

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



## MISSION AND ACTIVITIES IN 2013





## **A Word from the Rector**

Dear Friends,

You may remember that I ended "A Word from the Rector" last year like this:-

"On 1<sup>st</sup> 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 focused on me; trust me and I will be with you through all that is to come. This was built on when at Epiphany (Isaiah 60:1-6) 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."

This has certainly be true for me and I hope that it has for you. Throughout the year I prayed that new people would be drawn into our congregations. By the middle of the year, I was beginning to wonder if God was hearing my prayer as although a number of people had come to an occasional service, no-one seemed to be joining the congregations on a regular basis. Well that all changed in the second half of the year and I can count at least three families, one elderly gent and his daughter and one couple who have become regular worshippers across our congregations. This was really encouraging (Thanks be to God!) and I would ask you to join with me in the prayer that more people would be drawn into our church community during 2014, so that this time next year we can again celebrate that people are coming into a relationship with Christ.

2013 has been a year in which we have not just welcomed new people, but in which we have grown together as the people of God. We had a confirmation service at the beginning of the year – it is always a great joy to see people who've reached the point in their journey at which they want to declare their commitment to God in a public way. We had the "All Sorts" service in November which celebrated the fact that all sorts of people (of all ages and all congregations) can worship together in all sorts of ways (through music, prayer, bible study and craft).

The PCC are planning an Away Day for February 2014 which aims to look at more ways in which we can enable our congregations to grow both in size and in depth of faith. Please join with me in praying that this day will bear fruit and that 2014 will be a year in which we see God at work in both individuals and in our corporate life together.

**Revd Jane Turner**



## **THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL DURING 2013**

The PCC met eight times during a year of considerable change, development and innovation. Much of what we discussed concerned financial matters and the repair and maintenance of the churches. Although those issues will be reported in detail by the Treasurer and the Churchwardens, they cannot be omitted altogether from a report on PCC business.

In May, when discussing possible further financial economies, we recognised that none of those identified was really acceptable and that many people in the congregations had already responded very positively to appeals. After a lengthy discussion, we concluded that we were unlikely to be able to make progress without a change of approach and decided to turn our attention instead to discipleship, mission and growth.

Concentrating on those areas instead of finance opened many possibilities, and several areas of church life have been developed very successfully. They included the "All Sorts Worship" day, which was extremely well received; an excellent Remembrance Day Service, with new arrangements that left Bishop Keith "overwhelmed"; the photograph competition, which attracted over 60 entries and ended in a very enjoyable afternoon when all the pictures could be admired; and the Parish calendars, using pictures from the competition and which were quickly sold out. In September, we began to plan a PCC "Away Day" for early in the following year, when we hoped to take these and other ideas forward so that both spiritual and numerical growth within the church could be developed further.

Mr Eric Jones told us in September that because of personal circumstances, he would not be able to continue as a member of the PCC. He has been active in the parish since the late 1960s and has been a member of the PCC since June 1973. He became a churchwarden in 1976 and was also a member of the Deanery Synod. His contribution to the life of the parish over that time has been enormous and we were all extremely sorry at his departure from the PCC. He continues of course to contribute to the life and worship of the parish.

Mr R Turner retired as Tower Captain after many years. We and all the congregations were extremely grateful to him for his leadership of the bell ringers and the growth in their number over that time, during which the new bell was installed.

Turning to the churches, we were informed that water had been entering the sanctuary at St Bartholomew's. The cause was found to be defective or missing lead soakaway under the vestry roof. In addition, some stonework in the external wall of the belfry stairway had been repointed with cement rather than lime mortar, which had damaged the stonework. These two faults may have occurred during work carried out under the supervision of the Diocese following a quinquennial inspection, which might be grounds for an insurance claim during the next year. Other work required at St Bartholomew's included the churchyard wall, the heating system and the guttering.

We received some complaints about the churchyard, but unfortunately most of them concerned matters that we were unable to change. Concern was expressed about the

yew trees, but we need approval from the diocese and the Council Conservation Officer for any work. We gratefully accepted Mr G Burns' offer to make a new notice board. Mr Steve Ledsham offered a Christmas tree to be placed outside St Bartholomew's, but we could not justify the cost of installing the power supply for the lights.

The Conservation Officer suggested several possible ways of achieving some of the Open Door objectives and improving the conditions in the church, and these are still being explored. We also discussed the best ways to call for help in case of illness or accident at St Bartholomew's, where there is no mobile signal and no possibility of a land line.

We spent a long time discussing and approving a Health and Safety Policy prepared by Mr M Studholme, and arranged a Parish First Aid course at St Chad's which was attended by 13 members of the congregations. We were grateful to Mrs Brenda Jones of the Red Cross for leading the course.

Wirral Council offered £3,000 to improve disabled access to the toilets at St Chad's, which we accepted gratefully and ring-fenced in the accounts until we could find additional funds. Following strenuous efforts by Mr Eden, we received a refund of £2,280 for overcharges for water at St Chad's.

Our Child Protection Policy was approved in January and later in the year we agreed to join a new Diocesan service provided by CCPAS (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Scheme) to provide our DBS (previously CRB) service.

At the end of the contract for the church photocopier, it was replaced under a new Church of England national agreement which meant it costs less than the previous machine. The PCC agreed to transfer many old records to the Diocesan Record Office at Chester. Towards the end of the year, we began to discuss an exhibition or display at St Bartholomew's to mark the centenary of the First World War. We have already received some offers of medals and other items, but much more planning will be required during 2014.

This report has outlined the most significant matters discussed during 2013. If anyone wishes for more information about the PCC, its discussions or its decisions, please ask the Rector, the Honorary Secretary or any PCC member.

**G J Barley (Honorary Secretary of the PCC)**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT 2013**

I have been Parish Treasurer for 12 months now, although I have taken a close interest in our parish finances over a far longer period and believe I have a fairly in-depth understanding of the nuances of our parish purse. I have also been Churchwarden for four years and believe I have a fairly comprehensive understanding of parish dynamics and how the parish "ticks".

In addition I have been a statistician and researcher working with the Diocesan Mission Development Team and other parishes for several years, and by interaction with clergy, churchwardens, and treasurers of other parishes I am aware of the trials and tribulations experienced by other parishes over finance and statistical growth. By combination of all these roles I believe I also have a fairly broad understanding of where our parish fits within the diocesan picture.

### **Church Membership**

One thing I would like to emphasize early on is that as a Church of England parish we are not in sharp decline. Admittedly, weekly churchgoing has reduced and the age profile of our church community now leans more towards the elderly than it did a decade ago, but this is generally in keeping with the changing shape of the population of Irby and Thurstaston and the national picture of our aging society.

For example, there are now 24% fewer children and youth under 16 years of age living in Irby and Thurstaston compared with a decade ago, and 14% fewer adults under 40 years, but 4% more adults aged 40 to 64 years, and 19% more adults aged 65 years and over.

Average attendance at church on a Sunday has slipped below 100 adults and 20 children, but the overall size of our community (those who have joined our Electoral Roll, or contribute through our giving schemes, or are otherwise distinctly recognised as regular churchgoers) has remained large and solid, numbering around 250 souls overall.

### **Parish Share**

On the other hand we have for many years faced considerable financial challenges. In 2005 the diocesan synod changed the financial basis under which we pay our parish share. In short, all parishes now pay parish share based on their socio-economic location, and not their attendance, Electoral Roll membership, income, or the size of their parish population. In common with the greater majority of other parishes we now have to pay what in reality is the standard rate, which in 2013 was £55,244, and in 2014 will be £58,029. For that we get our own incumbent who is solely allotted to our parish and community.

There are some other parishes that cannot afford to pay their full parish share but they get only a proportion of a full priest's capacity. For example, two parishes may have to share a priest, or the priest is given other responsibilities outside their parish. Several

parishes had their allotment for their own priest reduced to 90% (or lower) in 2012 and 2013. Any such additional responsibilities which have to be taken on by an incumbent clearly impact on their capacity to undertake the full range of operations they might normally be expected to perform within a parish.

In short, if we want our own Rector who is solely dedicated to our parish we must pay and continue to pay our full parish share. If not we may have to trim the role by reducing the number of services that take place, or conduct services without an ordained priest, or reduce some of the other roles and responsibilities currently undertaken by our Rector. However, our capacity to pay our parish share depends on the state of our parish purse.

### **Balancing the Budget**

We derive our regular income both from (a) voluntary giving and (b) from our activities, and incur expenditure by maintaining our buildings and pursuing our missionary role through our services and other operations as a Church of England parish (for a detailed account of our income and expenditure see our church accounts).

However, sometimes our income is boosted by non-recurring gifts, legacies and insurance payments, and our expenditure is increased by damage costs, or specific repairs that are unlikely to arise again. Unfortunately, these unexpected windfalls and expenses can tend to hid the real state of our parish finances and colour our perception of how well we are doing. Therefore, in the rest of this report I have attempted to distinguish our regular income and expenditure from the temporary and non-recurring fluctuations that can crop up most years.

Four sub-areas of income and expenditure drive our parish operations

1. Voluntary Giving & Parish Share
2. The activities at and maintenance of St Bartholomew
3. The activities at and maintenance of St Chad and its complex of buildings
4. Other income, activities, and administrative

#### **1. Voluntary Giving & Parish Share**

Almost 80% of our voluntary giving is received through our envelope scheme, or in yellow gift aided envelopes, or from cash collections, and to a large extent the income they provide is directly the result of the range, location, diversity, and frequency of our regular services. However, almost 75% of money received in envelopes or as open plate cash is provided by churchgoers who mostly only give for and during the week they attend. In short, if their service does not take place they do not give.

If we fail to hold or change the normal location of a service we lose income. For example, our failure to hold two regular morning services, the 9.30am and 11.15am on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014, and instead join Irby Methodists for their Covenant service at 10.00am led to a reduction in voluntary giving of £523 for that Sunday alone. Some of this loss was clawed back as the more committed givers gave extra over the following weeks but there was still an overall deficit of £400 compared with previous years (actually this was

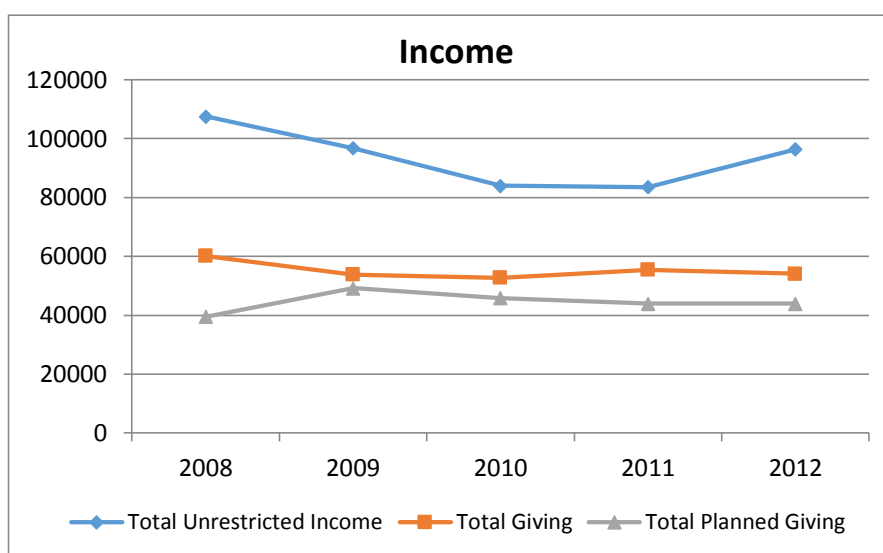
£500 if we count in the additional loss of Gift Aid & GASDS payments on this sum). Another example involved the decision to hold the 2013 Christmas Day mid-morning service at St Chad's rather than St Bartholomew's, the previous venue in 2012. The attendance in 2013 was only half of the previous year and voluntary giving was down by more than £100.

Unfortunately, each of our varied Sunday morning congregations is very particular to their service and very few will attend any alternative service if their regular service doesn't take place. Furthermore, even our smallest Sunday morning congregation, the 8.00am BCP communion service, provide a significant proportion (18%) of our overall giving income and most would be lost if their service did not take place.

Over the last few years our income from voluntary giving (including the recovery of tax) and other unrestricted donations has been a little over £60,000 per annum, which is remarkably similar to the core costs of providing and supporting our ordained parish ministry i.e. the cost of parish share, plus pastoral and rectory expenses, plus the basic expenses incurred in holding our range and diversity of services. It does seem to me that there is something theologically correct about this.

However, income from planned giving invariably follows a cycle of rise and fall which has its high point after a major stewardship and giving campaign and then falls as existing and deeply committed givers die or move away, to be replaced by new givers whose rising commitment has yet to mature. Like most parishes we pursue some sort of giving initiative most years to remind and encourage our members to give, but we only run a major campaign every few years. In fact, the Diocesan Adviser in Christian Giving recommends that we only run a major giving campaign once every five or six years.

The Research and Statistics Department at Church House London keep a history of our financial records and have provided the following table which shows our overall unrestricted income, and our overall giving income (including plate cash but less other donations), and our planned giving income since 2008. Our high point for planned giving was in 2009 when we conducted our last major giving campaign (which took six months to plan and execute).



The following table shows the pattern of our total unrestricted voluntary income (planned giving plus plate cash and other unrestricted donations) less the basic costs of providing and supporting ordained ministry and our regular services each year since 2008.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Unrestricted Voluntary Giving & other Donations	£55,841	£66,467	£63,749	£62,261	£62,931	£63,829
Parish Share & Ministry Costs	£57,976	£57,358	£58,204	£59,211	£61,398	£64,151
Balance	<b>-£2,135</b>	£9,109	£5,545	£3,050	£1,533	<b>-£322</b>

Unfortunately, unrestricted voluntary giving has not kept pace with the increase in parish share which has risen by 2% to 3% each year since 2009. The time is, therefore, approaching when we need to consider conducting a new major giving campaign.

## 2. St Bartholomew's

The annual interest received from two restricted endowment funds which have both been in place for more than 50 years directly supports the cost of maintaining the church and churchyard and cannot be used for any other purpose. The first of these is the Eileen Shaw Trust, which is a permanent endowment specifically for the upkeep of St Bartholomew's church building and churchyard. The second is the Morrell Trust which is also a permanent endowment restricted to the maintenance of the churchyard. These two funds provided an income of £4,311 in 2013 which can only be spent on the maintenance of the church of St Bartholomew and its grounds.

Revenue raising activities which take place at St Bartholomew include weddings and funerals, which provide fees and a contribution towards our heating costs when heating is required, and St Bear's Day. During 2013 these activities raised £6,770 in income. This was lower than 2012 because (a) there were fewer weddings and (b) new rules introduced by General Synod changed and restricted what we can charge. Although, weddings can only take place at St Bartholomew (and we secure a large number of weddings from candidates who live outside the parish simply because of the appeal of



the building and its setting), use of the income from fees and heating cost contributions is not restricted in any way and need not be spent only on the maintenance of the church and grounds.

The routine costs of maintaining the Church of St Bartholomew and the churchyard during 2013, excluding insurance claims and extraordinary one-off costs, but including heating & lighting, amounted to £8,641.

The trust funds and income from weddings, funerals and the annual St Beartholomew's Day have generally exceeded the routine cost of the maintenance of St Bartholomew's and its grounds since 2008 as shown in the table below.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Restricted Endowed Funds	£1,765	£2,331	£3,238	£3,886	£3,948	£4,311
St Beartholomew's Day	£187	£173	£161	£120	£137	£179
Fees & Heating Contributions	£3,324	£7,881	£5,890	£4,596	£7,120	£6,591
Total Revenue	£5,276	£10,385	£9,289	£8,602	£11,205	£11,081
Routine Maintenance & Costs	£4,600	£9,698	£8,048	£9,774	£8,648	£8,641
Balance	£676	£687	£1,241	<b>-£1,172</b>	£2,557	£2,440

In addition during 2013 there were extraordinary costs arising from repairs to the masonry around all the windows costing £3,529 (which were a legacy of the quinquennial inspection in 2011 and fell to us to bear), and impact damage to the boundary wall which apart from the excess was reimbursed by our insurers, and the cost of the new church sign. The extraordinary expenses we have met since 2008, the donations, insurance recoveries, and funds from appeals are shown in the table below.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Repairs or improvements	£0	£1,490	£0	£150	£7,128	£7,659
Grant, Insurer or Appeal Funds	£0	£1,490	£0	£0	£250	£3,691
Balance	£0	£0	£0	£150	£6,878	£3,968

### **3. St Chad's**

Income during 2013 from the hire of the hall, which included expense costs from the new Dawpool Pre-school for the extension payable from their summer term, amounted to £9,323. The net income from other church organised activities which took place in the hall came to £2,299.

The routine costs of maintaining the Church of St Chad and its complex of buildings during 2013, including all maintenance, cleaning, and utility costs, amounted to £10,998.

Even allowing for the loss of the longstanding hire contract with the NW Cadets from September the income from rental and other activities that can only take place at St Chad's meant that overall net income exceeded expenditure for the first time in many years.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Hall Rental	£6,753	£8,339	£7,784	£7,820	£7,973	£9,323
Other Hall Activities e.g Fund Raising Events	£1,939	£2,749	£1,189	£2,109	£1,287	£2,299
Hall Income	£8,692	£11,088	£8,973	£9,929	£9,260	£11,622
Routine Maintenance & Costs	£11,691	£11,832	£12,546	£11,420	£12,067	£10,998
Balance	<b>-£2,999</b>	<b>-£744</b>	<b>-£3,573</b>	<b>-£1,491</b>	<b>-£2,807</b>	£624

There was no extraordinary expense at St Chad's during 2013. The extraordinary expenses arising at St Chad's since 2008 are shown in the table below.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Building Repairs	£17,500	£10,670	£0	£0	£0	£0
Insurance Recovery, or Appeal Funds	£17,500	£9,321	£0	£0	£0	£0
Balance	£0	£1,349	£0	£0	£0	£0

#### **4. Other Income, Salaries, Fees and Administration Costs**

Other unrestricted income achieved during 2013 from the sale of calendars, advertisements in the Church magazine, the sale of the magazine, and the charging for administrative services e.g. copying charges etc. came to £1,495.

General costs, salaries, fees and expenses that were incurred and paid during 2013 came to £13,028.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Other Income	£1,703	£1,196	£1,345	£1,205	£1,209	£1,495
Parish Clerk's Salary	£2,698	£2,718	£2,742	£2,722	£2,731	£2,760
Organist's Fees	£1,055	£1,055	£2,680	£2,430	£2,340	£2,280
Administrative expenses	£2,963	£6,321	£7,412	£7,128	£6,396	£7,988
Balance	<b>-£5,013</b>	<b>-£8,898</b>	<b>-£11,489</b>	<b>-£11,075</b>	<b>-£10,258</b>	<b>-£11,533</b>

#### **Regular Income & Routine Expenditure**

When the four different areas of routine income and expenditure are combined the overall picture is as shown in the table below.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Voluntary Giving less Ministry Costs	-£2,135	£9,109	£5,545	£3,050	£1,533	-£322
St Barts Income less Maintenance	£676	£687	£1,241	-£1,172	£2,557	£2,440
St Chads Income less Maintenance	-£2,999	-£744	-£3,573	-£1,491	-£2,807	£624
Other Income less Salaries, & Admin Exp	-£5,013	-£8,898	-£11,489	-£11,075	-£10,258	-£11,533
Balance	<b>-£9,471</b>	<b>£154</b>	<b>-£8,276</b>	<b>-£10,688</b>	<b>-£8,975</b>	<b>-£8,791</b>

In consequence it will be seen that if we ignore legacies and windfalls that come our way from time to time, and the extraordinary expenses that crop up occasionally and are unlikely to be repeated in the ordinary turn of events, the routine cost of our parish

operations currently exceed our income by a sum approaching £9,000 each year. The PCC will need to address this situation during 2014.

## **John Roberts (Parish Treasurer)**

### **ST BARTHOLOMEW'S REPORT**

For centuries the Church of St Bartholomew has been the centre of parish worship and celebration, and of tribute and comfort when we remember those we have lost. During 2013 there were 158 regular or festival services of worship on Sundays and weekdays. For individual families it was the venue for 18 baptisms, 18 weddings, and 8 funerals. However, it was also the centre for many community gatherings which drew large numbers of parishioners and worshippers often



stretching the church to capacity; e.g. St Bear's Day, the All Souls service, the Remembrance Day services, the Dawpool School Christingle service, the Carol service, the Crib services, and the late night Christmas Eve service.

Our thanks and gratitude must go to the Revd Jane our Rector, to Alan Jones our Reader, and to the Revds Joe, Simon, David, and Julian our assisting clergy. We must give our thanks also for the ministry of Revd Ian Morris whose sudden death only a few weeks ago (January 2014) left us bereft of his ministry, wisdom, and experience.

Our gratitude and thanks must go to all those who prepare the church for all our services and ensure they take place. In particular the sacristans, servers, sidespeople, scripture readers, intercessors; to June Bibby and those in the cleaning teams; to Elaine Jones, and Daphne Amlot for their flower ministry; and Joyce Ratcliffe and Jon Oliver for their work as vergers. Thanks and gratitude must also go to Craig Vickers our organist, and Michael Jones, Sam Jackson, and Chris Turnbull who have deputised when necessary; to our team of bellringers under Peter Robson, the new Tower Captain; and to Sally Lang and her gardening team, with special mention for Brian Jones and Roger Dennison, for not only their contribution to the work of keeping the church grounds neat and tidy, but also their willingness to help in other ways when needed. Last but not least our gratitude and thanks must go once again to Jon Oliver and Archie Peat whose contribution in numerous practical ways during the year keep our buildings and grounds up to scratch.

Throughout the year we have undertaken essential maintenance and improvements at

St Bartholomew's. As a result of the skills and commitment of Geoff Burns we now have a brand new noticeboard; essential maintenance work has been completed to all the window masonry around the building by contractors; and the boundary wall and side gate entrance have been extensively repaired following the various vehicle impacts during 2012 and 2013.

During 2013 we were presented with the changing demographic picture of our parish when the detailed local results from the 2011 national census became available. These show that the population of Irby and Thurstaston fell by 3% during the previous decade. However, they also show that the age profile changed dramatically. For example the number of:-

- children and young people under 16 years of age fell by 24%
- adults aged 16 to 39 years fell by 14%
- adults aged 41 to 64 years rose by 4%
- adults aged 65 years and older rose by 19%

The nature and age of households also altered considerably. For example the number of properties:-

- solely occupied by more than one adult who are all pensioners rose by 7%
- solely occupied by single or widowed pensioners living alone rose by 11%
- occupied by a single person below pensionable age rose by 24%
- occupied by families with dependent children under 18 years fell by 21%

The rate of these changes appears to be ongoing, and although to some extent they resonate with the national picture, the percentages I have mentioned specifically relate to our local situation, and are not necessarily mirrored to the same extent in other neighbouring areas outside our parish. These changes will provide us with new contextual challenges as we seek to pursue our role over the next few years.

### **John Roberts (Church Warden)**

#### **ST CHAD'S REPORT**

Worship has continued on most Sundays and Wednesdays throughout the year. It is amazing how many people are involved and to whom our thanks are owed. Starting with our Rector Revd Jane, then the retired priests, and our Reader, the sidespeople, our organist, the cleaners, the flower arrangers, the coffee makers, the bible readers, the prayer readers, and very importantly our Junior Church leaders and helpers. Rather wonderfully nearly all the people who come to church take part at some time.



For a week in August the church/hall was closed for some maintenance, when the sanctuary received some attention, the hall paintwork was washed and most of the woodwork outside of the hall was stained. Our thanks for this were to John and Jean Heath, Leslie Worrall, and Mike Rostock (who did the gutters and downspouts). I am sure that with more support something else could have been achieved.

Besides hall user groups and occasional hall hire, the hall or church was used by the church for various events:-

- Beginning in January we had the covenant service shared with our Methodist friends.
- On Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb we were entertained by a quiz night that was good fun.
- At the end of February there started a series of Lent talks which proved helpful for those who attended.
- Our harvest supper organised by Dr and Mrs Turnbull and Dr and Mrs Robson and family. This helped by the musical entertainment was a very enjoyable evening.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> November saw the parish trying something new: an All Sorts worship, where we started off in church for the first part and then dispersed into one of the four sections of worship for two twenty minute sessions, before returning back together in church.
- A very successful Christmas Fair was held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, and I am sure that anyone who came to or took part in this will have had a good afternoon. Thank You to Julie DeBoorder and friends for organising this.

We were sorry to see the Army Cadets depart for another venue. We are very pleased that Dawpool Pre-school (which opened in September 2012) has found that our building meets their needs. It has been a pleasure to see them flourish under the leadership of Carol Marwing and her staff team.

Finally but not least, we owe Jon Oliver thanks for attending to our lighting at both churches and we owe Archie Peat a debt of gratitude for keeping our grass so well cut and trimmed at St Chad's.

Wishing all our parishioners all the best for the coming year.

**Roger Jackson (Church Warden)**

## **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

The Wirral North Deanery encompasses representatives (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 Rev Gillian Rossiter of St John Baptist Great Meols who is the Rural Dean and the lay chair is Lesley Young who took over leaving a gap of secretary which has just been filled by a volunteer from Hoylake.



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 has discussed amongst other things women bishops, human sexuality, ethical investment, environmental issues, gender based violence and girl guiding. It also receives reports from and elects representatives to Diocesan Synod which discusses and regulates finance of the diocese, for example deciding on a 3.5% increase in Parish Share.

The meetings of the Deanery Synod itself which rotate around the various parishes in the deanery at each of which about 50 people attend were as follows:

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

2<sup>nd</sup> June Songs of Praise – St Peter's Heswall.

10<sup>th</sup> June at Holy Trinity Poulton Lancelyn where there was a Presentation by Rev Vivien Gisby on Pastoral Workers and following this discussion about parishes' work in this area.

3<sup>rd</sup> September Parish work on Mission Overseas was discussed.

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November at St Andrew's Bebington where there was a presentation by Rev Andrew Greenhough on the Diocesan Committee for Social Responsibility which considers ecological matters and issues of poverty amongst other things.

Future meetings for this coming year are on:

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November (Lay Forum)

**Chris Turnbull (Deanery Synod Representative)**

## **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT 2014**

After the creation of the new roll for last year's annual parochial church meeting the roll contained 205 members from 133 households.

At the recent revision for this year's APCM I removed 3 members who had died and added 20 new members who applied to join. The Electoral Roll (as of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014) now has 222 members from 147 households.

**John Roberts (Electoral Roll Officer)**

## CHARITIES SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



### LEPROSY MISSION

The Leprosy mission was founded in 1874 when little could be done to help patients beyond caring for their physical needs. Today we can provide a completely effective cure for this ancient disease. With your help the Leprosy mission is changing the situation.

Through your Leprosy collection boxes and donations, I have been able to send, over the year of 2013, a total of £311.30.

Remember Leprosy is a dreadful, but curable disease.

**Pat Hulme**



### THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Jean Heath, Elaine Kavanagh (648 1721) and Barbara Kozer (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 £981.31. We are grateful for the help we receive year after year from our collectors, but new collectors are needed just to maintain the roads we cover at present and, 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.

During 2013 the house boxes, which people keep in their own homes and are emptied annually in the autumn, produced £33.42.

The annual "Thank You" coffee morning in St Chad's in October, which is open to all but also aids box collection, raised £64.72 from donations and bring-and-buy items.

The Christingle Service in early December at St Chad's raised a further £77.61 for the Society.

**Jean Heath (648 6015)**

## CHURCH ACTIVITIES

### JUNIOR CHURCH (Jan-Dec 2013)

Junior Church meets at St Chad's during the 9.30am service during school term time, excluding family service days. Presently there are 2 groups, Sparklers age 2 ½ to reception class and Starblazers school years 1 – 6. The wide age range in Starblazers has come about because at present there are not enough numbers to subdivide them, but year 6's have the option to and usually do join seniors a year early. I have found however, the key is to be flexible to the wishes of the individual, proved by one year 6 who likes to have his foot in both groups!

We have continued with our new home grown rolling three year programme which is in its last year now, using some material from Click resource books, other resources borrowed from Revd Jane or books from our own stock. Planning is a 'heads together' process and very much a term or two at a time, but looking to the future, we are nearing the end of all the planning and creating and by July next year we will have completed the programme and will be able to work from our new pre-prepared resource.

The activities this year were different from the normal; instead of the Easter/Harvest workshops and pancake party run solely by Junior Church leaders and helpers, Revd Jane organised several events with us jointly, which I must emphasise, was lovely and a very welcome helping hand, thanks Jane.

Firstly, we had a family pancake party evening and it was good to have members from both churches and all ages to enjoy the party games, table activities and pancake eating.

Secondly we had a Dads 'n' Kids morning, when dads brought the kids to make mother's day cards and gifts and enjoyed tea and cake, as dads deserve a treat too!

Lastly Revd Jane offered an afternoon entitled "The Easter Journey" which was an experience for families together to be taken through the events of Easter Week, involving pinning the tail on the donkey, walking to Jerusalem with painted feet, washing of feet, sharing in bread and wine, and Easter crafts. An event which was greatly enjoyed by children and parents alike.



We finished our summer term again with a picnic in Royden Park with impromptu games, lolly ices for everyone (including very hot dogs in need of a cool down) and good company.



During the summer holidays, St Bear-tholomew's Day was as popular as ever.

Junior Church leaders, helpers and their friends and families all helped to set up/clear away and provide stalls and refreshments, helped also by raffle prizes and delicious cakes donated by church members. Jon Oliver launched the teddies, Revd Jane kept us all safe from plunging teddies and Richard Turner judged the proceedings. Many brave bears launched off the tower and the three nearest to the marker received prizes of new cuddly pals.

Once again the children joined by the seniors led the 'Book Giving Service' and the 'Christmas Production'.

The Beatitudes gave me the inspiration for the book giving service this year and the theme was "Blessed are the peacemakers". Sarah Robson and I planned it together, thank you Sarah! Sarah led and there were several short sketches by Seniors and Starblazers and a song by Sparklers. Altogether everyone delivered an inspiring message that God's Love is all powerful and can overcome the anger and turn it to peace!

Inspired by the success of Seniors in the Bookgiving Service, for the Christmas Production I chose a play that Seniors could present by themselves, called "Countdown to Christmas".

Much preparation was undertaken by all. My thanks must go out to all the leaders and helpers who pooled their resources together, particularly Matt to whom I had to pass the baton due to unforeseen circumstances.

Sparklers gave us a lovely song and Starblazers acted out the nativity, alongside the Seniors giving us their unique take on the build up to Christmas Day. Together they all gave us a powerful message and the real meaning of Christmas shone through.

I must add, apart from a frantic quick delivering of a king's cloak, which I made the night before! I relaxingly watched it all from the audience, which was just wonderful!

**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 meets 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+**

The arrangements which were put in place towards the end of 2012, whereby the Seniors meet monthly, have continued this year and have proved much more

successful. Between eight and twelve attend regularly; we start the sessions with juice and toast and managed to cause a good deal of consternation or excitement, depending on whom you spoke to, in the church by setting off the smoke alarm on one occasion. We often watch a thought-provoking video and follow this with discussion, although we have varied the format on occasions.

Janet Trigg, Julie DeBoorder and Chris Smale share the leadership of the group and have been very impressed with the thoughtfulness and spiritual awareness of the young people. The year ended with them making a very significant contribution to the success of the Nativity play, "Countdown to Christmas". It is hoped that they will occasionally link up with another Christian youth group for some social activities.

## **Chris Smale**



### **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**

We continue to be busy Bellringing at St Bartholomew's Church. We now have 18 ringers and are looking to take on more beginners over the next year.

The year started with the retirement of Richard Turner from the post of Tower Captain after 45 years of service. This event was marked with special ringing; on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013 a peal of 5040 changes of Plain Bob Minor conducted by the new Tower Captain



Peter Robson in 2 hours 34 minutes, and on 27<sup>th</sup> January by a quarter peal of 1260 changes of Plain Bob Doubles rung by a Thurstaston band who had all been taught by Richard.

At the annual 'Christmas' dinner in February the Bell Ringers presented Richard with an engraved silver table bell and a certificate thanking him for his work and listing details of the celebration ringing. These gifts were represented to Richard at St Bartholomew's Church on Palm Sunday. An article describing the events was later published in the Ringing World (International weekly



ringing magazine).

During the year there was a peal of 7 Surprise Minor rung in 2 hours 30 minutes on 5<sup>th</sup> July by the Ancient Society of College Youths during their Country meeting. A quarter peal of 5 Doubles methods was also rung on 5<sup>th</sup> October by a band including 3 Thurstaston ringers.

We continue to have an enthusiastic group who practise and develop their ringing every Wednesday evening from 7 to 8pm and ring for Sunday service. A number of us meet socially after the ringing on Wednesdays in the local pub, and others meet up on the Sunday at Church farm for coffee. A number of us also join other ringers in Wirral and throughout the Diocese at ringing events.

If you are interested in seeing what we do, or want to learn more about ringing, then please come along on a Wednesday or talk to me in Church.

### **Peter Robson (Tower Captain)**

### **MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP**

The Men's Breakfast meets on Saturday mornings, at 8.45am on alternate months. We meet at Aroma Cafe in Irby, thereby supporting a much valued local business and attendance varies between 8 and 13 gentlemen. 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. 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**

This year the garden has not changed at all. General weeding and cleaning monthly. A wonderful donation of £100.00 was given to the group by Mr David Cope to remember his mother, who as a young girl was "Rose Queen" at St Bartholomew's and later married at St Bartholomew's. I have corresponded with the family, who at the correct time of year are quite happy to have an Azalea planted in memory of their Mother. They also asked for a photograph showing the Azalea and its position in the border for future reference, when they visit. Some of the money has been spent on weed killer for the main paths around the church.

### **Sally-A Lang**

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

2013 saw a great variety of social activities in the parish.

February – Quiz Night

February – Pancake Party

March – Lent Lunches

March – Dads'n'Kids Afternoon

April – Open House at the Rectory to celebrate Revd Jane's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as Rector

July – Picnic at Royden Park

August – St Beartholomew's Day

September – Photograph Competition Prize Giving Afternoon

October – Harvest Supper and Quiz

November – Christmas Fair

Thank You to everyone who organised and supported these events. The opportunity for people to come together and share in fun and fellowship is so important.

Thank You to Patsy who has acted as our Social Activities Co-ordinator. Patsy stood down at the end of 2013.

If anyone would like to organise an event in the future, please speak to Revd Jane. How about a Board Games Evening, or a Knit and Natter afternoon, or a BBQ or ..... If you have the idea and would like to get a team of people together to work with you and bring the idea to reality then Go For It!

For 2014 we already have planned a parish outing for June and an event to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War 1 in July.

**Revd Jane (in the absence of a social activities co-ordinator!)**

## **CHURCH RELATED ORGANISATIONS**

### **MOTHERS' UNION**

Sue Burns retired as Branch Leader at the end of 2012 and with no-one to take her place we decided to become diocesan members but to maintain holding our afternoon meetings as before on 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month.

In June, we celebrated the 85<sup>th</sup> birthday of "Irby and Thurstaston MU".

Throughout the year we have had a variety of interesting speakers including:-

- a talk from Ralph and June Bibby about their work with the children from Chernobyl. Members of Pensby MU joined us on this occasion.
- Colin Ratcliffe showing slides took us on a sunny holiday with him and Joyce to Greece.



At our Christmas Meeting we were entertained by the Year 2 children from Dawpool. We were delighted to also welcome their parents who enjoyed hearing their children sing.

For 2014, we have decided not to continue as Diocesan Members of MU. A small nucleus have kept their membership to MU by paying subs through EMU. We will continue to meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month as an open church meeting for ladies and gentlemen. Anyone who would like to join us for an enjoyable relaxing afternoon will be most welcome.

## **Leslie Worrall**

### **EMU January – December 2013**

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 2013 we held a 'Tea & Toast, Bring & Buy' at St Chad's, raising £67.50 for the Worldwide Fund.

In February Pam Desai came along with beautiful Indian saris for us all to try.

In March Kevin Hogan from 'The Ark' – a Christian charity that supports the vulnerable - came along and gave a very interesting and enlightening talk about the homeless.



In April there was a cupcake icing demonstration with Rachel Drinkwater, giving inspiration to the bakers amongst us.

In May Deanne Wiseman demonstrated button picture craft and we all made our own pictures, producing a variety of different designs. We were delighted to be joined at this meeting by four members of our Prayer Partners from Backford. Some of us then had a very enjoyable evening when we went to visit Backford Church in July, where we had a short service followed by sandwiches and cakes laid on by the Mothers' Union ladies.



In September we enjoyed our summer meal at 'Francos' in Hoylake.

In October we had a short talk on Fair Trade, with some items for sale.

Our last meeting of the year was in November when Jane came along with her jewellery for sale and we all had a go at making a bracelet.

**Chris Rostock – Branch Secretary**

### **1st THURSTASTON GUIDES ANNUAL REPORT 2013**

We have had a wonderful year, with a wide variety of activities. We were sad to say some goodbyes this year though. Firstly to 10 of our eldest Guides who left us in July; we are delighted some have moved onto Senior section. We were also very sad to receive Revd Jane Turner's resignation in August. She had dedicated many years of her life to Guiding, as well as starting this unit in 2008, and it is a great loss to 1<sup>st</sup> Thurstaston Guides. Two of our leaders Ellie Randall and Gaynor Vaughan were on maternity leave in the Summer term so we would like to welcome them back to the unit and also give a welcome to their new additions to their families, Evie and Edward. We are also delighted to welcome three new guides to our unit.

During the year we have:

- Undertaken many challenges
  - Three of our guides have completed their Baden Powell challenge – well done!
  - World Issues Challenge
  - Culture Challenge
  - Lithuanian Challenge
  - Pink Challenge
- Had some fun special interest nights
  - Sailing and windsurfing at West Kirby
  - Outdoor sports at Thurstaston
  - Netball night at Pensby
- Done some community and fund raising events
  - Red nose day
  - Pink Night – raising £58.96 for Breast Cancer Research
  - Helping out at St. Chad's Christmas fair
- Taken part in a District Thinking Day event



- Giggles 2013 – taken part in an international camp in North Yorkshire
- NW Region trip to Alton Towers

**Sarah Barr, Ellie Randall, Gaynor Vaughan and the Guides!**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> IRBY RAINBOWS**

We have had a successful 2013. Rainbows have enjoyed various activities during the year, including dance with Lauren from Irby Dance Studio. We had two joint meetings with 1<sup>st</sup> Irby Rainbows, a summer and Christmas Party. Rainbows also met with other Irby Guiding girls for Thinking Day.

Rainbows have attended Church Parade during the year and were proud to be a part of the Remembrance Sunday Service.

The girls have worked towards and achieved several interest badges, supporting the work of other guiding groups.

A large number of the girls enjoyed helping Hadlow Fields celebrate its 35<sup>th</sup> Birthday, enjoyed a Division outing to Underwater Street, and a trip to the Floral Pavilion for the amateur pantomime.

During the year, Rainbows have made cakes, decorated biscuits, done lots of craft activities, played games and had fun!

**Karen Fearn (Unit Leader)**

## **TOTS'N'TINIES**

Tots'nTinies has now been running for twelve months. 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 23 children. A number of people who attend have said that this group is the best they have been to!

A couple of people have stepped up to help occasionally, but we would still be grateful for more helpers, particularly someone to welcome other Mums (Thursday morning) even if not every week. Other tasks include setting up/tidying away, and helping in the kitchen.

**Allison Youds**



