

# ALL SAINTS CHURCH



## ANNUAL REPORT

2018/19

Kingston Team Ministry

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## **All Saints Kingston - called to be generous**

Perhaps the central call of the church is to be generous: generous with its time, generous with its people, generous with its faith. The incarnation (Christmas) is a story of God coming to us - listening, adapting, engaging - the resurrection (Easter) one of surrendering to, and sharing in, the worst of our experience in order that we might find a way to redeem it. Generous acts.

In our age of accountability and need for things to be certain the wider church is being tested as to whether it can remain generous enough with what it believes for it to be accessible to all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or aptitude for faith. At All Saints, we can't influence how well this challenge is met but we can do our best to ensure that generosity remains the watchword with which we approach our ministry and mission with those we encounter.

This last year has seen many reasons for us to be grateful for the generous way that people have welcomed, listened, sung and rung, taught and played, ministered and served in order that the love which made us in the beginning, and remakes us day by day, is whispered to those we encounter.

Our admiration, respect and gratitude is for them all but we should mention Revd David Ball, who is moving on to minister elsewhere after three fruitful years with us (David, thank you) and, though they will remain among us, Liz Deller and Jennifer Pearce, retiring as Churchwardens, and Alastair Deller handing on the Treasurer's spreadsheet. Of all our parish jobs these are, perhaps, the most demanding. They have performed them with incredible expertise, good humour, commitment and love for which we cannot thank them enough.

Jonathan Wilkes  
Rector

## **The Kingston Team**

Its been another year of gentle connection between our three churches. A service together (this year at All Saints), a trip away (for a much valued pilgrimage to St Albans), chances to share and learn (in Lent) all serviced by our Team Council of Wardens, Readers, Spa's (Southwark Pastoral Assistant) and Clergy meeting as the year goes on. Within our separate and distinct identities we remain united in our friendship and commitment to each other.

This year we are sadly saying farewell to Rev'd Vicky Maunder who is leaving St John the Evangelist as Vicar to take up a post in the Winchester Diocese. We have much to thank Vicky for, not only in her inspiring leadership at St John's, but also for the energy, commitment and insight she has brought to the wider team. We wish her and all her family every good thing in their new surroundings and our partnership together remains on hand to support St John's in their period of interregnum.

Praise and thanks are due, too, to all those among our number who work so tirelessly to enable the life of our three churches to continue and to thrive. From clergy to cleaners, choir members to coffee makers, wardens to workers with children and all places in between we have so much to be grateful for. Our gratitude, respect and admiration are due all round.

Jonathan Wilkes  
Team Rector

## **St John the Evangelist**

2018 was a significant year for St John the Evangelist. After many years of fundraising we were able to carry out the first phase of our building project. The ugly and failing overhead strip heating and lighting systems were removed and radiators and a wonderful new lighting system were installed. The building is now warm and well-lit and feels spacious and beautiful, an inspiring space for worship and community activities. On 25<sup>th</sup> November we welcomed the Archdeacon to a joyful service celebrating the completion of the works.

In the autumn we also received the great news that we have been awarded significant funding from the Garfield Weston Anniversary Fund and the City Bridge Trust to carry out a second phase of building works in 2019. This next phase will provide much improved community facilities, including toilets, kitchen and improved access into and around the building. God is good!

We began 2018 with a vision morning. From this a number of new initiatives were agreed. We started a weekly Bible study group which first explored Mark's gospel and then the book of Ruth. We set up a weekly community café, opening the church on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12. We set up a social media group which has developed our on-line presence and an eco-group to work towards an eco-church award.

There was much interest in Carolynne Cotton's wonderful display about the lives of those men listed on our WW1 memorial which was in the church for Remembrance Sunday and the weeks following.

For a second year we ran some popular children's activity days over the summer. 12 children were admitted to receive their First Communion. And towards the end of the year we introduced Diddi Disciples, a new worship resource for our youngest children during our Sunday services which has proved popular.

Vicky Maunder

## **St John the Baptist**

I want to begin this report with a thank you. Thank you to all of you who make St John the Baptist such a special place. Your dedication, your donations, and most of all your fellowship. On a Sunday the sharing of the peace is just so important to everyone ensuring that all should be made personally welcome. All those social events which are so much fun because of the community who take part in them are a key feature of our church.

2018 began as it meant to go on with music we had the whole big band in January, followed by Burns super and Tina Turner tribute later in the year we had Elvis tribute, fireworks, summer and frost fair and no end of other fun socials. Thank you to all who contribute to these events especially Sue.

In 2018 we also made more space in church for wheel chair users by removing the front of pews and refurbishing the ramp. Other building works completed included the addition of

some beautiful new benches in the orchard and then that emergency fix on the heating at the end of the year.

We had two great kids holiday clubs one run by the Koran church and another by Oxygen. We also began most importantly messy church this is worship for all ages to enjoy together. We began introducing it with a service all together for mother's day. We had training by Lucy Moore herself which we hosted here at St John's. We then began afternoon messy churches with harvest in October.

2018 saw a number of baptisms and also for the first time in a number of years a wedding. What a special day with Lucy and Tom.

Monday club went from strength to strength with a number of fun outings.

Special services this year included a very memorable Reembrace service to mark the ending of WW1 and including the "there but not there" figures as well as personal stories. 2018 Christmas services included a wonderful 9 lessons and carols and a packed and fun crib service.

St John's is you the people and you make it the place that it is. In 2018 we have struggled to make the books balance and although we did not make it, due to all your hard work we came closer than we at first feared.

So let us pray for the future of our beautiful church and its special people. That we may continue to be at the heart of our community serving all the people of the parish.

Rev'd Many Beck

## **Churchwardens' Annual Report 2017-2018**

This has been a busy and successful year for All Saints.

### **Services**

Once again we were asked to host the Kingston Episcopal Area Ordination Service which was a very joyful occasion. Our thanks go to the large team of volunteers that helped make this go so smoothly.

Civic services during the year include the Mayoral Service and Crown Court Service. After the Civic Remembrance Service there was a service of Commemoration and Re-dedication of the East Surrey Gates, the gates having been beautifully re-painted and re-gilded, 100 years after the end of WW1.

All our Christmas services were well attended , including our 2 Crib Services

### **Ministry team**

We have been thankful for the steady leadership of Jonathan and Sandy, supported by David Bell, and welcomed Mark Stafford to the team.

This coming year sees a change of Treasurer and Churchwardens.

### **Staff**

We welcomed David Condry as Director of Music and Pippa Joiner as Learning and Engagement Officer.

Thanks go to Isabel Isaacson for her help in the office during holidays and editing the Saints Alive magazine so superbly.

### **Deputy churchwardens and PCC**

The deputies continue to meet monthly. Isabel Isaacson does excellent work as our PCC secretary, and thanks go to Alastair Deller for his diligent work with the finances.

### **Volunteers**

We are enormously grateful for all the volunteers, too numerous to mention, who help All Saints to stay open daily, welcome visitors and support daytime and evening events. On Sundays our Sacristans, Crucifers and Acolytes, Setting up team, Readers and Intercessors, Chalice Assistants, Sidespeople, Workshop leaders, Coffee makers, Bellringers and Flower Arrangers make up the invaluable and loyal teams which keep us going on a regular basis. On other days the Listeners, Vergers, Knitters and Embroiderers are all busy making All Saints a welcoming place. Thanks to all.

Thanks to Vikki Hone and Sandy Cragg for their organisation of a wonderful Christmas Tree Festival.

We hosted the winter night shelter on Mondays in February and March and were glad to provide shelter to approximately 10 or so people on those cold nights, helped by several volunteers from our own congregation.

### **Children**

The Little Saints Toddler group continues to thrive under Ann Cornick's supervision and the Sunday Workshops are well attended.

### **The Building**

Our Quinquennial inspection took place in March and a programme of works is being carried out in 2019.

We took delivery of our lovely new choir stalls in January 2019 and they greatly enhance the building.

Our team of handy volunteers, including Iain Nevill and Brian Cornick do excellent work in helping the Churchwardens renovate and repair as needed. Our team of intrepid gardeners, Brian Cornick, Carys Griffiths and Jean Cope keep the churchyard looking attractive and welcoming, whatever the season.

The Churchwardens would like to thank everyone at All Saints for their continued support and encouragement. We are very grateful.

Liz Deller & Jennifer Pearce

Churchwardens

### **Annual Fabric Inspection**

The Churchwardens are required to inspect the church building and the churchyard at least once each year, or to arrange for this to be done on their behalf (*The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure, 1991*). The Churchwardens are required to present an annual report on the condition of the building to the Church Council. This report is then presented to the Annual Parishioners' Meeting, with any amendments required by the Church Council (*A Handbook for Churchwardens and PCCs, 1997*).

The Church wardens are pleased to be able to report, on the basis of the annual Fabric Inspection and Risk Assessment carried out in February 2019, that the church building is structurally sound, watertight, secure, safe, in good decorative order, clean and tidy, well-lit and heated, and is accessible by wheelchair. The churchyard is judged to be safe and is clean and tidy (thanks in no small part to the continuing work of the Gardening Group) and does not pose any threat to neighbouring buildings.

The Quinquennial Inspection has highlighted some work needed on the roof and rainwater drainage systems and this is scheduled to begin this year.

Gas, electricity and lightning conductor safety certificates are all up to date, as is the church's Public Liability Insurance.

The full report is available from the Churchwardens.

Liz Deller & Jennifer Pearce (Churchwardens); Paul Thompson (Deputy Churchwarden)

February 2019

## **Treasurer's Report**

Financial statements and arrangements to follow.

## **PCC Report 2019**

The All Saints Parochial Church Council met eight times during the year following the 2018 APCM (May 2018-March 2019). There are **15** elected and co-opted members and **12** ex officio members including the clergy, wardens and Deanery Synod representatives. The average attendance at meetings was **13**. The PCC's regular business includes the monitoring of the Church's finances, reviewing Church life and events, health and safety issues, including safeguarding, and preparing for forthcoming services and other events. The work of the PCC is greatly assisted by the appointment of sub-committees to look in detail at particular issues: in addition to the Stewardship Planning Group and the environmental sub-committee there is a sub-committee to help support All Saints social media presence and a Finance sub-committee to provide support to the Treasurer in his or her day-to-day work and also a forum in which related issues can be discussed.

Isabel Isaacson

## **Good Causes 2019**

This year we continued to support our chosen good cause.

We were able to give each organisation £1,000. The total amount of £8,000 is made up of £7,000 from Church funds and £1,000 from the successful Christmas Tree Festival.

We have had letters of appreciation from the eight organisations:

**Kingston Welcare:** 'will enable us to provide services for young families in Kingston'

**Momentum:** 'will help us to support children and their families across Surrey who are faced with the diagnosis of cancer or a life-limiting illness'

**Royal National Lifeboat Institution:** ‘helping to support our work in making Kingston Riverside a safer place

**Kingston Branch, Samaritans:** ‘to continue our vital work in Kingston’

**Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness:** ‘our work with the homeless in Kingston depends heavily on the support of local churches and schools’

**Medicines sans Frontières:** ‘helping us to provide medical aid where it is most needed in the world’

**Refugee Action Kingston:** ‘please extend our gratitude to your congregation, this donation will contribute to our work with refugees and asylum seekers living in Kingston’

**World Vision:** ‘Your support and prayers are such a blessing, thank you for your generosity. Everyday we bring real hope to vulnerable children in the worlds hardest places as a sign of God’s unconditional love.’

Jennifer Pearce  
8 March 2019

### **Vergers Report April 2019**

The vergers are a friendly and dedicated group of people who have volunteered to welcome visitors into our beautiful church . The café offers a welcome but it is the vergers who have the time to give a personal welcome and offer information.

If you like meeting people it can be a very enjoyable and rewarding occupation . there is plenty of information available and we have a very good short video of the history of the church .

Visitors come in all varieties and for various reasons . Some like a chat , others do their own thing , others are just using the short cut from John Lewis to the Market Place .

Having a verger in church to alert visitors of the desirability of quiet when a weekday service is taking place can be invaluable . We aim to cover from 10am – 4pm every weekday and Bank holidays and Sundays from 12-5.30m . Usually in 2 hour sessions but any help is welcome . So please take the time to consider whether this could be a way you can help as we are struggling to cover every day especially Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons . Perhaps you could do a Sunday from 4-5.30 pm and stay on for Evensong ?

Most vergers make a commitment for a regular slot but we have “occasional “ vergers who fill in when they are available . How about “ shadowing “ a verger to see if you like it ?

Rosemary Gout

## **Christian Aid**

The Church has continued to support Christian Aid through fund-raising and in other ways. Collectors from All Saints raised £1900 in the house-to-house collections during May's CA Week, and five-eighths of this was gift aided, adding an extra £300 to the total. Collections at the CA Service held at All Saints, during the week at Kingston railway station, and from a collection tin on the café counter boosted the total by almost £700. Church members also helped to support the Market Stall at the East Surrey Gates on 19 May, fielded two teams in the Quiz Aid held at the URC in September, and collected for CA while singing carols in Clarence Street in December. We are grateful to everyone for their involvement and contributions

Ian Williamson and Keith Long

## **Little Saints**

The number of families coming to Little Saints continues to grow and at some sessions recently there have been over 20 families present. The children come with mothers, fathers, grandparents, nannies or carers and families welcome the fact that Little Saints is a drop-in and they can come for a short while or for the full two hours, and also when it fits in with their other commitments. As the children's area space usually decreases when Cards for Good Causes is in the church, a new carpet was bought so it could expand towards the café. This carpet is now incorporated into the area and is fully utilised. A buggy park has also been set up (Thank you, Liz). While I was temporarily out of action Yasko Rousseau looked after the Friday group and Pippa Joiner the Tuesday group and I should like to thank them enormously.

Ann Cornick

## **All Saints Book Group**

There are usually six of us at our meetings on the fourth Sunday of the month in the church. This year we have welcomed several new people to the group. The Church Times choice of books is wide-ranging and the articles about the book choice interesting and illuminating. We find though sometimes that the questions set by the paper are convoluted but we

muddle our way through and have some excellent discussions. This year we have particularly enjoyed *The Sixteen Trees of the Somme* by Lars Mytting. We have also read the classic *Precious Bane* by Mary Webb and *My Name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Polok and the recently published *The Librarian* by Salley Vickers and *The Huntingfield Paintress* by Pamela Holmes. The latter has us all planning trips to visit Huntingfield Church and wonder at the ceiling painted over seven years by the then vicar's wife in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Ann Cornick

### **English Conversation**

For a year now we have been holding once a month sessions for people who want to practise their English. We noticed that more people with limited English were coming into the church. When I volunteered with Learn English at Home I realised that it is often very difficult for people from elsewhere to find British born people, other than their teachers, to talk to in English. At our meeting in January we met with people with varying standards of English from 5 or 6 countries. We talk about everything; families, home countries, shopping, Christmas, children, traditions, St David's Day, recipes and many other topics. We usually meet on the last Friday of the month from 12noon till 2pm. I am very grateful for to help given by my fellow conversationalists, William, Sandy, Barbara and Mike.

Ann Cornick

### **Annual Safeguarding Report to PCC 2019**

The single Church of England safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults is "Promoting a Safer Church" which came in force in 2017. All Saints continue to review its Safeguarding processes in light of this policy to ensure full compliance. This policy must be reviewed and adopted by the PCC annually. The PCC must also adopt the "Reporting of Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission" procedure by 30 May 2019. This means that the PCC need to pass a resolution to delegate the responsibility for preparing Safeguarding Serious incident reports to the DSA and for submitting them to the Diocesan Secretary.

Risk Assessments continue to be carried out annually as well as a Safeguarding audit. As a result of the last safeguarding audit, posters have been added to the back of the church toilets to increase awareness of organisations that can provide support to people in need. DBS checks continue to be recorded electronically on a shared electronic platform that only

4 people have access to. This also records when DBS are due for renewal (they expire after 5 years) to ensure these are renewed timely. The current groups of volunteers that are DBS checked in the Church are those that volunteer for the Children's Workshops, Choir Supervisors, Vergers, the person in charge of the Bell Ringers, Church Wardens, the Parish Safeguarding Officers and the Heritage & Learning volunteers. There is also an electronic record of Safeguarding training (which is password protected) to ensure it is recorded who has completed the relevant training and when refreshers are due (every 3 years).

Amanda Bullen

Parish Safeguarding Officer

### **Heritage Activities**

Pippa Joiner started as the Learning and Engagement officer in September 2018. She has had a busy six months with the delivery Heritage activities and supporting the work of the dedicated team of Volunteer Leaders.

Schools activities have been very successful and we welcomed 274 pupils in Autumn and Spring terms, running a total of 13 workshops.

We have held 9 family events for 'Thumbs Up It's Thursday' over the school holidays, with over 1,200 participants.

We have lots of exciting plans for 2019. These include launching a new Early Years workshop working in partnership with Story Stalks and running a lecture series programme over the summer.

2019 will also see a 'pop up shop' selling a small selection of products that enhance the interpretation and appreciation of All Saints Church and enable people to support us. Pippa will also be assisting with future development plans to return the Coronation Stone to a place of prominence in the grounds of All Saints.

This work would not be possible without the help of the wonderful volunteers who have supported Pippa on busy event days and with the development work.

### **KNIT FOR THE NEEDY**

Once again we are pleased to report that the Knitting Circle continues to flourish. Visitors to the church often express interest in the work and some mention the possibility of introducing a circle in their own churches. Beginners or non-knitters need not hesitate to join us as skilled, experienced knitters are on hand to instruct and explain and our new knitters make steady progress and produce delightful items.

Since the last report we have sent to **MALAWI**: 36 large blankets & 25 small lap blankets in a variety of colours and patterns and 53 cot blankets. We continue to provide simple T-shirts large, medium and small (45) and hats (72) to suit both girls and boys in different sizes. We have sent: 64 "fish & chip" sets for the new born and very small babies. These babies are called "fish & chip" babies *because their mothers are so poor that they have to wrap the babies up in newspaper when they take them home from the hospital.* To the afore-mentioned we can add: 7 baby bonnets and 9 pairs of booties along with 4 large cardigans and 23 little cardigans, 4 hat and jumper sets, 2 shawls and 7 scarves. These blankets and garments provide much needed warmth and comfort particularly during cold nights and winters. Another addition to our range is 26 little teddies (children need cuddly toys). **The costs of shipment are very high.**

There is also a continual need for **traditional English manual carpentry tools** so the men can train in this field and have a useful trade which will provide independence for them and their families.

The recently opened centre to **train ladies as dressmakers** so they have a skill with which to earn their living has been a success and the first group of ladies recently left with their sewing machines. They are already earning and able to assist with providing for their families. As a group we have been pleased to provide many, many boxes of **haberdashery items** - scissors, needles, reels of cotton, ribbons, thimbles, pins, tape and bias binding and so forth. **Two more manual sewing machines** (making a total of four) have been delivered to the office in Surbiton and they will go out in the next container.

There has been a generous response to the request for **writing materials of all sorts for the children**: pencils, coloured crayons, drawing and colouring books, educational games books, erasers, pencil sharpeners and so forth.

**Toiletries and medical items** are always useful. As are suitcases which are used to carry items out to Malawi and then given to the students when they go away to school or higher education for their possessions.

**The quantity donated has been amazing and a big thank you is due to the ladies for all these items.**

Knitted flowers have been provided for the Easter decorations in All Saints Church.

At the beginning of the Centenary Commemoration of the First World War members knitted **many, many poppies** in different sizes and styles and this year these were once again displayed around and beneath the War Memorial in the church. Once again in December we took part in the **Christmas tree festival in All Saints Church** with many knitted decorations including stars, garlands, toys and animals.

The Circle meets on Tuesday between 9.45 am and 11.45 am approximately. At present we have 28 members and the average weekly attendance continues between 14 and 18.

Any donations of wool would be gratefully received and any new members, experienced knitters or beginners, warmly welcomed. As you will see all donations will be used to alleviate the difficulties and suffering of very needy people.

Catherine  
Fennemore

## **Kingston upon Thames Tower Captain's Report 2018**

### **Ringling:**

We ring every Sunday morning and evening and quite often manage to ring all 12 bells with our own band. Practices are generally well attended and tend to focus on our learners, but we try not to forget the experienced ringers as well. We have continued to ring quarter peals for evensong at least once per month.

As well as local visitors and ringers from Leicester, Bristol, Birmingham, Brecon, Mold, Stratford, Rochester and Exeter, we had international visitors from Sydney, Toronto and Washington Cathedral.

Ringling Remembers was designed to recruit at least 1,400 new ringers in memory of 1,400 ringers lost in the first world war. It has been remarkably successful, over 2,700 people signed up for potential lessons. We have welcomed a large number of people in Kingston for taster sessions and initial lessons, but inevitably several of them have dropped out when they realise ringling is harder than it looks and needs a great deal of commitment to become proficient and be a regular service ringer, especially at 8.30am! Kate and I have also helped train ringers for other towers.

We are delighted that Gavin, So-Shan and John have passed their training with flying colours and have been warmly welcomed into our band. We also warmly welcome Daniel Kelly who moved to Kingston from Peterborough and has become a regular member of the band.

The ringers rang for and attended the funeral of Steve Rata, a former ringer at Kingston. Sadly Peter Molony got a new job in Sweden and Rob Hornby seems to have disappeared out of ringling.

### **Outings:**

The ringers had a very good weekend in Somerset, ringling at Bridgwater on the Friday and a number of towers on the Saturday including Wiveliscombe and Milverton. The highlight was ringling on the lovely new 12 in the magnificent tower at St Mary Magdalene Taunton on the Sunday. The 2019 outing will be a day outing to Cheltenham including the new 12 at the Minster.

## Children's Workshop

We have had a very positive and active year of children's workshop.

Attendance is flourishing with a number of long standing families continuing to join us regularly as well as some new families joining both the younger group (children aged 5 and below) and the older group (5+ years) within the last year. Between the two groups there are on an average week (excluding the school summer holidays) 14 children joining in the activities, though on occasion there has been up to 26 children. We have around 14 families whose children come to the workshops at least once a month.

We have in a place a very strong and committed team of workshop leaders for both the younger and older group The children's workshop at All Saints continues to grow and flourish.

Attendance is steadily growing and we estimate that between the older (5+ years) and younger (5 and under) groups, in the region of 40 children now attend regularly.

We have in a place a very strong and committed team of workshop leaders for both the younger and older group workshops, who continue to bring the teachings of Jesus and the love of God to our children.

The Scripture Union syllabus continues to work well for both groups and provides our leaders with lots of inspiration and ideas on which to base each session. We have developed our workshops further with the introduction of singing time. Both groups gather together in the choir vestry at the start of workshop for a short prayer, followed by group singing. We now have 3 songs in our repertoire, which the children partake in enthusiastically with lots of actions. The two groups then split for age appropriate teaching and activities.

The children's involvement in the main service continues to develop. Each week two children are nominated to take the collection from workshop and join the main offertory procession. They really enjoy this responsibility and the feeling of being a part of the main service.

Throughout the last year the children have had the opportunity to be involved in the wider Church life. This has included reading at family, Advent and Christmas services and designing decorations for our tree at the Christmas Tree Festival.

We also have plans for a social gathering of ASK young families at Canbury Pavilion later this year.

As ever, a huge thank you to all our wonderful workshop leaders who work so hard each week and to all our parents and families for their commitment and support.

Susannah Acland

## **Flower Team**

Flower Arrangers

The flower team continues to enjoy its work in spite of the decreasing numbers and increasing ages of its members! We are particularly grateful to Vi Benjamin for her tireless work collecting cash donations from you all for the flowers, which this year raised £540 and of course grateful to you all for your contribution. Flowers are expensive and we couldn't manage without your help.

We have also arranged flowers for several weddings this last year where we normally add 50% to the cost of the flowers for Church funds, still giving the couple a great bargain compared to commercial florist prices and if we may modestly say this, the brides have expressed delight at our efforts.

We welcome new volunteers, a larger team would enable us to have flowers in church more often than at present. If you or someone you know would like to help please speak to us.

Faith Macdonald and Sandy Cragg

## **Listening**

All Saints Listening Service

The Listening Service has been operating now for 16 years when we started with a team of 12 people on 2 mornings per week and now we function on 6 mornings a week with a team of 29 trained volunteers. 17 worship regularly at All Saints at one or other of our services: - Sunday 8am, Sunday Evensong, the midweek Eucharists as well as Sunday 9.30. The other 12 have come across the service either through coming into the church for a coffee or by word of mouth and have applied to help. Not all are Christians – indeed we are delighted that we now have one Muslim listener – but all support our ethos of compassion and non-judgment as we offer our service to any and all who come into our church. We do not give advice, we just listen.

During the last year we ran 2 training courses to welcome 8 new listeners. A new and very successful initiative has been to train listeners from Christchurch New Malden alongside our own as they are setting up a Listening Service there and we also have several people on the books waiting for the next course so we hope the team will grow even larger over the next year.

Listeners hear all kinds of problems and in the last year over 300 people have brought their issues to them. Many others – well over 1,000 – have been welcomed with friendly conversation, which can mean an enormous amount to people who are lonely and otherwise have little or no human contact.

Anyone wanting to consider becoming a listener is welcome to talk to me about what is involved.

Sandy Cragg