

Parish of Yeovil with Kingston Pitney

Annual Report of St. John the Baptist Church for the Year ended 31st December 2012

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Appendix – Summary of St. John's Annual Accounts

Parish of Yeovil with Kingston Pitney

Annual Report of St. John the Baptist Church for the Year ended 31st December 2012

Administration Information

St. John's Church is situated in the centre of Yeovil and has a daughter church St. Andrew's which is about 1 mile from the centre. They are part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Church Street, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 1HE. This report covers the activities of St. John's Church and the Parish activities.

St. Andrew's Church has produced their own report covering their own domestic issues.

The Parochial Church Council is registered under the Charity Commission, registration number 1134345.

The PCC comprises members of the Church Council's for each church together with the Incumbent, Readers, Wardens and elected representatives to the Deanery Synod.

The following members have served on the PCC during the last year.

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Incumbent | The Revd James Dudley-Smith | Chairman |
| Curate | Revd Tim Lewis | |
| Readers | Beth Farrington | |
| | Ted King | |
| | Keith Stevens | |
| | David Upton | |
| Representatives on the Deanery Synod | Rob Dean | |
| | Nick Scorer | |
| | Anne Wicks | |
| Member of General Synod | Edward Armitstead | |
| Wardens | Phil Juggins | St. John's |
| | Helen Peace | |
| | Mike Streatfeild – Deputy Warden | |
| | Robert Warr – Deputy Warden | |
| | David Maynard-Griffin | St. Andrew's |
| | Les Jackson – Deputy Warden | |
| | Jenny Jones – Deputy Warden | |
| Elected Members | Eddie Brooks | St John's |
| | Ros Bush | |
| | Gordon Crawford | |
| | Ian Croxford | |
| | Roger Fox | |
| | Iain Maitland | |
| | David Matthew | |
| | Joy Neville | |
| | Keith Ovenden | |
| | David Preston | |
| | Paula Rollason | |
| | Jenny Salberg | |
| | Anne Wicks | |
| | Margaret Akerman | St Andrew's |
| | Ron Blake | |
| | Bridget Handcock | |
| | John Handcock | |
| | Jean Kirtland | |

Rachael Maynard-Griffin
Ruth Preston
Mike Rimmington
Bill Solley
Betty Sweet

Co-opted Members John Brookes – Secretary
Simon Corner – Youth Minister
Kath Upton – Parish Administrator
Martin Warr – Treasurer

St. John's

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to join the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Each church is managed by a Church Council elected at their AGM who have prime responsibility for managing the affairs of their church. The two Church Councils come together to form the PCC.

Objectives and Activities

St. John's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Revd James Dudley-Smith in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for the St. John's Schoolrooms and St. Andrew's Church Hall.

Achievements and Performance

This report covers the activities of St. John's Church as St. Andrew's Church produces their own report.

2012 has continued to be a year of good progress under James Dudley-Smith's leadership with a significant contribution from our curate Tim Lewis who was priested in June.

I particularly commend the Church Wardens' report as a very positive statement of all that is happening in St. John's.

The financial affairs of the church are in good order and we finished the year with a small surplus on the general fund. However the size of the Parish Share paid to the Diocese each year is a cause for concern as we will be paying £81,813 in 2014. This is nearly 60% of our income and over £6 per week for every person on the electoral roll. Including St. Andrew's the parish will be paying over £100,000.

The restoration of the tower continues to be a major concern and at an estimated £300,000 is an enormous sum for a church with about 250 regular worshippers. We await the outcome of our application for a significant grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund as without this it will be extremely difficult to move forward on this project. St. John's is an important community building whose photograph is invariably used in any publicity about the town and should receive proper support from the community. Whilst it is important that we keep the building in good order the mission of our church is to preach the gospel and reach out to a largely unchurched community.

The congregations at our services are increasing and the 6.30pm@St. John's is now an established part of our worship with a good size congregation coming from a wide geographical area.

Our youth activities are developing well with a thriving Sunday school and Holiday club. We held a very successful Parish Weekend away at Heatree in September when over 100 church members enjoyed good food, good teaching and worship, good social activities and good fellowship in a beautiful setting.

The fellowship groups are going well and the 18 – 30 plus group is developing with new friendships being made. A new group, Tiny Toes, was started in January and is already a success with almost the maximum numbers of Mums and babies attending for the space available.

Christians Against Poverty is providing a vital service for the increasing number of people having problems with unmanageable debt. Some have already become debt free and have accepted Jesus into their lives and are attending church services.

Work has already started in planning for our parish mission from 10th to 16th November 2014. There will be opportunities in 2013 for all of us to get involved and to start preparing ourselves to reach out to Yeovil next year.

Please take time to read the whole report as there is a tremendous amount going on in the life of the church. We are blessed by the number of people who want to get involved but we do need more and it is only by volunteering and meeting with other Christians that we become a real community of Christians serving Christ in Yeovil.

John Brookes – PCC Secretary

Report on the PCC Meetings

Domestic church issues are generally dealt with by each Church Council whereas wider church issues are dealt with at PCC meetings. The PCC met on 2 occasions during the year and all meetings were well attended. The minutes of all PCC and Church Council Meetings can be viewed on the St. John's parish web site. Every PCC meeting receives feedback from Church Council meetings, the Deanery Synod and the Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP).

We discussed the 5th Sunday 10.30am service at St. John's when we are joined by St. Andrew's congregation. However it was recognised that the number attending from St. Andrew's was generally low due mainly to mobility problems. It was suggested that occasionally we have the 5th Sunday service at St. Andrew's however due to the number of visitors coming to St. John's this was thought to be impractical. It was agreed that St. Andrew's should discuss this at their church council meeting.

At our last meeting David Matthew demonstrated a new St. John's web site that he had developed. It can be found at www.sjyeovil.org.uk and although primarily aimed at St. John's, St. Andrew's can have their own pages.

John Brookes – PCC Secretary

Report on St. John's Church Council Meetings

There were four meetings during the year and all meetings were well attended. The full minutes of all Church Council meetings can be viewed on the church web site. Apart from routine business on finance, services and fabric matters, much of which is covered in other sections of this annual report the following items were discussed.

The Government proposal to redefine marriage to allow same sex marriages was discussed at length and whilst the views of the church council were not unanimous we were all encouraged to write to our member of parliament David Laws expressing our views. It was very evident from replies received from David Laws and The Minister for Equalities, Lyn Featherstone that they did not agree with our views. In particular David Laws said that the most important part of Christian teaching is that we should love each other as ourselves and Lyn Featherstone said that the proposal was that there should be a civil marriage and a religious marriage and no church would face a legal challenge for failing to perform a marriage of same sex couples. David Laws offered to come and meet the Church Council but it was decided that there would be little point in this.

The desirability of removing the pews was discussed. The general feeling was that this would be a good thing and would offer much greater flexibility to use the church in more creative ways. However the cost was a major consideration and with the tower project pending it was agreed that it was unlikely that we could go ahead in the foreseeable future. However it was agreed to look at other churches who had removed their pews and the feasibility of the project without incurring any costs.

We agreed to have a parish mission in 2014 and Roger Carswell has been booked for a mission from 10th to 16th November 2014 and a small working group led by Tim Lewis has been set up.

We discussed the possibility of having another paid member of the staff. The cost was a major consideration and it was agreed that we would look into the possibility of having an apprentice to work in the parish for one or two years from September 2013 helping within various areas of local ministry.

The desirability of having a bookstall in the church was discussed and subject to finding someone to run it, it should happen later in this year.

The format and content of the All Age Worship service on the first Sunday of each month was discussed. James said that it was the hardest service to lead and do well but many thought that it was invaluable to have a service where all the family are together. It was agreed that all leaders need to get together to evaluate the service.

We were asked to discuss and vote on a document issued by the Diocese entitled Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Guidelines for Parishes. Various views were expressed on why we need such a document and upon a vote being taken 7 voted for the document with 8 against and there were 5 abstentions and therefore the motion was lost.

The future of the Friends of St. John's was discussed and it was accepted that if the appeal for the tower goes ahead then perhaps the Friends should reduce their level of activity but it would be an opportunity to revive it once the tower has been completed.

St. John's Wardens Report

A year of Growth! In a world where the UK economy stubbornly refuses to grow and the church in this country is widely reported as shrinking, we at St John's have Growth. Every year we provide statistics to the Diocese about the numbers of people attending our services. If we look at the average total (adults and children) attending on Sundays (counted in October) for 2010 and then 2011, we find a growth of 19%. If we look for 2011 and then 2012 we find a growth of 17%. The Chancellor would love these to be his figures! But what does growth really mean? Years ago there was a book about the work of God called "My Father is the Gardener". In the winter our gardens often look dead, but when we see growth again we know they are ALIVE. At St John's we are not really concerned about the numbers, we are concerned about LIFE, bringing the life in its fullness that Jesus promises and enables us to have through his death and resurrection. So this report rejoices in the signs of life rather than the numbers (which are themselves signs of life too). We have so much to be grateful to God for, as his Holy Spirit works in His Church.

Many of the exciting signs of life are reported elsewhere in this Annual Report, so to summarise just some here:

- Our Sunday evening service, 6.30@St John's, has become a well-established part of our life, well-attended, drawing in new people and providing its own special informal blend of great worship and inspiring teaching.
- Our CAP centre (Christians Against Poverty) is also now well-established and reaches out with the love of God to restore people suffering from debt, both financially and spiritually.
- We enjoyed our Church Weekend Away in September (held every two years), a time of blessing from fellowship, teaching and worship and with a very successful new venue.
- We continue to pray together for our churches, our community and our world at our Parish Prayer Meeting '1st Wednesday' each month.
- Our Fellowship Groups provide havens of God's love and support as we meet regularly to learn and pray together.
- We have a new group for new mothers and their babies – Tiny Toes.
- We are now looking forward to our Parish Mission in November 2014.
- Holiday Club 2012 even brought the sun out, as we provided fun and teaching to a horde of children!
- We continue to pray for and support our mission partners – Hilary and Marc Deneufchatel in Benin, Ruth Hulser in Tanzania and Muyunda in Zambia and Malawi.
- We had a budget which more than balanced, despite the recession...
- As part of our calling to be *for Christ in the heart of Yeovil*, we have reached out to the community through our special services, from the Civic Service in the Summer through Remembrance Day and the Hospice and Hospital services in the Autumn to the busy schedule of school carol services and our own busy Christmas programme.
- Our Youth Minister Simon continues to be a blessing to the young people of St John's and also the wider community through his work in schools and the "Unite" events with other churches.
- Our curate managed to morph from Father Christmas to Jesus on Christmas day, but

resisted the temptation to use a zip-wire from the balcony! Tim continues to surprise and inspire us!

- Immense thanks are due as always to James for his leadership, care and teaching ministry to us.

As this life from God flows through us, we become the Body of Christ, with (as Paul says in the Bible) every part called to take up its role, whether more visible or behind the scenes. So a great big Thank You is appropriate from the Wardens on behalf of us all to all who play their part in the church at St John's. From flowers to bells, finances to music, cleaning to praying, puppets to welcoming and many more things besides, we give thanks for your work. We remember particularly our Administrator, Kath and our Verger, Bob, plus our organist Ray Willis and our Music Group, our Readers and Service Leaders. Special thanks too, to Robert Warr, who is standing down after 3 years of faithful and diligent service as a Deputy Warden.

We have challenges ahead, such as the Tower work and the bigger picture of our part in sharing the message of God's love in a "post-Christian" society, but we give enormous thanks to our God for all that has gone before and seek to continue, strengthened by Him, to fulfill all that He has called us to become and do.

Phil Juggins and Helen Peace

Finance Report – Accounts to December 31st 2012

The accounts for the year to December 31st 2012 were discussed at the Church Committee meeting in January and they reflect continuing stability in the state of our funds due to the commitment of our regular givers, the generosity of ad-hoc donors, and a business-like approach to the control of expenditure.

General Fund - As explained in previous years, this account measures our success, or otherwise, in meeting the operating expenses of our church, utilising our routine church income derived from giving, income tax recoveries and a modest amount of investment interest.

2012 - The Budget set for 2012 reflected a small deficit of (**£1,202**) in the expectation that this would be bettered and that our Charitable giving target of **£13,250** would be met in full. This was, in effect, a wake-up call which made it clear that our mission giving, church growth aspirations and associated expenditure were not matched by our income. Our optimism that a surplus would be achieved and that outward giving levels could be maintained was well founded. The General Fund showed a surplus for 2012 of **£2,892, £4,094** greater than the budget.

Annual Income of **£138,108** reflected an increase, over budget of **£3,455** and expenditure of **£135,216**, which was almost exactly in line with budget, enabled an INCREASE in outgoing Charitable donations from the budget of **£13,250 to £13,400**. This was a modest increase but must be set against previous years where this budget has been under threat.

The increases and decreases in other expenditure headings resulted in a broadly neutral result but expenditure is dominated by our Diocesan contribution of £79,222 which is scheduled to increase further to £81,913 in 2013.

General Fund – Budget for 2013 - The Budget for 2013 shows a break-even situation with income levels increasing by 2.8% which should allow us to meet the running costs of the

church and Diocese and, in addition, donate £13,500 to charity. Special collections in aid of charities will be passed on as additional giving.

Rev. Tim Lewis's support costs of approximately £1,900 for a full year will continue to be a charge on our General Fund with St. John's bearing this cost in full.

The Diocesan Quota (Parish Share) for 2013 will be £81,913, an increase of 3.4%.

James continues to enjoy the very welcome support of Tim as his curate-in-training at no additional charge to the parish beyond the support costs mentioned above.

In Conclusion -We go forward with renewed faith and confidence but, for the record, the paragraph below repeats our urgent desire to maximise tax-efficient giving receipts.

*Undoubtedly, we have yet to convince all those who **could** that they **should** utilise Gift Aid to the full through the Yellow envelope scheme. This is a simple and completely trouble-free means of donating more to the church at no cost to the individual. The only rule is that the giver needs to be a tax payer and to have paid tax equal to the amount reclaimable on their giving.*

Fabric & Fabric Investment Funds -These Funds represent the operating and investment elements of our reserve account established in order to meet the more significant non-recurring cost of Fabric maintenance and repair costs.

During 2012 the investment return was very modest - £867.

Support for the fund was as under:-

Sundry donations - £602

Income Tax recoveries - £152

Other Income – Insurance claims - £3,822

Expenditure on external work, covered in part by insurance, totalled £14,643, the major elements of which were:-

Replacement of the flagpole, covered by insurance - £1,447

Architect's fees - £2,565

Electrical Update - £2,952

Audio/visual system update - £3,272

Window Repairs - £2,493

Stonework repairs - £597

Boiler repairs - £991

The Fund balances at year-end 2012 were £76,955.

Restoration Fund - This major Restricted reserve fund was reactivated in 2012 to receive donations and bear the initial costs of the Tower restoration.

The Fund balance at 31st December 2012 was £6,280.

School Rooms Fund - This Designated fund reflects the operating income and expenditure of the facility. It does not bear the cost of youth activities.

During the year, lettings amounted to £6,662 and investment interest to £101 against which was set operating costs of (£6,625) resulting in a surplus for the year of £256.

The balance of the costs of flooring improvements and the like will be a charge in 2013 accounts.

The School Rooms fund balance at 31st December 2012 was £12,085.

Youth Minister Fund - This Designated fund bears the gross employment costs of the Youth Minister and the expenses of office associated with that post. The fund was launched by

initial giving pledges in the year leading up to the appointment of Simon Corner and by a Diocesan grants over 3 years which have now ceased.

The costs borne by the fund during 2012 amounted to £31,630 and the income for the year was £26,617, the fund reduction being (£5,013) net.

At the end of 2011, and continuing into 2012, the Rector launched an initiative to raise the profile of the Youth Minister's activity and the funding of Simon's work. Future funding levels are satisfactory but the fund will diminish year on year unless a new source of grant funding can be found to match the Diocesan support.

The fund balance at the year-end was £23,734.

Tom Setter Belfry Fund - This Restricted reserve fund reduced during the year by (£806) as preliminary costs were met by the fund, the balance of which is now £63,418.

Roger Fox, the Captain of the Bell Tower, is proceeding apace with plans for the enhancement of the bell facility.

St. John's Organ Fund - The year-end balance of this Designated fund is £6,738. The fund reduced during the year by £413 net due to an initial deposit of £500 paid on a second-hand support organ which is being procured as a practical enhancement to our musical instrumentation and as support for our most important Harrison pipe organ which is both aged and infirm!

It is hoped that the cost of the new instrument, which is due to be delivered in April 2013 will be met by the Organ fund in 2013.

St. John's Bellringers' Investment fund - The year-end balance on this fund was £9,044. Investment interest will accrue in 2013 on maturity of a Nat West Bank investment bond.

St. John's Flower Guild Investment Fund - The year-end balance on this fund was £3,174 the balance having reduced by (£711) during the year. The fund bears the cost of flowers and receives the fee income associated with the provision of that service by volunteers.

St. John's Choir & Music Group Fund - The balance on this account at 31st December 2012 was £464, further instrumentation having been purchased during the year, covered wholly by donations.

Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund - The balance at 31st December 2012 of £999 reflects modest expenditure of (£223) and a transfer of £500 from General Fund against future costs of parish computer equipment.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Fund - This fund supports the important new initiative launched during 2011 and carried forward by Ian & Francis Croxford and their team.

The Fund is dependent for its income on a small group of regular and committed donors. The continuation of this initiative is wholly dependent on an increase in this small group of donors because there is no direct subsidy from the church General Fund. However a donation of £900 was made to the fund as part of the Charitable Donations for the year.

The outgoings of the fund are a regular monthly payment of £625 to the national C.A.P. Organisation plus local expenditure incurred by the support team.

Income for the year was £13,979, Outgoings were (£11,404) and the balance at 31st December 2012 was £7,368,

Total Reserves - Reserves in total amount to £227,850.

These funds are invested as shown on the Disposition of Funds Statement as at 31st December 2012

J. M. Warr ACMA, CGMA, – Hon. Treasurer

Gift Aid/Tax Recovery and Stewardship

First of all, **many thanks** to those who currently support St John's through the regular giving systems: weekly envelopes and standing orders. Most of these folk have enabled us to reclaim tax on their giving via the Gift Aid scheme. The Gift Aid scheme allowed us this year to recover about £25,000 towards the £140,000 it costs to keep St John's in business, so you can see how valuable it is.

It is surprisingly easy to overlook the importance of reviewing the church's needs in relation to our own circumstances. The regular giving schemes are much more value to us than "loose cash in the plate" for several reasons:

By having a set of Weekly Envelopes which you can fill each week, even if you are unable get to church every week, assures us of a predictable income.

The same goes for Standing Orders which are more convenient, too.

If you are a taxpayer, by signing a Gift Aid declaration we can obtain a refund of the tax you have paid on the amount you give. That now makes each £1 worth £1.25 to us. Surely it is sensible to do this if you are a taxpayer - at no cost to you.

Tax cannot be recovered on the "loose cash in the plate"

We realise that there must be some people for whom these arrangements would not be appropriate. The church exists to **serve all**, not just those who can afford to pay for it. Nevertheless I feel sure there are quite a few who attend our church regularly for whom this particular penny has not dropped!

A number of new folk have joined the scheme during 2012 and this is very encouraging.

Then there are the Yellow Envelopes which can be found in the pews, service books etc. These are really for visitors who would like to help us through Gift Aid, or for a one-off response to special appeals.

There are many other ways in which we can benefit from your generosity. Special one-off donations, legacies and so on. Please speak to me about any of these if you would like to know more.

The wording on Gift Aid Declarations has been revised by the Tax authorities. All existing donors have been sent a copy of the new form to complete, but a few have still not returned them to me. Please ensure that if you have one to return, to do it as soon as possible.

Please be assured that all this is managed with the utmost confidentiality which I, Shirley Lee (envelopes secretary) and our Church Treasurer have been involved in for over 30 years!

Roger Fox. Gift Aid and Tax Recovery Officer

Christian Stewardship Envelopes

The envelopes for weekly giving are used by 70 people. Envelopes are also used by anyone who wishes to make a separate contribution towards funding the youth minister. Anyone who would like to have a set of envelopes please contact me on 01935 – 427070. I would always be happy to supply them.

Shirley Lee

St. John's Fabric Report

The Tower - The Tower continues to crumble and present a danger from falling masonry. The temporary safety fence around it is now in its fourth year, after a major renovation last year. It has continued to need running repairs due to unwanted attention. The refurbishment of the tower itself is our major fabric need currently, with an estimated cost of around £300,000. Hoping to obtain up to half of this from a grant, we applied to English Heritage (EH) in June 2012 but unfortunately our application was rejected.

The rejection by EH of our application for funding led to a need for evaluating our future strategy for funding of the Tower repairs, in the context of a number of other large proposed Fabric projects. These were: Enhancement of the bells; Refurbishment of the organ; Removal of the pews. A Sub-Committee meeting was held in October to define recommendations for the way forward, for the Church Council.

The church architect, John Beauchamp, believed our tower application was “very good” but that EH had insufficient budget left to provide a grant. EH Bristol were surprised we were turned down. This was the last year for funding from EH. From February 2013, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will be responsible for grants, with four deadlines per year for applications. The Church Council agreed that we still have a good case to pursue funding for the tower and should re-submit our application, to the HLF, in the Spring. For the tower to be left crumbling would be inconsistent with our desire to be a living growing church in the centre of Yeovil. We also expect to see visible benefit from the work, with the results giving the right “message” of life and growth to the town. If our application is successful, it will only delay the original schedule by 6 months, which should mean the work is completed by the end of 2014. We have therefore gone ahead with our submission to the HLF.

The Bells - The project for refurbishment and enhancement of the bells is now about to start, following the granting of a Faculty by the Diocese in February. Estimated cost is £200k, of which a large proportion (£64k) is already in a ring-fenced fund and the remainder is available via known pledges. There will also be opportunities for others to give. This project is not linked to work on the tower, except for some work on louvres, which can be done later when scaffolding is up. Completion is expected by 2014.

The Organ - The organ could cease to function at any moment (tomorrow or in 10 years). Currently it is working very well and Ray says it is a joy to play! It is 100+ years old, the only original Harrison & Harrison organ by Cuthbert Harrison out of 5 existing. There is national and international interest in its preservation. The vulnerable parts are flexible leather elements in the bellows. The swell organ bellows has already been repaired, but other bellows are less accessible, with the master bellows requiring removal of the whole organ for access. Pipes have been collapsing and a service of the organ is needed.

The strategy we have agreed is to wait until the organ ceases to function, then rely on a long-term temporary digital organ while fund-raising and renovation takes place. Fund-raising is proposed to include holding organ recitals in the church with well-known organists who would draw in a regional audience. Total cost is expected to be up to £300k.

Although the expected cost of the temporary organ was £12,000 to £15,000, a suitable secondhand instrument has been located (cost around £6,000), permission to install it has been obtained by Ray from Archdeacon Nicola (assisted by the Diocese's other organ advisers) and the instrument has been delivered.

Pews Removal - Removal of the pews was proposed as a medium to long term aim by James at the 2012 AGM. It has great potential to enhance the use of the building. Chairs can be “arced” and the church building would be more welcoming and comfortable. As an example, at another church, removal is known to have cost £50,000. It has been agreed by the Church Council that feasibility of removal of the pews should be explored, including obtaining advice from the Diocese and communicating with churches who have successfully taken this step.

Practical issues to be dealt with at St John’s would include re-flooring and filling or bridging the cavity under the pews and re-arranging the heating system. The historic pew ends could be used to line the side walls. Archdeacon Nicola has been consulted and has offered to visit St John’s with a delegation from the Diocesan Advisory Committee to provide advice. It is early days for this project, which will not go ahead without full discussion of proposals when once they are clearly defined, and is unlikely to start until after the major expenditure on the tower.

The Quinquennial Survey - This survey takes place every five years (the meaning of quinquennial) and was performed by the Church Architect in April and May of 2012. It was also necessary to have the output from the survey to support our Tower grant application. The results indicated that the church building is overall in good condition, but identified a list of “things to be done”, split into headings of “Immediate”, “Within 18 Months” and “Before next Quinquennial”. Nearly all of the “Immediate” items (6 out of 7) relate to roof or guttering/downpipe repairs of one sort or another.

The Police Survey - We also had a visit in July from Beth Poole, Crime Reduction Officer from the Police, to take a look at the north side of the church, which has been the scene of a number of acts of vandalism, and discuss possible improvements to discourage such actions. A number of recommendations were provided from this survey, which we need to follow up.

The Fabric Committee - Over the years, a large proportion of the actions concerning fabric items has fallen to Roger Fox, for which we are very grateful. In order to share the load, the larger projects have recently been assigned to Project Managers (eg Rob Dean for the Tower, Roger for the Bells, Ray Willis for the Organ), but with Roger wanting to relinquish more of the day-to-day responsibility and with a “shopping list” of items from the Quinquennial and Police surveys to work through, a new Fabric Committee has been formed. This meets in the church every two months on a Saturday morning and is using a Project Plan spreadsheet to track all the items that need doing, large and small, and the target dates for accomplishing them. If you feel able to help in this area, please let Phil Juggins know.

Font Cover - Having decided it was not a good use of funds to carry out work required to renovate and certify the hoist mechanism of the (Edwardian) font cover, to meet Health and Safety obligations (the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998), the cover was taken down in early 2012 and displayed in the North Transept. We have received an extension of the licence from Archdeacon Nicola (to March 2014). It is planned to provide a plinth for the cover and a replacement (simple) font cover by the end of this period, as a permanent solution, which will require a Faculty from the Diocese.

Flagpole and Weather Vane - The Flagpole on top of the tower was destroyed in gales in January 2012 and the Weather Vane on the Tower is in poor condition, with a letter having fallen off recently! Thanks to Roger Fox, the Flagpole has been replaced, covered by an

Insurance Claim and with the policy excess kindly paid by a generous donor. A quote for refurbishment of the Weather Vane has been obtained, with the work due to start shortly.

Phil Juggins (Churchwarden)

Report on the Electoral Roll

At the time of writing this report there are 247 on the electoral roll. This is an increase of 39 compared with last year. The actual figure at the date of the AGM will be given at the meeting.

Kath Upton – Electoral Roll Officer

St. John's Sidepersons Report

Many thanks again are due from all of us to the welcoming Sunday morning (or evening) faces of St John's. To accomplish this role, which also includes shepherding the congregation at Communion, collecting the Offering and clearing up all those books and remaining pieces of paper at the end of the service in the midst of the tide of people, we currently have a team of 18 on the Sunday Morning rota, as well as other Welcomers for 6.30@St John's.

During the year we experimented (in September) with the Children and Youth team taking on the Sunday morning rota slots. It was great to have the young people doing this, but practicalities of having them available to cover the beginning and end of the service, and collection-taking, on a regular basis, were challenging. With many thanks to those who participated in the experiment, we have decided to involve the young people on an occasional basis, linked to when they are taking part in leading services, rather than as part of the rota.

This does mean we could do with some more volunteers for Sunday mornings. So PLEASE CONSIDER WHETHER YOU COULD HELP. Most of the members of the rota have been fulfilling this role for many years, so how about those of you who have not been at St John's so long?

Again, a really big THANK YOU to our friendly faithful sidesmen and women! We appreciate your ministry to us Sunday by Sunday.

Phil Juggins (Churchwarden)

St. John's Bell Ringers

Thanks are due to all our ringers for their commitment who turn up regularly about an hour before each main Sunday Morning Service to announce that the Church is in business. Most of them stay for the service, but there is no compulsion to do so. Now that there are services on Sunday evenings we shall have extra opportunities to ring. So as not to put too great demands on the ringers, it would be nice if some of that "new" congregation were to become ringers.

2012 provided several opportunities to join with the wider community in celebrating the Queen's visit to Yeovil in May, the passing through the town of the Olympic Torch, the Opening of the Games and of course the Diamond Jubilee. Ringing for these events, some of which were very early in the morning, was much appreciated by the townsfolk.

We also meet every Monday evening for practice. We are always on the lookout for recruits, from inside or outside the church family. I believe there is more scope for involving some of

the increasing number of youngsters in our Youth Ministry department: this is something they could do for St John's and themselves. It is the ultimate in team work and requires commitment. Please let us introduce your children or grandchildren to this absorbing hobby. A strict code of conduct is in place in regard to the Safeguarding of young ringers.

We have a remarkably fine ring of bells, but since the last major work was done on them in 1931 some improvements to the mechanism are overdue. There is a special (restricted) fund within the church accounts for this sort of work. The Church Council have agreed that this work can go ahead and we have just received the necessary Faculty from the Diocesan Chancellor. The work should be carried out in the second half of 2013. There will be some disruption at the base of the tower as the bells are taken in and brought back. The work will rehang the existing bells in modern fittings, and include the provision of 4 extra bells, to give us some lighter ones for the young learners and, as we now have as many lady ringers as men, they too would appreciate some lighter and easier-going bells. It would also give more flexibility over which combinations of bells we can ring. So as not to put an extra financial burden on the churches stretched finances, grants will be sought and donations for particular bells will be requested. You may consider a gift of a bell to commemorate a family member; it is a tradition in such cases for the names of donors to be cast into the bells. Please talk to me about this if it appeals to you.

The Clock - The clock is currently the property of the Yeovil Town Council. They have unfortunately decided not to spend any more money on it and have offered it to the church. Whether St John's takes it on is still to be decided. If it is to be retained and kept in action there will be some expense in adapting the striking hammers to the revised layout of the bells in the tower.

If anyone is interested in visiting the tower to see the bells, the ringers in action, or the clock mechanism, I am more than willing to arrange it.

Roger Fox, Tower Captain

St John's Schoolrooms

Our programme of updating and modernising the Schoolrooms has continued this year. The rest of the paintwork downstairs has been completed, and we employed a painter to do the task of the stairs and lobby. He also painted the cupboard and window sills and other bits of gloss work to the downstairs rooms.

A new cupboard has been put up on the wall of the downstairs kitchen, and this is now used by our Tiny Toes group for storage of their refreshments and mugs.

The old stained carpet has been completely removed from the downstairs and replaced with a superb laminate style 'kudos' flooring, which is much more functional for all the groups that use the rooms. The cost of this was over £3,000, which is substantial, but it is expected to last for the next 30 years!

The Schoolrooms have some regular bookings throughout the week, such as the Women's Institute who run a Friday market, music tuition, adult learning, a choral group, and others. Other users of the Schoolrooms come mainly from our church family: the Ladies Group, a Sewing Group, Sunday crèche and for our Church Youth and Children's groups, both on a Friday night and on a Sunday morning.

Simon Corner, our Youth Minister, uses the upstairs back room as his office, and this turns into the Pathfinder room on a Sunday morning. The church continues to pay a cleaner to work 4 hours each week to clean the Schoolrooms. A new Dyson Hoover was purchased for the Schoolrooms – and can only be used upstairs on the carpet. Surprisingly, this brought much joy to those who need to clear up after children's groups especially!

St John's Church Council agreed to pay for the Schoolrooms toilets to be twinned through the Tearfund Scheme, enabling others to have a safe, clean and hygienic place to go to the loo. Our three have been twinned with loos in Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal. (see www.toilettwinning.org for further details).

My thanks to Gil and Keith Ovenden for their help with the flooring, and to Kath Upton, who liaised with the Schoolrooms users to enable the above work to take place (no easy task!).

Helen Peace – Church Warden

Youth Minister's Report

2012 has once again been a challenging year, though with us being able to move my mum closer to Yeovil in the autumn it feels like a great weight has been lifted off our shoulders, and it has been excellent to be able to focus more fully on work here, knowing she is safe and well looked after, and that we are able to pop in to visit without it being a 3 day trek. The youth work too has had its challenges this year, but it has also been a real privilege to see and be part of the young people growing in understanding and drawing closer to Jesus. Once again I must thank all of you for your continuing support and encouragement. It has been amazing knowing that people are praying for the youth work, teams and the young people, as well as for Ruth and meCRB. We really value your prayers and support. Thank You.

Leaders - 2012 has been a good year in the Youth groups of our parish, with some changes too, and once again it has been a real pleasure to work with such a dedicated, enthusiastic and encouraging group of volunteer leaders. The teams are committed, enthusiastic and give up their time to work with our young people. They are amazing, and we could not do what we do without them. My sincere thanks go to all of them for all their hard work.

A few of our leaders have stood down over the course of this year, all for good reasons, but we, and especially the young people will miss them greatly. Big thanks to Gordon and Di, Caroline and Roz for all their hard work over the years and we wish them well with their new challenges and opportunities.

It has been brilliant to be able to welcome new leaders too, and Emma has become a really important member of our Pathfinder team in a short time. It has been fantastic to have Henry with us too for a short time, while he was on placement at AugustaWestland, but again we will be very sad to say goodbye to him as he returns to his course up in Bristol. As a result of the losses, once again one of our main concerns for the coming 12 months is a need for more volunteers for the youth work. Primarily we are in need of a couple of people to help with Friday Pathfinders, though it would be great if we could strengthen all the teams if possible. If you think you might be interested in helping with youth groups on a Friday or a Sunday, or would simply like to know more, please get in touch with me, as I'd love to talk it through with you.

Regular Church Groups - Our Friday night groups, Pathfinders and CYFA, have been going well this year, and they continue to have a mix of teaching and more social sessions. Pathfinders have been working through 'Rock Solid' sessions from Youth For Christ, which have been a great success. Each evening has a theme and games, activities and short Bible talks and studies that cover that topic. Amongst the sessions we've looked at such things as self-worth, friendships, chocolate, our amazing God, living as a Christian, how we use our money and the true meaning of Christmas and Easter. In addition we have had Chip-shop challenges, craft evenings, Cooking events – we discovered the Pathfinders make very good Muffins – and much more.

CYFA on Fridays has changed slightly over the course of the year. We felt we were spreading ourselves a little too thinly running events on Friday and Sunday evenings, and were very keen that the CYFA focus on Sundays was getting to church. As a result we have stopped our weekly meeting on Sunday evening and tried to focus our efforts more on Fridays. We have a fun activity each evening and then some time where we have a short talk, Bible study and time for prayer. This system has worked well, and CYFA have been looking at some basics of the Gospel in Mark, Daniel and most recently Philippians. Amongst that we have also had a Chip-shop challenge, a Travelling supper, Murder Mystery evening, Film nights, and a formal Christmas party, which gave everyone a chance to dress up.

Sadly lots of our planned summer events ended up being called off due to foul weather. As a result we were unable to go swimming at the Mitchells, go to our usual weekend away at Chickerell and our summer wide-game was also affected. We were, however, able to run a successful evening in the autumn, at which we were able to do presentations about what CYFA and Pathfinders do as well as having lots of entertainment. This also gave us an opportunity to raise funds for Becky, one of the Pathfinders, who went on a School trip to Ghana.

We have also had a few guest nights for both CYFA and Pathfinders, and it has been great to be able to welcome new members to both CYFA and Pathfinders over the course of the year. Please pray that the young people will continue to feel able to and want to invite their friends.

'Pathfinders' on Sunday mornings continues to be popular and it is fantastic to have a good mix of volunteers leading the sessions bringing very different styles and gifts to them. It has been great to see the young people confident to bring friends too, and to see how they have been welcomed and included by the regulars. As Easter approaches a few of the young people will be moving up from Pathfinders to CYFA, and although this will change the dynamic of the group a little, it is fantastic to see the young people still wanting to grow in faith and looking forward to moving up.

CYFA on a Sunday evening was a joy to be involved with, and popular with a core of the young people. Sadly, due to leader availability and a desire to encourage the young people to be attending the 6.30 service we felt it necessary to close the group for the time being. Instead we have ensured there is solid Bible input most weeks for CYFA on a Friday, and Ruth and I host the CYFA group for food once a month before the evening service and then bring those who attend down to the 6.30.

Over the course of the year it has been a real privilege to see several of the young people growing in their faith. I'm now meeting 1-1 with a few of our CYFA lads on a weekly basis. Ruth has done some 1-1's, though her teaching and commute have restricted this, but we are

hoping to do more 1-1's or small group work with the girls. With the lack of a Sunday evening group I am also aiming to set up a weekly Bible study for older Pathfinders and CYFA. Having spoken to the young people it looks like Monday evening is the best night for this, and we hope to begin something after Easter.

Trips / Camps - The Chickerell youth camping weekend 2012 was very sadly called off at the last minute as the weather that weekend was terrible and the campsite reported waterlogged pitches. We did head up to Ham hill on the Sunday of that weekend and were able to have a great morning with a short service, BBQ and wide-games before it began to rain again.

Many of the young people went off to camps last summer, and a large number to Hill House. The young people had a great time and it seems many had significant times with God whilst away. Several of the young people are again off to Hill House this summer and it would be good to pray that they are able to meet with God there and that it would again be a great time for them all.

In September, lots of the young people were part of the St John's and St Andrew's weekend away at Heatree. They seem to have had a great time and enjoyed being part of the church family.

Schools - We have had several visits from schools and groups over the past year including Milford, Huish, various Cub packs, Holy Trinity and more. It has been great to be able to introduce them to the churches, and talk about what goes on in them and what Christians believe. As well as enjoying meeting the groups and working with them. I have particularly enjoyed working through some of the preconceptions the visitors have had about 'Church' and 'Christians'.

In partnership with the Urban Warriors and Roz Chatwin, the Christian Union at Westfield continues to go well. We have a solid base and generally see between 8 and 14 in the group most weeks. We have worked through a series on the Basics of Faith and issues facing young people today, and a Christian response. We have also had a few special sessions for Lent, Christmas and other events. The group are keen, and beginning to open up about their doubts and where they stand, and are keen to learn more about Jesus and the difference he makes in people's lives. It is great to have seen the development and growth of the group over the year and please pray for them as we begin to plan and look at what to do next year.

In addition to these schools, I have been running a 'Christian Union' at the Park school with the help of Sharon Stosiek, and the support of both the former and current Head-teachers. This was taking place on Thursday lunchtimes with a very varied attendance. It was a great opportunity to work through tough questions and such things as 'what Christians believe' with the young people, many of whom are not 'church-goers'. Sadly, in September, due to clashes with other activities, it became impossible to find a lunchtime that the young people could make, and so Keith Stevens has taken over the responsibility of running a Christian Group after school. Do pray for Keith in this and especially for the young people who were keen, that they might continue to grow in faith. I have also been asked to do a few assemblies at the Park, both for the Juniors and the whole school.

I am also still part of the Chaplaincy team at Yeovil College, attending the Thursday lunchtime Christian Union as well as being part of the Chaplaincy 'management committee'.

This may be changing in the coming year as Jarrett is moving on so it is unclear what provision there will be at Yeovil College. Please pray for wisdom for the management committee in this.

Other Activities - I was able to attend a very good conference in January run by the Good Book Company for Youth and Children's Ministers. As always the input and teaching was superb and I returned refreshed, encouraged as well as challenged by what we heard.

I continue to meet regularly with most of the other Youth and Children's workers in and around Yeovil, and it is fantastic to be able to share issues with like-minded people, chat and pray for one another and our work.

The 'UNITE' youth events have continued through the year and into 2013, and have been a great success. It has been brilliant to see the young Christians of Yeovil come together, worship, pray and simply meet with one another, and a real encouragement for us as Youth leaders and the young people. We have seen numbers fluctuate, but we have always been between about 50 and 80 young people, and it has been great to see some of the older youth getting involved in leading, playing in the band, leading worship and games. Pray for wisdom for us as we seek to encourage others to take on responsibility, but also that UNITE remains something new, fresh and different. We have also had a BBQ social at Birchfield, which was great for the young people to invite friends to, despite the downpour that arrived mid-bbq. Please pray that the young people would feel confident to bring friends to regular sessions too. Thank you so much to all who pray for these services and please do continue to pray. The next one at the time of writing is May 4th at YCC.

I am still sorting CRB forms for the church (now the DBS), as well as being involved in the Safe Recruitment and Safeguarding procedures with Margaret Hamilton. We have also organised a Safeguarding meeting for March 2013 at St John's and I have about 30 CRB forms to update that are up for renewal this year.

Training & Meetings - I continue to try to meet with the Pathfinders and CYFA teams for Fridays and Sundays each month, and we try to arrange to have a social one month, a prayer meeting another month, and a review and planning meeting in a third month. Though understandably not everyone can make all the meetings this pattern does seem to work quite well, and I am really keen that leaders teams are supported, encouraged, are praying and prayed for, and are totally involved in the reviews and planning of each term.

I have completed a level 2 food hygiene course this year, renewed my 1st aid qualification and completed a course on E-safety in youth work, which will be useful as we begin to organise new policies for Social media.

Prayer - Thank God for the relocation of my mum, and that 2013 will be a great year of growth, fun and excitement at what God is doing in the young people. Please pray for the young people and all the leaders who work with them. Pray the young people would come to know and love Jesus as Lord and Saviour for themselves, and grow in that faith, and begin to look to share that with others too. Pray for God to raise up additional leaders for each of the groups, and for encouragement and energy for those already involved. And finally pray for godly wisdom as the teams look at how best to develop and grow the work we are doing with Children and Young people at St John's.

Simon Corner – Youth Minister

Junior Church

Our junior church is growing all the time. We have lots of new families joining us, as well as new babies from our regular congregation.

In crèche we have varying numbers. Sometimes too many for two people to handle, and sometimes not many at all. It would be helpful if we had some people that would be happy to be called on when we have high numbers. Please contact me if you could help with this. We are going to be introducing a bit more craft/colouring time to keep the older ones occupied. Scramblers (3-5's) have 16 children, most of which are very regular. This group is going well and the children are enjoying themselves, whilst learning about Jesus, bible stories and our Christian faith. They are also building strong relationships with each other which we hope will continue throughout their lives, leading to a strong and healthy youth group in the future! We have CYFA members helping us, which is fostering responsibility in them, and giving our young children Christian role models nearer to their own age. We do need more adult helpers in this group, so please contact me if you can help in this way.

Climbers (5-7) and Explorers (8-11) are meeting together still, as a number of children in these groups are not so regular, leading to quite small groups. However, come September, five children will be moving up from Scramblers. We are going to be teaching the two groups together at the start of each session, and then splitting them up for age appropriate activities. The Explorers group have much more discussion and drama, and the younger group more craft. This will start as soon as we have our three new teachers on board.

In order to help the new families to feel a real part of our church community, and all of the children and parents to get to know each other better, we are having social events. We had a picnic, with games and puppets to start the year in September. We also had a Christmas party, and are planning another picnic at Easter time, and a summer outing. We are also planning special events that the children can invite friends to, to encourage evangelism from a young age.

I encourage all of you to pray for our children and young people. Please also pray for our hard working team of leaders and helpers.

**Thank you
Jo-Anne Smith**

St John's & St Andrew's Holiday Club



For the first week of the school summer holidays, St John's Church became the "The Get Fit Leisure Centre": being the year of the London Olympic Games, our Scripture Union holiday club had a Global Games sports theme, and was based on the significant events from the life of Jesus found in Mark's Gospel.

Sixty under 11's teamed up each morning for a fun-packed programme of Bible stories and teaching, creative games, crafts, songs, drama and prayers. At the end of the week, each

child was given a Bible and a copy of the Scripture Union booklet covering the week's activities.

A fantastic team of over 60 adults and young helpers kept everyone and everything on track (pun intended!) to ensure the children had a fantastic week, making new friends, meeting old friends, and being introduced to Jesus.

On the Sunday, we held an On Your Marks Celebration Service, followed by a barbeque. Thank you to everyone who took part in the week itself, and also to those who worked behind the scenes. It was also great to know that so many people were praying for us, THANK YOU ALL!

Planning is already under way for this year's Holiday Club – Space Academy - which will run from 29th July – 2nd August. We'll explore the early chapters of Daniel and see how Daniel and his friends stood up for their faith in a foreign land, despite the opposition, and how God was faithful to them. The children will encounter a God who is wise, powerful, mighty, and above all others. But also a God who is interested in helping his people.

Ros Bush

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Group is a small group of church members who visit those unable to get to church and those whom the staff team requests us to visit. We realize that many others also visit and support church members, and it is the job of all of us to care for one another. We also help with the Christian Aid lunches, social events in church, like the Harvest Supper and shared lunches, and the giving of Christmas gifts from the Lord's Larder. We meet throughout the year to support one another and to pray. We are meeting soon with James and Tim to see if there is a better way to care for our large congregation.

Jenny Salberg

Parish Prayer Chain

17 people from St John's and St Andrew's make up the parish prayer chain. This prayer chain is used regularly and all requests are dealt with in a sensitive manner. Prayers are offered to the Lord in faith and leave both people and situations in his loving care. We do not follow up each prayer but if we are asked to give thanks for answered prayers we are delighted to do so.

Shirley Lee

St. John's 18-30s Group

This year has been really encouraging. We continue to meet (weekly) on a Monday night from 7.30pm at 9 Park Gardens and have grown numerically and spiritually. Our diet has been roughly as follows: regular nitty-gritty bible study - we've studied James' letter in the NT, and a series titled 'Proverbs: Practical Worship' which has looked at fear, the heart, wisdom, friendship, money, planning, addiction, marriage; quite a lot of cake and tea; the odd social - we've had mystery music nights, bowling nights, mulled wine and secret santa at Christmas; and a Christianity Explored course. We're very grateful to God for bringing all sorts of newcomers to us and for increasingly Jesus-centred relationships.

Tim Lewis

Kids & Co

This group runs on a Monday afternoon from 1.30 - 3.0pm, during the school term time at St Andrews church hall. It is run for the benefit of families with pre school children. The numbers of children and carers is up and down, and the mums tell us they really appreciate this group, we continue to have a Bible story ,songs, and a prayer , James and Tim come once a term to lead the Bible story.

A merry band of tea ladies provide essential refreshments for adults and children. The group is run by a committee and we meet every term to plan the next terms Bible stories and craft activities.

We have had some very generous help from church members, but we still don't have someone to take over the running of the group. We are hoping to keep 'limping' through until July and hope and pray someone will be able to take over for September.

Beth Lewis

Tiny Toes

Tiny Toes at St John's is a new group for parents and their babies (aged up to approximately 1 year old). We meet every Thursday morning, during term-time, from 10 - 11.15am in the Schoolrooms (downstairs).

The group started in January 2013 and we already have about 16 mums on our register, with an average attendance each week of about 12 - which is about as many as we can comfortably fit in the room! This is a fantastic and encouraging start for a completely new group! The aim is to offer support and friendship for the parents, in a relaxed environment, with coffee and cake for the mums and with a time of singing and nursery rhymes with the mums and babies part way through the morning. The majority of the parents coming along do not seem to have any links with the church at present, and we hope and pray that this group will be a way of building relationships and showing the love of Christ in action. There is a team of 6 people currently involved in running the group, some helping once or twice a month, others each week, and a number of other church members who are supporting this work by making delicious cakes on a rota basis.

Grateful thanks to all those who are involved on a regular basis and who have helped in the launch of this new venture, to those who bake cakes for us and to all those of you who have been praying faithfully for this new work. Please continue to pray for us, as we develop relationships with the mums, and pray that Christ's love would be noticeable in all we do.

Joy Neville

Fellowship Groups

Fellowship Groups mostly had a good year in 2012. There were various movements around the groups, with one group closing and a new group beginning.

Fellowship Groups meet fortnightly, usually on the 2nd and 4th weeks of each month. There are 9 groups in the parish with a total of 115 people involved in them.

There are three principal aims for a Fellowship Group: Bible Study, Prayer, and Friendship. Groups give time to each of these every time they meet. As such, the groups are a vital aspect of our church life. They help us to grow in the knowledge of God, to support one another in prayer for particular concerns, and to foster real, deep, caring Christian friendships.

The leaders are: Beth Farrington, Paul and Penny Cattermole, Joy Neville and Edward Armitstead, David and Kath Upton, Roby and Iain Maitland, Ian and Frances Croxford, Jon and Helen Peace, Rob and Janet Dean, and Jenny Salberg is providing temporary leadership to a group also. I meet with the leaders about three times a year. They serve their group members, pray for them, care for them, and oversee the three aims above in a variety of ways. The group leaders are also part of the overall leadership of the parish.

Tim Lewis and I have written Bible Study notes on the first seven chapters of 1 Corinthians for the Fellowship Groups this year. This has led to discussions about weakness and strength, the cross, church life and divisions, the Holy Spirit, church growth, leadership, church discipline, sexual ethics and marriage, and more.

Thanks to Mary and Alan Irwin who have led a group for many years, but stepped down this year.

It's vital to keep our small groups functioning well and growing. If you would like to join a group, please speak to me!

James Dudley-Smith

Genesis

Genesis is primarily an opportunity for younger ladies to learn and grow in knowledge of and love for the Lord Jesus and to support one another through prayer.

Our studies over the year include the 'Discipleship Course' based on the book of Philippians and 'God's Big Picture' by Vaughan Roberts an overview of the bible focusing on God's rescue plan through Jesus Christ. Currently we are using 'One to One' looking at Jesus's birth, baptism, temptation and ahead to Good Friday and Easter as well as topics on loving Jesus, the cost of following him, etc.

Please pray for the ladies as many of them juggle the demands of marriage, family life and work, that they will find time to read their bibles and pray and that some will make a commitment of faith.

With grateful thanks for the ladies who help with crèche: Ann Johnson, Jenny Jones, Elaine Penny, Anne Unwin and Ann Francis and to God who never fails to provide.

Becky Dudley Smith

Together on Tuesday

We continue to meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 2:30 pm to 4 pm. Our summer break is from the 3rd Tuesday in July until the 3rd Tuesday in September. Meetings are held in the Schoolrooms (downstairs). We maintain our link with the ladies of the United Reformed Church who also meet on Tuesdays.

We continue to support the "Water for Life" work under the umbrella of the Akamba Aid Fund in North East Kenya. They concentrate on health education and water projects. We make blankets from knitted squares and also other knitted garments. These are sent via Smile International who provide aid to strengthen relief efforts around the world - to improve the quality-of-life of the most vulnerable. They also help victims of national disasters, war and civil unrest.

We have a wide variety of faithful speakers who give their time so generously. We are grateful to them. At the moment the group is small just 12 in number. All are welcome so why not join us?

Shirley Lee

Men's Prayer Breakfast

"Beggars, lame, and harlots also here,
Repentant publicans are drawing near,
Wayward sons come home without a fear,
God and man at table are sat down,
God and man at table are sat down."
Words to communion hymn by Dr Robert Stamps.

The men's prayer breakfast, open to all the men in our parish, started in May 2008. We have continued to meet monthly on the second Saturday of the month but we now start at 8am rather than 7 45am. During the summer and autumn we meet in St John's but during the winter months we take advantage of the cooking facilities in the schoolrooms.

The summer menu comprises fruit juice, cereals, fruit, croissants, rolls and spreads, tea and coffee. In the winter months we have enjoyed the full English cooked breakfast preceded by porridge and rounded off with hot buttered toast and range of preserves.

Friendship and fellowship around the table is the reward for the early risers and after reflecting together on a passage of scripture (usually a Psalm) we share prayer concerns before praying together.

Further fellowship around the sink is equally appreciated and we are all on our way by 9 30am being all the better prepared for the day ahead!

Please come and join us on any second Saturday of the month – you will be made extremely welcome!

Keith Stevens

Beyond Yeovil Group – (BYG)

Over the past year the BYG group has continued to provide information about our overseas links through the magazine and the notice boards in our churches. It is our observation that, as hoped last year, our overseas links are now prayed for more regularly in services as well as being on the monthly prayer sheet. It was also one of our objectives set for the year that there would be articles in the magazine concerning those groups or individuals who received money from the church's outward giving and that also has been happening. In 2012 we also set up an evening to focus on Ruth Hulser and her work in Tanzania at which, thanks to the St John's techies, we were able to be in contact by SKYPE with Ruth herself who gave us a brief tour round her home and were introduced to Juma the young boy she has "adopted". The evening began with a simple soup supper and was felt to have been well received by those who came. Watch out for this year's "event" which is coming soon. I would like to thank all the members of the group for their on-going work and if anyone reading this would like to join us please make contact and give it a go. .

Beth Farrington

Friendship Circle.

Friendship Circle has continued to meet on the first Tuesday of the month over the past year with a variety of speakers and cakes! This group is much appreciated by those who come and is relaxed and caring. New members are always welcome and Bridget Handcock can provide further details.

Beth Farrington

Foam & Fellowship

A chance for the men of St John's and St Andrews to meet socially for a drink and a chat, and somewhere to bring non-church friends. We meet on the first Friday of each month at the Armoury Inn (1 The Park, Yeovil) at 9pm. We've been an average of 6 in number recently. Newcomers always very welcome. For more information speak to either Ian Croxford or Terry Bush.

Terry Bush

SALT (St Andrew's at Lunch Time)

Another year and we are still here with lunch being served and guests being welcomed. The main happening this year was being rediscovered by the food hygiene bodies at County and undergoing an inspection ...which we passed. Our guests seem to enjoy this opportunity to share a meal with others and we welcome new guests at any time. Please give us a try. In the past year we have received a grant from Active Living towards the work of helping people to have social contacts which are beneficial to on-going health as people grow older. We are grateful for this help as costs of all sorts are rising. We had to increase our charge this year but still feel that it is very reasonable. Lunch club could not run without our helpers both on the day and at home making puddings and to them all I would like to say a huge thank you. At Christmas Jean Detrey who has been on the planning group since SALT began and Jo Dodwell who has also been helping a similar time decided to retire. We say a special thank you to them for all the hours and encouragement they have given and are pleased that they are still with us as guests. We have at the same time welcomed others onto the team as Bridget Handcock, Ann Beable and Toni Robus have joined us. When SALT began our aim was to provide an opportunity for fellowship in the context of a shared meal as part of the ongoing pastoral care of the church. We continue as we began and would ask your prayers for the future.

Beth Farrington

St. John's Music Group

Another amazing year has passed. It has been a privilege to lead worship in song in St Johns. The group has grown in confidence and repertoire.

The group continues to cover: Together for Worship, first Sunday and Communion, fourth Sunday in the mornings and every week for the 6.30@ St Johns evening service. The group has only had three Sunday evenings off this year. In total this means from April 1st 2012 to 31st March 2013 the group will have led 75 services.

There have been times when it has been difficult to cover some services due to: holidays, illness and other commitments. There are 16 people on the current rota but due to personal circumstances 3 of these are rarely available so the pressure on the remaining is quite high. On one occasion in the evening service we were without keyboard. It is hoped that more people will feel called to be part of this ministry. There is a need in all areas, voice and instrument including technical. The latter is taken so much for granted, it in itself is an important ministry.

The group practises in the Church building most Monday evenings from 7 to 9pm usually for the coming Sunday services but also to learn new songs. So we encourage as many of the group as possible to attend. It is also a time for discussion and prayer. Our leadership is based on a bed of prayer.

We know that Jesus is the centre and in Him we trust.

Jane Hiscock

St John's Floral Group Report

The past year has been an extremely busy one for St John's floral group, partly because of what happened nationally with the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympics, and partly due to sickness amongst our members. With slightly depleted numbers we have decorated for Easter, the Jubilee in white, gold and purple, the Olympics in the colour of the Olympic rings without using the rings as the official Olympic committee considered doing so infringed their copyright. We also decorated for three weddings, two of which were for church members, one remembrance service and a funeral, the first time that this has been requested. With harvest and then Christmas, I think that we were all a bit weary.

Unfortunately, there didn't seem to be the time or opportunity with the dismal summer weather to arrange any garden visit or garden party. We hope to do better this summer. Many thanks again to the faithful few who kept the church decorated during 2012/13. Anyone new to the fellowship who would like to join this would be welcomed with open arms.

Mary Brooks - Chairperson.

The Friends of St. John's

The Friends were started 1994 with the aim trying to involve the local community, not necessarily connected with St. Johns, to recognise the importance of this beautiful Parish Church right at the heart of Yeovil and to help raise money for its preservation for the enjoyment of future generations. Since its inception it has raised £70,000 and £57,000 has been spent on church projects. We are very grateful for the support that we receive from the members of St. John's however it has been extremely difficult gain support from the wider community. Our committee has gradually dwindled and got a lot older and it has been difficult to attract new volunteers to join the committee. Whilst no firm decisions have been made, without more volunteers coming forward, we will probably adopt a low profile if the appeal for the tower goes ahead. Once the tower has been restored it may be an opportune moment with hopefully a list of donors to the tower appeal to revive the Friends.

John Brookes – Chairman

Focus Magazine

“How long does it take to put an issue of Focus together?”

This is a question I have been asked on numerous occasions and until recently I could not even guess an answer. It has been a question I've wanted to find the answer to but never really had the opportunity to work it out. I recently timed how long it took to put the December 2012 & January 2013 double issue together and worked out it was over 12 hours! That really surprised me. I think that each issue probably takes that long, sometimes longer.

Being an editor isn't an easy job, everyone has differing views, and I try to bear this in mind when I put Focus together. The highs include receiving fantastic contributions from lots of

members of both St John's and St Andrew's Churches. I have been commissioning articles from people based on their work, studies, outside interests, their church and their faith. It's encouraging when articles come through when I'm expecting them and really special when they are unexpected. Unfortunately an error slipped through in one issue this year, but the mistake had been made, and it wasn't intentional. It is tricky sourcing suitable filler articles, quotes, poems etc and I hope they are helpful and thought provoking. It is hard to feel that what I'm doing is good or if the magazine benefits the readers when I rarely receive feedback. I really appreciate feedback; if you have particularly enjoyed, or felt strongly about an article, please do come and speak to me, this helps immensely as I put future issues together. Without your feedback, the magazine is only shaped by the Editor, rather than the whole church.

I always seek to make each issue better than the last and this year I have joined ACE (Association for Church Editors). This group sends out emails to editors with ideas, materials, tips and advice on improving your magazines. It holds an annual meeting, workshops and some areas have local groups to share and support each other. This support has been invaluable and the advice given, though subjective, has been useful. It is my opinion that whilst a glossy colour magazine would appear impressive, it is substance (the content) that is more important than style.

My thanks, as always go to all contributors, the advertisers and to Brian Lee, whose hard work printing and collating the magazine is so important.

Elaine Mitchell – Focus Editor

Deanery Synod Report – 2012

It is a privilege to be a member of the Deanery Synod acting as a link between Christian work going on in the greater Yeovil area and our own PCC. We have regular updates of the work of the deanery missionary, the Rev David Keen, for instance, who often acts as the enabler between the parishes promoting common training programmes and initiatives, particularly on the newer estates in the town. Another standing agenda item is a Parish Profile of the parish in which the synod is meeting. It is always interesting to find out more about the work and problems facing churches in the rest of the area. There is often a theme to the meetings the latest is aimed at making us all aware of making people welcome in our churches and some of the dreadful pitfalls and mistakes that we can make in the eyes of newcomers.

The two Bishops of Bath and Wells visited the Deanery earlier this year. It was a very ecumenical visit looking at the whole Christian life in Yeovil – they visited churches, Yeovil College, organizations and even workplaces and industries, including AugustaWestlands, for instance. They reported to us that 'the church' in Yeovil is held in higher regard than we might sometimes think; with churches working well together and with the education sector, the police and the health service. Their encouraging conclusion was that '*God is working in Yeovil in ways that you don't even yet realise*'.

Occasionally an item might be off the mark or will be challenging. Rev Keith Powell, the diocesan renewal officer and a parish vicar, encouraged us with the knowledge that we have a God who is active and alive. Other talks included:

Yeovil4Family. Rachel Dyer of the YCC addressed us in June promoting a fantastic charity set up by Christians in Yeovil that is operating in the heart of Yeovil with the support of a number of churches in the area. Its aim is to avert the tide of family breakdown in Yeovil, helping families to help themselves. Family Support programmes have trained volunteer, parent mentors, usually people who have raised their own children and who are willing to

listen and offer family support to help them find solutions to their challenges and bring about the hope that has been lost. Y4F is always looking for new volunteers to help. Ask Lorna Storey at admin@yeovil4family.org.uk or 01935 433146, for more details.

MTC. Sometimes we are called to sing for our supper too and I was asked to give a summary of the Ministry Training Course run by the SW Gospel Partnership in Bath. Chris Blackburn and I travel to Bath every Thursday and enjoy fellowship with about thirty other students ranging in age from their twenties to sixties (or older). It is a one-day a week course for those who want to understand the Bible better and be equipped to teach to others. Some of the students are apprentices who will enter full-time paid Christian Ministry, others will lead Bible Study, Fellowship Groups, and Sunday Schools and is ideal not only for Christian workers but also for those in retirement or who are able to take a day out from work on a Thursday.

General Synod - We are fortunate in that we as a Deanery Synod do not only receive reports from the Diocese from our representatives, but with James and Edward Armitstead as members of the General Synod we receive more thorough and meaningful feedback from their debates, meetings and processes. The last year has been a difficult and emotional one for all involved with extremely complicated issues to resolve that tax some very fine minds. We shall continue to watch with interest and pray hard for them all safe in the knowledge that the right solutions will be found and that you should not always believe what the media reports!

Rob Dean

The Town Centre Churches - (LEP) Local Ecumenical Partnership

This covenanted partnership comprised the Methodist Church in the Quedam, the Baptist Church in South Street, the URC in Princes Street, along with St. John's and St. Andrew's. The Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Ghost had observer status in this partnership. The LEP (Local Ecumenical Partnership) was founded about 10 years ago and came to an official end in the early months of 2013.

The LEP achieved much in its lifetime: closer relationships between the town centre churches, shared worship and study, shared prayer and support among ministers, and there is no doubt in my mind that the LEP fostered good friendships among Christians of differing traditions. Of course it also excluded other churches by being a tight group in the town centre.

It has served many functions, but it was decided at a meeting in January 2013 that it had served its purpose under God and should be closed down. Those present from all the churches were unanimous in voting for its closure, and this was supported also by the Somerset County Ecumenical Officer who attended the meeting. She explained that LEPs were very popular in previous decades when official connections and covenants were needed, but the modern way is for a more organic form of connection between churches. This organic and more natural way of relating has given rise in Yeovil to such initiatives as the Street Pastors, CAP, the Lord's Larder, YeovilNET, Yeovil4Family, and other such ministries. These were not forged by the LEP but by other groupings of local town churches without the need for a formal covenant. Ministers from a much wider variety of churches meet for a monthly breakfast and time of prayer together, which Tim Lewis and I attend. I am delighted that ecumenical relations are as good as they are in Yeovil. We do not need to be meeting together all the time, and we do need to foster in each Christian a real

commitment to their own local church. But churches should feel that they are serving God's purpose together in any locality, and so we are all working for the common good of Yeovil as we preach the Gospel and live out our Christian care for all, each from our own church base.

James Dudley-Smith

Yeovil CAP Centre Annual report.

The centre has now been open for nearly 2 years, and we are starting to see the fruit, as lives are being totally transformed. 6 of our clients are now totally debt free and a further 31 are well on the way to becoming so. These are all people who were living in fear of their creditors, often afraid to open the door, pick up the telephone, or open the mail. This has all been taken away. They are living on budgets, able to feed or clothe themselves and their children, and even saving for the future. Most of all they have Hope, where once they had despair.

Also 9 of our clients or their friends have been so impressed by the practical love they have been shown that they have made a commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Five of the men have attended a Christianity Explored course at St John's. 2 of our clients are now regulars at St John's. 5 attend other churches in the area. Children have attended holiday club, the Christmas event and Kids and Co.

David Upton has now been trained as a debt coach to join Frances and I on the team, and John and Gill Brookes have also trained as CAP Money Coaches.

There is a constant demand for all our services, and we are booked over two months in advance. We are also getting requests from outside our area, particularly from Ilminster and Langport for both our normal debt counselling, and for CAP money courses. We are very pleased that a centre opened in Wells at the end of the year, but our greatest need is for a centre to open in Taunton.

We are very grateful for the support from everyone in our Churches, particularly the prayer team, our befrienders, and all those of you who support the centre financially. I would love to thank you individually, but in many cases I don't know who you are.

Please keep praying for us. If you are interested in this ministry which is so appropriate for Yeovil in 2013 please have a chat with me.

Finally, it is estimated that 1 in 4 families are struggling with unmanageable debt. There are probably some people reading this who need our help more than they can give it. I can assure you we maintain strict confidentiality. Names are never mentioned, cases discussed, or people put on prayer lists unless they ask us to. Don't struggle alone, or live in fear, just call 0800 328 0006 for an appointment. We will bring hope and we always have a solution to any debt problem.

Ian Croxford CAP Centre Manager

Yeovil Street Pastors

It's now four years since we stepped out onto the streets of Yeovil town centre every Friday and Saturday night. Street Pastors has proved to be an amazingly practical, hands-on response to some of the problems our communities face. Undoubtedly this God inspired

project is a great example of Christians being present at street level and drawing alongside others, helping them and guiding them in their needs, rather than just talking about the issue. Throughout the whole country Christians are being beacons for compassion and concern – whether they are pointing people in the right direction, persuading someone not to do something, or being a shoulder on which to cry.

Over 20 churches in our area are involved in this project showing our community how much the church cares for everyone out there and bringing a relevant Christian message. Street Pastors believe that our streets are places of opportunity to help and care for people. We are from all walks of life with a common commitment to Christ and a desire to love and serve God greeting people nonjudgmentally and respectfully; to listen and show love in small acts of practical care; to attempt to understand rather than condemn.

The street pastor initiative provides a structure for and the training to do what many Christians have had in their hearts and minds for years. There are currently 4 street pastor and 3 prayer pastor volunteers from St. John's and if you are someone who has been living with the belief that you must be able to do something about the problems you perceive are in our communities, then come and join us. We are short of both street and prayer pastors. Your commitment would be one night's shift per month. We need you there. Our communities need you there. God needs you there!

Keith Stevens

The Lords Larder- (Yeovil Christian Support Trust)

I would like to thank on behalf of Y.C.S.T. the Volunteers and Trustees from St John's who work in the Lord's Larder and The King's Place, together tackling the effects of local poverty. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who choose to shop at the King's Place, giving financially or by bringing food for The Larder from St. Johns and St. Andrews, for their continued loyal support of the charity last year.

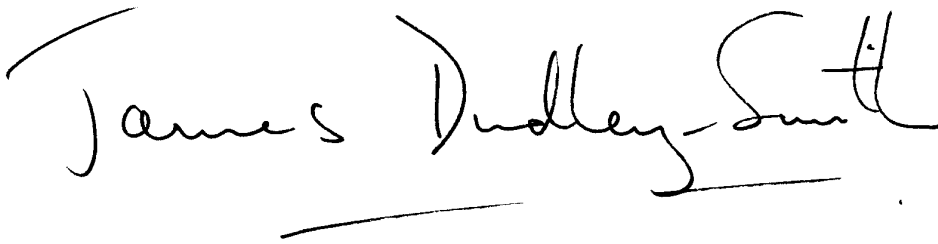
Throughout 2012, The Larder experienced an increase in demand for our services due to a continuing worsening economic climate - however, with your support we were able to meet that need. The Lord's Larder was able to give out emergency food parcels to a total of 3,103 local people (584 more than the previous year) who were experiencing the effects of food poverty. That figure represents 1,986 adults up 18% and 1,116 children up 26% on the previous year. This would not be possible without your support.

As a result of your generosity, we were able to give 318 Lord's Larder Christmas Parcels to those in our local community experiencing the distressing effects of poverty at Christmas time. Each parcel contained a Christmas card with a greeting explaining that the parcel came from the Lord's Larder supported by the local churches.

The King's Place Charity Shop on Coronation Avenue, continues to raise funds generated from sales in the shop, which provides small grants for local people in need, last year we spent £5,307 from the fund on purchasing beds, washing machines, cookers, etc. The King's Place also offers an opportunity for clients, with support from their agency, on low incomes, and moving into new accommodation, to receive vital and much needed clothing, bedding, curtains and kitchen equipment, all free of charge. Last year 101 people made use of this service. For more information on how you can support us can be obtained from Frances Croxford at St. Johns, or on our website www.yestyevovil.org.uk.

Matthew Callaghan, our Operations Manager

**Approved by the St. John's Church Council on 7th April 2013 and signed on their behalf
by:**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Dudley-Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Revd James Dudley-Smith – PCC Chairman