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29. viii. 17

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

On Tuesday 26th September, we are all invited to an 'Annual General Meeting' of the Parish at 7.00pm. Not an invitation or a title to send us into spasms of excitement!

However, this evening is not planned or proposed as the stiff business affair the title suggests. Rather it is an opportunity for us to celebrate together a year of shared faith, thank and congratulate each other for the prayer, care, and communion we have received and given, if necessary note and seek to iron out individual difficulties or communal problems, and shape together and look forward to the year to come in the Parish.

So yes, a busy evening, but important for us all and for the Parish. To help us prepare, the various parish groups and ministries have produced these reports of the year past. Many thanks to them for the reports, and for the year of Christian work and ministry they relate. Representatives of each group are asked to be present on the evening to answer your questions and hear your comments and suggestions: An opportunity and call to us all to continue and build up the life and mission of our Parish.

Please read and enjoy the reports, and come to discuss and further them and any other Parish issues on **Tuesday 26th September at 7.00pm in the Parish Hall.**

May God continue to pour out his blessings on us as a Parish, and each of us individually,

Revd. John Kelly

SAINT HELEN'S PARISH, 2016 – 17

Our success in organising the 'Annual' General Meeting at its proper annual rather than biennial pattern means that the story I am asked to review is much fresher in our minds, and so also are the questions and concerns of last September's review. Thank you to the Parish Council for this increased efficiency which helps our ongoing growth.

It feels like a busy year, with a few highs and lows, and the regular demands of the ongoing life of the parish. So first of all, a great thank you to the many different people who work quietly and reliably in the many different tasks of organisation, preparation, and delivery of the everyday life of the parish day by day, week by week, and through the year: Sacristans and cleaners and those who keep up the perpetual round of maintenance; welcomers, servers, and musicians; collectors and counters; ministers and catechists; toddlers and youth club; family groups, 'Szcola Wiary', and the sun-shiners; quizzes and socials; our schools; and the many outreach initiatives of the SVP, Cafod, APF, Bereavement, Night Shelter, Contact the Elderly, Macmillan, and more.

All of which regular, routine, and reliable work was leavened by a few high spots: At the end of January the Liturgy Group offered us the fascinating 'From Darkness to Light' day opening up the Gospel of Saint Matthew and the shape of the liturgical year we were settling into, Saint David's day took us into Lent, which we walked in the company of six adults asking to join in the Easter Sacraments for a first time: These they celebrated with great joy in a church that seemed burst open by the explosion of resurrection life. The joy continued soon after with a wonderful celebration of Confirmation, and later with 19 families bringing their children into the Communion. The season culminated and finally burnt out in the celebration of Pentecost.

Amongst other blessings the start of the year saw the chair of the PAC and several other parishioners involved in celebrations for the Centenary of the Diocese, including creating a display as part of the Cathedral Flower Festival. Later there was an outdoor Mass and (indoor-because-the-rain-came) picnic organised by the Family Groups, a small May Procession, a Corpus Christi Procession, and the Deanery Mass for the Assumption at Penrhys. And once again the flower arrangers won plaudits for their contribution to the Caerphilly Flower festival.

One or two lows also: - With great sadness the Night Shelter was closed a week early because of misbehaviour in another centre; And our involvement with and sharing in the ecumenical scene with other local churches has on the whole been lack-lustre.

So on to the second half, the report on progress since last year's review: Here we have good news. following the AGM we held the parish survey 'How does our Church work – How do we work our church': Lots of responses, many volunteering for new tasks as requested, which led to new faces in several ministries and groups: Many thanks to all who responded, and all who found new places and ways of living their faith in the Parish. But don't worry if that didn't include you, this is an on-going work, and there is always room for more help in every sphere of our parish life, and always a need for new people, energies, and ideas. If you have a place you want to be or something you want to do, talk to those involved, or to Father or a Parish Councilor to set it up.

One area was picked out last year as consistently and comprehensively failing in 'succession planning': The clergy. So, it is with delight that we welcome Elliot Hanson, a seminarian, who joins us for a year as part of his formation, and as a sign of hope for the future, not yet one of our own but maybe an inspiration and model, and a bit of formation for us also. Please welcome him, work with him (and work him), and allow him to form and refresh us.

Rev. John Kelly.

Evangelisation

The Parish Evangelisation Group meets every 4 to 6 weeks to canvas new ideas for reaching out to lapsed/resting church goers, creating and improving parish vibrancy and promoting participation in parish life while utilising our talents in service of others in both parish and broader community.

July – December 2014

- Continuation of Sunday morning tea, coffee, biscuits and fellowship following Mass on Sundays.
- Promoting of St Helen's as a family friendly parish. Initiatives included communications to parents on preparing children for Mass and do's and don'ts for parents with children during Mass.
- Arrangements made to have CaFE come and conduct Parish Mission. Advertising and general communication about the event leading up to the mission. Meeting with Tim Stephens and evangelisation team prior to the event was arranged to orientate the team with the type of parish activities conducted in the past and feedback on interest from the advertising campaign.
- Review of parish mission event and feedback to the parish on the individual men's and ladies' sessions, family session and visits of mission team to parish schools.
- End of year night out in Caerphilly with partners.

January – July 2015

- Preparing parish for Lent with an evening presentation on what Lent means in today's society with some reflection on how Lent was practiced in years gone by. Presented by Kate Duffin.
- Work on communications within the parish through improvements of web site and set up of face book and twitter accounts, linked to parish web site, to advertise up-coming parish events as well as to post feedback on events.
- Preparation for Proclaim 15 event in Birmingham which was the Catholic Bishop's conference response to Pope Francis' call for new evangelisation. Three evening discussion groups were conducted using the information and format provided by Proclaim 15 web site. Discussions and prayer centred on:
 - o Meeting Jesus – Presented by Michelle Medina
 - o A missionary disciple – presented by Maris O'Brien
 - o Jesus is alive – joint presented by Alun John, Simon O'Brien and Steve Hoy
- Shared lunch after Sunday Mass arranged for and conducted on 19 April and advertised.
- 8th July prayer night, in conjunction with adoration, on the eve of Proclaim 15 conference in Birmingham.

Stephen Hoy

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The Sacrament of Baptism

This year we have been fortunate having had eight Catechists and we continue to work in pairs. We are still using the 'Baptism' DVD which is still proving to be very popular. We encourage parents to take an active part in our discussions and invite their opinions which seems to work very well.

We have three sessions, two with the Catechists and a third one with Canon John Kelly which takes place in church. We also invite the parents to bring along their godparents, especially to the session with Canon John.

This year some of the parents have brought along their children/babies, all of whom have been on their very best behaviour. In fact, at our last session we had five babies present. It is a great pleasure to see these children/babies who will be baptized and become members of our church. This year we will have had twenty-one baptisms by the time of the AGM.

As always, we encourage to bring their children to Mass and continue their journey in the church. Many thanks to Canon John Kelly for his support.

Barbara Jones

Confirmation Group Report

This year, preparations for Confirmation began earlier than in previous years due to the April date for Confirmation given by the Archbishop.

The initial meeting with potential candidates and their parents took place in December last year. The first instructional session commenced in early January with a ten strong confirmandee group of Year 8 pupils, all attending Cardinal Newman School. As with the last few years the 'Power through His Spirit' programme was followed, consisting of seven sessions taking place on alternate Thursday evenings in the church. The sessions were lively and enabled lots of discussion and contemplation. The day of recollection took place on Saturday 1st April, the venue again being the tranquil Llansor Mill retreat centre outside of Caerleon. There was time for peaceful meditation and reflection as well as activities including, walking, smors cooked on a traditional stove and invitation making.

The catechists and confirmandee also led one of the Friday 'Stations of the Cross' during Lent.

The Confirmation Mass took place on Saturday 22nd April, presided by Archbishop George Stack. Everyone agreed on how wonderful the service was, and once again as catechists, we were very proud of all the newly confirmed and send them forth with our love and prayers.

God bless,
Simon.

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Reconciliation and Communion for Children

Our preparation for Reconciliation and Communion began on September 13th, 2016, with 20 children and their families attending.

We continue to use the, "On our Way with Jesus" program, beginning with Reconciliation. The sessions were every fortnight during term time culminating in the children attending a reconciliation service on Saturday 3rd December, 2016, where there were 4 priests in attendance to hear reconciliation. This, as usual, was open to the parish as a whole.

After the Christmas break we began sessions leading up to the children celebrating Communion for their first time. This they did on the weekend of the 21st/22nd May 2017.

This year we were able to plan our sessions around the Velathon and 10K, but this meant that the children's celebration was delayed by a few weeks, taking place on the 13th June.

This year we welcomed two new catechists to our team, which means that we start our 2017/18 program with six catechists.

This year's feed-back from the parents has been, in general, positive. We have taken on board all comments and have made a few changes to the way we will present our next sessions. We hope this will make for a better experience for all involved.

Caroline Bennett. (Catechist)

RCIA – Accompanying Adults into the Faith

The RCIA (Rite of Cristian Initiation of Adults, or Looking into Faith) group is run by Father Kelly every Thursday evening. It is aimed at those who would like to become Catholics or who would just like to know more about the faith. Father Kelly is supported in this task by parishioners like Ann Head, Margaret Rees and Alun John who come along to learn and to support those who may enter into the church. Our meetings are very informal and take place every two weeks. Father John is always there (except when he attends meetings) as we explore the faith through a course called Evangelium (and the excellent Catholicism series), which offers an excellent grounding in the full panorama of Catholic beliefs.

The RCIA has had a very good year in 2016-2017 and we have received into Communion and welcomed into the Church 6 new members in a glorious celebration of Easter 2017: Louise and Stuart Ellis, Paul Jackson, Michael Johnson, Nicola Skym and Andrew Wittington. As part of (or even 'Earlier in') their faith journey they were also welcomed by the Archbishop as Candidates for Confirmation and Communion in the Catholic Church at the Rite of Enrolment held in the Cathedral every first Sunday of Lent.

Alun John

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Marriage Preparation

We continue to provide two marriage preparation courses a year, one in September and one in March. We are part of Marriage Care www.marriagecare.org.uk and couples for these courses book through a national appointments service. There has been a trend towards couples being drawn from a fairly wide geographical area as couples often leave it late to book their course and find that their local course is full or that they can't make the dates available. During the last year we have prepared 29 couples for marriage, including one couple who needed to have a course specifically designed for them because of their own particular needs, and one couple who received a bespoke service known as FOCCUS.

FOCCUS stands for Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study. There are tailor-made consultations to the couple following their individual completion of a questionnaire. The questionnaire and its analysis is research-based and is meant to be a snapshot of how the relationship works. There are questions about family life, ways of communicating and of managing differences as well as views on faith and spirituality. The responses highlight areas of life which will benefit from reflection and discussion. The facilitator begins to open up these topics. Tessa is currently the only person within the Archdiocese who is trained to deliver FOCCUS.

Evidence shows that preparing for marriage helps to sustain relationships in the long term. The day course "Preparing Together" provides information about building and nurturing relationships, managing conflict and the religious and public commitment of the couple to each other. There are group and couple exercises with space provided for the couple to spend time thinking and talking about their relationship, as well as their individual needs and desires. This is done in private and can be a rare opportunity in the sometimes, hectic build-up to a wedding ceremony in the midst of busy lives.

At the time of writing, it is unclear exactly what the impact of the new Archdiocesan guidelines on marriage preparation will have. Marriage Care will continue to be the preferred provider of courses but marriage teams within parishes will grow under the plans so that support for marriages is more broadly focused. Pope Francis describes the need for "greater effort on the part of the whole Christian community in preparing those who are about to be married". (Amoris Laetitia 2016). The connection between marriage, baptism and the other sacraments is emphasised so that marriage preparation is firmly grounded in the process of Christian initiation. The complexity of today's society and the many challenges faced by families means that initiatives which support marriages and families to thrive and flourish need to be supported by parish communities. Those involved in such work will be inspired by Pope Francis' words "There is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems." (Amoris Laetitia 2016)

Marriage Care has centres throughout Wales, England and Gibraltar. We are volunteers with the Newport Centre. Currently Steve leads the team and is a marriage preparation facilitator. Tessa is also a facilitator of the course and a FOCCUS facilitator as described above. Although the national appointments service manages bookings directly now there is still some local administration and Tessa manages this. For the last few years Tessa has provided a small couples counselling service also, but is taking sabbatical leave at present, although she

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continues to provide regular supervision for others in what can be very demanding work. The Centre is in the process of transferring the treasurer role to Andrea Davies. There have been some hiccups along the way but it's hoped that this will be resolved soon. Anne Frost who is formally attached to the Cardiff Centre supports us with our marriage preparation days.

There is a great need for the team to grow and a recent request to parishes across the Archdiocese has led to some interest in joining Marriage Care. There are a number of volunteer roles available, some of which mean very little commitment such as preparing the space and providing refreshments during our courses. Marriage Care provides full training for the more extensive roles, although financial constraints mean that the counselling service is only recruiting fully trained relationship counsellors/therapists at present.

The fee for a day's course is currently set by the national office at £70 although this will increase shortly. The fee for FOCCUS is slightly more than this. The counselling service is donations based. Although Marriage Care is made up largely of volunteers, there is a small team of paid staff. The materials used are also very good quality. All volunteer facilitators are fully trained and supported with development opportunities as are volunteers in other roles appropriate to their task. The counselling service is supported financially by the marriage preparation service. Marriage Care is also involved in those public policy initiatives which contribute directly to supporting stable relationships.

Steve is a member of the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission and recently presented at a training/information event for clergy and laity. As the new guidelines for the preparation of couples for marriage published in 2016 by the Department for Christian Responsibility and Citizenship find their way into local policy there will be a more collaborative relationship developing between Archdiocesan structures like the Family Life Commission and Marriage Care.

Tessa and Steve Jones

Parish Liturgy Group

The Parish Liturgy Group was established in May 2016. The main purposes of the group are:

- to deepen our understanding as a parish of the liturgy.
- to enable the parish to celebrate liturgical worship in the very best way that it can.
- to be the means of providing a key channel of communication within the parish on worship issues.

The group consists of: Canon. J Kelly, Brett Pugh (Chair), Jayne Macfarlane (Vice Chair), Clare Foster, Tom Beach, Debbie O'Brien, Pavel and Katya Zawistowski and meets on the third Wednesday of every month.

To date these are the main activities which the group has undertaken:

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1. Setting in place a liturgical on-line diary for the parish outlining liturgical celebration for the year ahead.
2. Co-ordination of major parish liturgical celebrations so as to avoid clashes with wider Caerphilly events, such as the 10K race, the Velathon and the Big Cheese.
3. Revision of the on-line guidance for funeral and wedding celebrations so as to provide clarity and encourage understanding.
4. Support with the liturgy for First Communion and Confirmation, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.
5. Holding a Parish Liturgy afternoon on Saturday 28th January. The afternoon was based on the theme 'A Journey from Christmas to Easter with St Matthew'. There were workshops for adults, youths and children. Over 80 people attended and the feedback was very positive.
6. Organisation of a May Procession.

Next year we intend to undertake:

1. Another parish liturgy day in the autumn.
2. The development of Advent and Lent as journeys of liturgical expectation.
3. The provision of a celebratory invitation to a number of post-Christmas and post-Easter liturgical celebrations, including a May Procession and a Pentecost Vigil Mass.
4. The expansion of the number of people taking part in the singing and instrumental group.

Brett

Guild of Saint Stephen – Altar Servers

At St Helen's we are fortunate to have a group of young people who are committed to their role in the life of the Church as Altar Servers. On the Feast of St. Stephen, each year, new altar servers are enrolled as members of the Guild of Stephens and existing servers renew their promise. Our M.C. Tom, who this year has been serving as an altar server for 25 years, along with the older servers, train and support the altar servers as they learn the various tasks required during the celebration of Mass. A child who recently made her First Holy Communion at St. Helen's has become an altar server. Chris McGowan and myself care for the young people before and after Mass. We would like to thank the families of our altar servers for their support in bringing the young people to Mass a little earlier in order for us to prepare for Mass and to the extra practises when needed, especially at Easter time.

Kay Cronin and Chris McGowan

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Children's Liturgy of the Word

The aim of St. Helen's Children's Liturgy Group is to introduce and familiarise the younger members of our parish community to Christ's gospel teachings in a form targeted to both their age, learning ability and understanding. Immediately prior to the Liturgy of the Word, the group leaders take the children to the adjoining hall where a child friendly liturgy setting has been previously prepared.

While the adult congregation listen to the Old and New Testament readings, Psalms and the priest's homily, the children hear similar Gospel readings shared with the group leaders in a less formal setting and with a simplified delivery. The celebration is centred on a lit candle representing 'Christ the Light of the World', and follows a familiar format for the children week to week. When time permits, the children are encouraged to discuss and interact with the leaders reflecting on the day's gospel reading. Activities are sometimes undertaken to produce art work and this is taken into the Church at the Offertory where Fr. John often engages the children to establish their understanding of the day's message.

The Children's Liturgy group was formed around fifteen years ago and has sustained a strong core group of participating children throughout this period, attracting approximately 30 children each week. The group continues to seek volunteers to help with these weekly sessions and we are keen to welcome any new volunteers.

Fr John continues to support our group with the availability of parish funds for various liturgy aids and new resources which is always appreciated.

Angela Western
Children's Liturgy Group Co-ordinator

Church Cleaning

The Three Team system has worked very well thanks to the Team Leaders dedication ringing team members to remind them of the weeks they are on and their availability. It should also help that we have now been given a printed ROTA with each teams' weeks on it.

We have also strengthened our teams from some of the new names we received from the 'Parish Appeal for Volunteers' last year. Unfortunately, one team has lost 4 members from her team recently, due to ill health/other commitments.

We could always do with a few more volunteers. If you are available on Saturday mornings, please give me a ring – telephone number is on the back of the newsletter.

Graham Taylor

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Church Flowers

We continue to have two teams, although we have managed to recruit a few new helpers, two of whom are juniors who help when school work allows.

For the first time in many years we haven't had any weddings but we did participate in the Flower Festival, which, although is very time consuming is an opportunity for the arrangers to practice and display their talents. It was held much later this year so as not to clash with other events organised for Caerphilly. These events have certainly put Caerphilly 'on the map'.

We were able to choose our own theme and decided on 'God the Creator' and to use the Hymn 'All things Bright and Beautiful'. We are sure you will agree that the colour and variety of flowers used interpreted the title excellently.

Having organised the Festival for 10 years, Johanna Greenaway stepped down and Josephine Caruana, who has been coordinating the church flowers for over 30 years took over this year, enabling Saint Helens to continue to be part of this wonderful event.

This year, Saint Helen's Parish flower arrangers agreed that donations received during the flower festival would go to GOSH (Great Ormond Street Hospital), a much deserving charity. £78.34 was raised. A 'Thank You' letter has been received from GOSH for the generous donation, which has been displayed on the notice board in the church porch entrance.

Josephine Caruana and
Johanna Greenaway

Parish Safeguarding Team

The Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR Team) is responsible to and appointed by the Safeguarding Commission.

The purpose of the Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR Team) is to raise awareness of the aims and policies of the Safeguarding Commission, to ensure policies and procedures are implemented and consistently adhered to, weaving them into everyday practice to enable the parish to collectively engage with children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst safeguarding all those involved. To this end, the team ensures that all those who use church facilities are aware of the need to keep all vulnerable groups **"SAFE IN OUR CARE"** by adhering to the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

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This report is restricted in its content due to the Data Protection Act and the highly sensitive confidential nature of the information provided to the Safeguarding Team as part of the task of providing proper protection and clearance of those personnel who are involved in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The current Parish Safeguarding Team has been in existence since August 2008 and consists of three members, Ken Ryan, Angela Western and Mary Conant. The Team's photograph, together with telephone contact numbers is displayed in the church porch entrance and on the Parish hall notice board. Since its inception, the team has interviewed, processed and obtained Criminal Records Bureau clearances for over 100 personnel. Currently there are 78 personnel including SVP, Eucharistic Ministers, Child Liturgists, Youth Workers, Catechists, Altar Server Supervisor, First Holy Communion Cat and Parents and Toddlers volunteers who have been cleared to work in various capacities with children, young people and vulnerable adults. In addition to the above, there are two new categories of personnel cleared – these are the Night Shelter which has 8 personnel cleared to operate and the Bereavement Support group which has two personnel cleared to operate. There are 2 applications pending at the moment.

A number of volunteers have been removed from the official list due to no longer participating in the tasks for which they were originally cleared because of death, retirement etc.

The current authorised list of personnel cleared to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults is displayed in the church porch entrance and on the Parish hall notice board. The list will be amended as applicable when personnel leave or new volunteers are cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Ken Ryan

CAFOD

This year, thanks to the continuing support from our parish, we have raised £4400. This has been used for various appeals and for the support of our Connect 2 parish Sebeya, Ethiopia.

The retreat at Llantarnam in November was an excellent day and is for all CAFOD supporters. The next one is this November (more details later).

Early spring saw the launch of Green Heart Day and many of our supporters wrote to their MPs.

Pope Francis tells us “that there is an urgent need to substitute fossil fuels and develop sources for renewable energy”. This Advent, we will launch ‘Power to Be’.

There are always updates and information on the Cafod website for those who are interested.
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Thank you for your support throughout the year, both spiritually and financially. CAFOD is not a closed group, but open to all young and old! Should you see a meeting advertised, come along.

Berenice Williams
CAFOD group

Saint Vincent De Paul Society – SVP

SVP members have been actively involved in visiting the sick, the housebound, the lonely and the bereaved in our community, in their homes, hospitals and nursing homes; in accompanying to Mass, shopping, dental, doctors and hospital appointments; in supporting bereaved families at funerals; in delivering donated items to SVP shops in Trowbridge, Barry and Newport, to the Huggard Centre for the Homeless, to the Refugee Centre and working in SVP shops.

Thanks to the generosity of parishioners past and present, we have been able to give practical and financial help to families, groups and individuals including the Night Shelter.

We are delighted to welcome 2 new members to our conference.

If you have time and would like to join us in this very rewarding work, please come to our fortnightly meeting, notified in the Newsletter.

Finally, if you know of someone in need, please tell one of our members. We will try to help and we promise confidentiality.

Christina Ball

Bereavement Group

The bereavement support group remains available and active in the parish. Even though none has been requested, the support is there should anyone require it.

Bereavement support is somewhat like an insurance policy, in that it is there when needed.

The support group consists of 2 members who are available for support, and a group is scheduled to run for six sessions in September this year. The members providing the support

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will continue to do so, and it is heartening to know that our parishioners appear to receive sufficient love and support from family and friends without the need for additional help.

Sue Acreman and
Andrea Davies

Night Shelter

2016/2017 Night Shelter saw our longest shelter period accommodating 90 beds, evening meals, and Breakfasts thus providing 300 meals all cooked and served in the hall.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day we opened the shelter, with an invite to parishioners to celebrate a Christmas meal along with the Homeless. The invite was to anybody who may not have had a family to celebrate the Christmas meal, although the response was very poor (more volunteers than homeless or parishioners) it indicated that for Christmas Day many were celebrating with others, and also our homeless guests had been treated to meals throughout the day prior to their arrival at the Shelter, obviously a lot of good Christmas spirit about.

Near the end of the Shelter period an unfortunate incident occurred which curtailed the Shelters by 1 week, but it highlighted a problem for shelters who don't have sufficient resources for the full term. This year 12 churches have agreed to participate thus reducing the number of weeks each shelter is open, and a central register for volunteers who are willing to assist other shelters on different nights.

This year saw the guests remain with the shelters throughout the full term, and only in the last few weeks was accommodation found for them, funding to assist the guests has been hit by austerity, with some churches getting together to raise the bond for 1 guest, St. Helen's helped through the donations given. £1000 to £2000 is the funding required to set up accommodation, but by achieving this we are helping to put the guests on the right path for the future.

Only 2 didn't have accommodation this year, and 1 guest from previous years returned to the shelter, therefore approximately 30/40 homeless have gone into accommodation and are supporting themselves.

A big Thank You must go out to all our Volunteers who have steadfastly supported the Night Shelter, and the SVP for their sponsorship.

Cliff Bray.

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Family Group

The Family Group provides an opportunity for all parishioners to participate in social activities. The group's objectives and proven benefits which come from these activities are a sense of belonging through fellowship, opportunity to serve each other and be served, to share with and follow each other's life experiences.

Not many Family Group activities have been had over recent months. As there were many clashes with other parish activities, it was decided that rather than put together a program of events for the year, events would be scheduled and arranged as and when the time for an event needed to take place. Unfortunately, this approach hasn't proved successful as life on a daily, weekly and monthly basis for all group members have filled the gaps where typically opportunities for activities took place. That said, the following is an account of those activities that have been held:

- December 2016, Adult Christmas dinner in Cardiff without children. Attended by about 18 people, the night out was enjoyable and a fitting end to the year.
- January/February 2017, Curry Night. Again, well attended and enjoyed by all.
- May 2017, National Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Doyle. Myself, Tracey and Gloria Morruzzi from St Helens and another parishioner from St Dyffrigs.
- Sunday Tea & Coffee Mornings. Enjoyed by all who attend.

Myself and Tracey are still involved with the national steering committee and attend residential meetings to help formulate strategies for introducing family groups to other parishes in England and Wales and resourcing. 2017 residential was held in Oblate Retreat in Crewe. 2018 residential will be held at Hedley Lodge in Herefordshire.

For the remainder of 2017, it is hoped that we can arrange at least three more family group events to try and get some momentum behind the group.

Stephen Hoy

Saint Helen's Youth Club

St. Helen's Youth Club has continued to run on a Thursday evening during term time from 6.15pm until 7.30pm in our Community Hall. The youth club is open to children from yrs 3-6 and everyone is most welcome. As the numbers of children attending can be 40+, we spilt them between yrs 3-4 and yrs 5-6 and they attend alternate weeks. For the last few weeks of

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the school year, they can all attend together and then we pray for fine weather. A range of activities are in place for the children. They are charged £1.00 per week to attend; this covers the cost of activities and the selection boxes at Christmas, Easter eggs at Easter and ice cream at the end of term. At the end of youth club, we have Circle time when we join together for pray. We have at the moment three voluntary leaders.

When youth club started in 2006 the aim was to help young people attend the World Youth Day in Sydney. Three young people attended in 2008 and two young people attend the 2011 World Day in Madrid. This year we have been able to donate £450.00 to help with the running of the Community Hall.

We would like to thank Fr. Kelly for his continuing support at youth club.

The Youth Club Leaders

Parent and Toddler Group

Our sessions on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning continue to be popular. This year we have incorporated some charity events into the sessions raising money for Macmillan Cancer Care with our coffee morning in September, money for Save the Children with a Muddy Puddle Toddle in May and a successful table top sale run by the Wednesday group in June, which raised funds to replace some of our more tired equipment. Each of the events was popular so we will look to replicate these this year.

As always, having enough volunteers to run all of the sessions is a problem. We have lost a few volunteers at the end of this year as they move on to new ventures, so if you hear of anybody interested in helping out, please let myself or Father John know.

Emma Yates

Saint Helen's Sunshine Club

We at the sunshine group are a friendly bunch of non-denomination over 50's who meet every Thursday afternoon from 2-4pm for a chat with a cuppa and biscuits and a game of bingo afterwards.

This year as well as our annual Christmas meal out, we have been a bit more adventurous and taken ourselves off for meals and visits to the theatre as well as a few coach trips. We are looking forward to the future and even more nice experiences.

Annette Alexander

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Fund Raising:

1/. Parish Quiz

The Parish quiz is much the same as last year; it is held on the last Friday of every month in the community hall; it commences at 7:30 pm and always finishes before 10:00 pm. We usually have about five or six teams averaging thirty people; on quiet periods such as holidays it can be as low as four. It is enough to create a nice atmosphere and ensures that the competition remains keen, but always friendly. The quiz consists of trivia, picture and family fortunes rounds with questions to suit everyone, so that everybody feels included and can make a genuine contribution.

At half-time, we have a fish and chip supper (other choices available) provided by Fecci's Fish and Chip Bar, Lansbury Park, which we are very grateful for and give thanks for the delicious food, prompt service and free delivery. We also thank them for raffle prizes that they provide.

Bernard organizes the evening with the gracious assistance of volunteers, who run the bar, sell the raffle tickets, collect the entrance fee (which is only £1.00), takes orders for the food, sets out the tables and chairs and tidies up at the night's end. Bernard thanks them all for their contribution, enabling the evening to run smoothly.

Profits run between £100 - £150. All monies go to the Parish for the upkeep and to set off expenses for the community hall.

Bernard

2/. Bonus Ball

The Bonus Ball continues to run as in previous years. Winners are those who have the bonus ball number in Wednesday's draw of the National Lottery. Each winner receives a prize of £25 and the remaining money is paid into church funds. Weekly results are printed in the Newsletter and the annual profit made is printed at the end of the financial year.

For the year ending April 2017, £4,144 was paid into church funds.

Thanks to all.

Ann Head

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3/. 200 Club

The 200 Club was taken over by a new committee in September 2016. The members are Stuart & Margaret Davidson, Barbara Carley and Olga Fernández.

We have spent the last year becoming familiar with how the club operates. Our aim for the next year is to increase the membership so that we can maximise the profit being returned to the parish each year. There are several numbers free at the moment and our aim is to try and sell all of these.

Statement of Accounts

1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017

Income:

172 Members at £12 = £2064

4 Members at £11 = £44

1 Member at £7 = £7

1 donation at £4

Total income = £2119

Deposits to bank

Month	Cash & Cheques	S/Orders	Total
September 2016	£1732	£186	£1918
October 2016	£80	£12	£92
November 2016	£48	£0	£48
December 2016	£24	£0	£24
February 2017	£31	£0	£31
March 2017	£0	£6	£6
Total: £2119	£1915	£204	£2119

Expenditure:

Monthly Prize draws

10 months @ £60 = £600

2 months @ £350 = £700

Total expenditure for prize draws = £1300

Profit = total income – total expenditure: £2119 - £1300

Total Profit = £819

Margaret Davidson

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Parish Maintenance and Repairs

The responsibility for repairs and maintenance of St Helens Caerphilly is part of the Parish Finance Committee role which consist of Gerard Morris (Chairman), Veronica Simmonds (Finance), Rory Simmonds (Secretary), David Hughes (Utilities), Anthony Raven (Maintenance), Jacob Kolasa (Gift Aid Scheme manager), Sian Leek (Finance) and Canon John Kelly.

The Parish Finance Committee endeavors to meet every 3 months to review Finance and Repair and Maintenance of the Church Hall and House and also to look at how these assets of the Parish can be improved.

Meetings were held on

- 24th October 2016
- 9th January 2017
- 13th March 2017
- 8th May 2017
- 11th July 2017
-

Date of next meeting Monday 11th September 2017

The expenditure on repairs and maintenance in

- 2013-14 was £11,434
- 2014-15 was £26,324, (Includes Church Painting costs £21,707)
- 2015-16 was £19,199 (Includes hall painting costs £4000 and Kneeler costs £11,004 +£1,100)
- 2016- to August 2017 was £8457 with further costs for roofing Repairs to the Hall to follow.

Since the Last AGM on 16th September 2016

The following works have been completed

- Hall internal main entrance Fire Doors replaced – Cost £942
- Electrical Inspection – Cost £1,600
- Presbytery roof repairs – Cost £1,440
- Guttering repairs - Cost £175
- Fire/emergency lighting /alarm maintenance - Cost £975
- Granwood Floor finish to Hall - £2,353

Other maintenance cost

- 50% share in Grass mower - £1,000
- Ground Maintenance Budget £3,658

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The Budget allocated for expenditure for this financial year commencing from the 1st April 2017 for Repair and maintenance is

- £16,068

Planned maintenance needs to be carried out on

1. The Two Church Central Heating system and Boilers
2. The Hall Central Heating system and boiler
3. The Presbytery Central heating system and Boiler
4. Routine testing of the Electrical systems to the Church, Hall and presbytery
5. Routine checking of the Emergency Lighting system to the Hall / Church
6. Maintenance to Alarms / CCTV systems in Hall / Church
7. Painting of Church / Hall / Presbytery
8. External Maintenance of the Church, hall, Presbytery external envelope and Hard landscaped areas and drainage.
9. Printer and Photocopier (Annual cost £3500)

'Reactive Maintenance' is required to all internal and external fixtures external and internal fabric when required including

1. Lights
2. Kitchen Equipment
3. Internal Fixtures and fittings
4. Internal doors
5. External doors
6. Window fittings
7. Furniture
8. Sanitary fitting

Improvement projects ongoing include

- Repair required to Hall roof – Commencing August 2017
- New Door and window Screen to quiet Room – tendering process ongoing
- Improvements to Acoustics and sound system in Church - under discussion
- Improvements to Access and Egress of Church Grounds – Discussion stage
- Improvements to Car Parking and car park lighting - Discussion stage
- Improvements to Church Entrance – Discussion stage
- Replacement of existing water mains
- Installation of Solar Panels

Other works

Soft Landscaping estimated cost for 2017 £3,658

Gerard Morris

Parish finance Committee Chairman

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Parish Finance Committee

A summary of the 2016-17 accounts for our parish was published at the time of the appeal back in June, but is attached for reference.

ST HELEN'S CAERPHILLY - ACCOUNTS FOR 2016-17

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Offertory	57,083	Salaries & Wages	12,489
Hall Hire	7,284	Hall Expenses	1,967
Fund raising	6,579	House Costs	2,123
Other income	10,174	Premises Costs (including grounds)	18,270
Tax Refunds	8,787	Liturgical costs (including flowers)	5,220
Legacies	11,673	Parish Assessments (Levy)	20,192
Third Party Income	6,632	Other expenditure	8,593
		Third Party Expenditure	5,894
		Transfer to Deposit	12,000
Total Receipts during year	108,211	Total Payments during year	86,749

CURRENT ACCOUNT	£
OPENING BALANCE 1.4.16	87,640
PLUS INCOME 16-17	108,211
LESS EXPENDITURE	-86,749
CLOSING BALANCE 31.3.17	109,102

NB. Third Party income and expenditure relates to collections made in response to appeals (eg Priests Training Fund, SPUC), also to money collected and paid out for parish pilgrimages

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	£
OPENING BALANCE 1.4.16	201,184
PLUS INTEREST	1,567
PLUS TRANSFER FROM CURRENT ACCOUNT	12,000
LESS EXPENDITURE - PROPERTY	-790
LESS EXPENDITURE - ASBESTOS SURVEY	-150
CLOSING BALANCE 31.3.17	213,811

The total Offertory income for 2016-17 was only about £500 more than the previous year, but since Christmas 2016 there has been an increase in the number of standing orders and envelopes which will hopefully be reflected in an increased total for 2017-18, and also an increase in the gift aid tax rebate (£600 less in 16-17 than it was in 15-16!!). Last year's appeal to consider how much you contribute to the church in comparison to your other spending still stands.

The various fund-raising activities in the parish have been equally successful this year, increasing the contribution to the finances by £6,500. If all 200 numbers in the St Helen's 200 Club were taken up this year, we could look forward to an even bigger total next year! Many thanks to all those who organise and take part in this and the other fund-raising activities.

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Income from hiring the Hall has increased over £1,000 since last year, which is excellent news, but it also comes with the additional commitment to keep the building cleaned, decorated and in good working order. Our parishioners can help with this by getting out and putting away furniture carefully to protect the walls and floor, not using sellotape or blutack on the walls, and taking all their rubbish away after any event.

The title of 'Finance Committee' is rather misleading as we spend the greater part of our meetings discussing premises related matters. This is probably because we are in a fortunate position to be able to afford the liturgical support and development that is needed (the main concern of our parish community). As a result, most of the major expenditure in 2016-17 related to premises and grounds maintenance and will be included in that report. Mention must be made of the willingness of our committee members to climb ladders, clear gutters and generally save the parish money on small DIY tasks (you know who you are!)

We continue to transfer £3,000 per quarter to our deposit account, which at the end of June 2017 held a balance of £217,217. This, added to the £109,830 in our current account at the same date puts us in a very healthy financial position. However, there are on-going projects that will quickly reduce that balance once completed:-

1. Cleaning and refurbishment of hall floor undertaken July 17
2. Renewed water main
3. Soundproofed 'parent and child refuge'
4. Enlarged entrance to church
5. Improved access, lighting and parking in the church car park
6. Expert advice on the acoustics in church
7. Possible installation of solar panels

There is also a long-standing issue of water penetrating the hall roof, which could prove to be costly to fix, and the external rendering and lighting around the church could require major work in the not too distant future.

The day to day running costs of the parish, about £46,000, have not changed much over the past year, with a small increase in wages following our commitment to the Living Wage. Savings have been made by the purchase of the hand driers in the hall rather than leasing them, but in 16-17, for the first time Caerphilly CBC started charging the parish for refuse collection.

We hope that this time next year we can report considerable progress on some of the premises related projects detailed above. We will also be reporting on the receipt of £97,229 from the sale of a house in Abertridwr left to the parish by Brenda Cook. We are certainly blessed with the generosity of some parishioners who remember us in their wills!

Veronica Simmonds
Parish Accountant

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Caerphilly Council of Churches

The Meetings held with representatives of most Churches within Caerphilly, discuss aspects of Churches cooperation on a range of projects.

The ecumenical union starts with the Joint Prayer Meetings, Bible Studies, Lenten Lunches, Friday Stations of the Cross, Good Friday Stations within Caerphilly, Pentecostal service, Christian Aid Service, Women's Day of Prayer, Flower Festival, Big Cheese Stand and Joint Service.

It also highlights other areas of cooperation, Street Pastors, Night Shelter, Educational Club 707 assisting in schools, bridging the gap, Food Bank. Job Club.

It is the voice for many appeals, such as from the Night Shelter somewhere for the homeless to spend some hours prior to the Shelter opening on Sunday Afternoons, or from the Street Pastors who are desperately short of Volunteers.

All these aspects of cooperation are transmitted throughout the Churches, with Canon John displaying notices and communicating with the other ministers, thus enabling anyone to join in and work alongside other denominations for the good of all.

Cliff Bray