



ST ALBANS FRANT AND HOLY TRINITY ERIDGE

Trustees Annual Report for 2020

The PCC: Aim and Purposes

The primary objective of Frant with Eridge PCC is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd Brendan Martin, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church pastoral, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and Activities: The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish. It makes suggestions and supports the Rector and Ministry Team on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. *Note:* Planning for ministry and mission within the communities has been very different, difficult and challenging this year given the limitations imposed on us by the Covid 19 pandemic, and the day to day changing situation.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commissions guidance on public benefit. The reports contained herein, demonstrate that the year 2020 has been unique for showing the ways in which we have been able to fulfil this role in our communities. The PCC had tried to enable local people to live out their faith as part of our parish community, through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge of, and trust in Jesus
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Missionary and outreach work

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of St Albans Frant and Holy Trinity Eridge.

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Ex Officio members

Incumbent:	The Reverend Brendan Martin
Curate:	The Reverend Imtiaz Trask:
Readers:	Mr Roy Goodship served until his death in December Mrs Lesley Lynn
Wardens:	Mr Crawford Burden (Frant) resigned in October Mrs Jane Emler (Frant) Mr Jonathan Lynn (Eridge) Mr Stephen Barnes (Eridge)
Elected Members	Mrs Susan Vincer (Secretary) Mr Jeremy Halmshaw (Treasurer) Mr Roy Buchanan Mrs Helen Carpenter Mrs Gail Cooper Mrs Caroline Creedy Smith Mrs Rosemary Froud Mr Christopher Hall Mrs Ann Huggett (Deanery Synod Representative) Mr Nicholas Jones Mr Edward Pascoe Mrs Anne Pybus (Deanery Synod Representative) Mr David Torr

REVIEW OF THE YEAR FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2020

PCC: The PCC met 5 times in 2020 and in February 2021. The average attendance was 11. PCC meetings in June, July, September and November were via Zoom conference, which accounts for the relatively low attendance. The Annual Parish Meeting which had to be postponed until October, was held in Frant Church. As several members of the PCC and our congregations were not comfortable to attend a public meeting held inside, attendance was very low. At that meeting Crawford Burden retired as Church warden and Susanna Hall retired as a Deanery Synod representative. Caroline Creedy Smith and Ed Pascoe were appointed to join Anne Pybus and Ann Huggett as representatives to the Deanery Synod. **The Frant Committee** met 3 times in 2020 and in January 2021. **The Eridge Committee** met twice in 2020.

THE STABLES: The Stables being closed for much of the year meant a significant loss of income. Our regular users were keen to restart their meetings in the summer and there was no lack of potential bookings. For a while we were permitted to reopen, only to be closed again in October. However, while the Stables was not being used the main hall was redecorated by the Pascoe family. We also saw the completion of a new office building in the Stable yard.

ELECTORAL ROLL: At the end of the year the Electoral Roll stood at 130 in Frant and 94 in Eridge.

MINISTRY:

Parish share: We have always paid what has been asked of us towards keeping a fulltime ministry in the parish, and despite our depleted income this year, the Finance Committee confirmed that we are still able to do that. Our proposed share for 2021 is £69,340, which represents approximately 93% of our running costs (an increase of £2,614 on the previous year).

Everyone has questions.

Exploring is good. We're built for it. Explore more about life, faith and meaning with Alpha.



Alpha



The Alpha course got off to a good start in January with 35 people from both communities signing up, these were not all members of our congregations or church goers. An average of 30 turned up to each session. The last session in March had to be cancelled when the first lockdown came into effect, but the response to the course was appreciative and positive with several requests for some kind of 'follow up', perhaps a new house group.

In a year when the church buildings were closed for half of the year, one might think that the ministry and mission of the church would have diminished, but when we look back it is amazing what an awful lot did happen, and what is more, how during the year we have seen growth. Things didn't happen in the way we're used to, but through the super creative and imaginative work of our ministry team everyone embraced enthusiastically different ways to worship and to evangelise. The excellent all age online services were conducted from various locations apart from in the church, including the top of the tower, the Rectory garden, the Stables and the paddock. With members of our congregations both young and not so young reading lessons and leading prayers, these services proved to be popular and were viewed by greater numbers than is usual for Sunday services in church. On 9th August the church re opened and

'social distancing' services in the church began. These were short services of Morning Prayer with no singing and no sermon. A survey showed that people were still reluctant to attend services in the church building and would favour open air services, so in September '**Festival Church**' was launched.



These outdoor services, held in the Rectory paddock, included our children's church or 'Sunday Club', for which the Forest School site in the paddock was used. All of these services were very well attended and attracted several new families. There came a point when we were unable to sign up any more children as we were restricted to 2 'bubbles' totalling 30 children, so we actually had a waiting list. Although home groups could no longer meet, Roy Buchanan continued the Wednesday morning bible study and prayer group online, and our Lay Reader, Roy Goodship continued to send thought provoking scriptural reflections on line until his sad and sudden death in December.

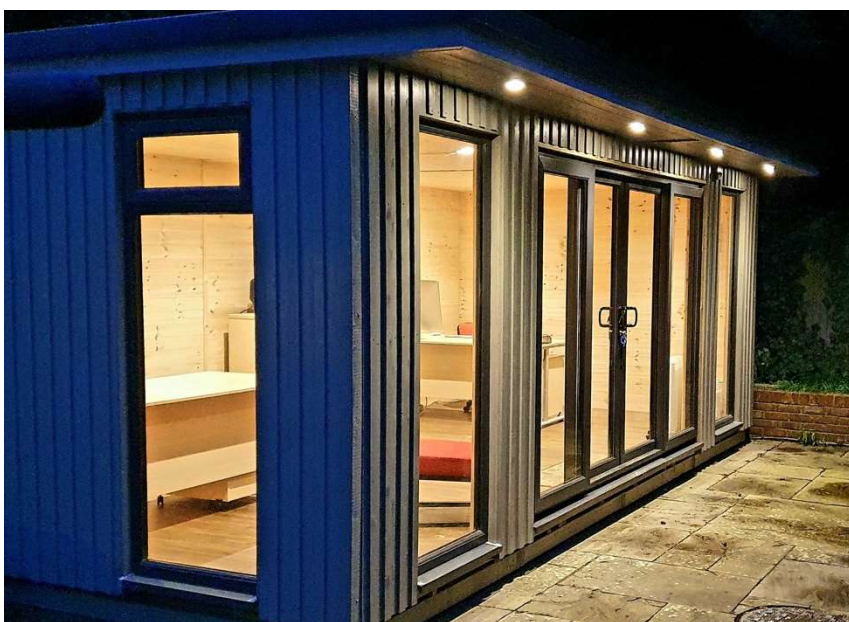
Devising and organising services within the existing restrictions, while completing endless risk assessments and trying to keep in touch with as many people as possible now that home and hospital visiting was not possible, meant that life for the ministry team became busier and more challenging as the year progressed.

FESTIVAL SERVICES AND OTHER SPECIAL SERVICES: About 20 people attended a service of Holy Communion on **Ash Wednesday**. The first online service went out on **Mothering Sunday**, it was conducted by the Rector on his own in church, but with contributions from youth worker Ed and family. On line services for **Maundy Thursday**, **Good Friday** and **Easter Sunday** were all very special and uplifting, ending with our church family wishing each other a happy Easter from their own homes and in many different and original ways. The number of people who watched these services was amazing and surprised us all. For **Harvest Festival** we were back in church, but there was also an online service for those who still didn't feel comfortable with being inside. In November many members of our two churches participated in the online **Service of Remembrance**. It was a moving moment when a trumpeter, standing at the heart of the community outside the Memorial Hall, sounded the last post. In December, in spite of the rain, about 100 people, wrapped in warm layers and carrying flasks of hot drinks, attended the open air **Service of Lessons and Carols**. The paddock was divided into 'pens' for groups of 6 separated by strings of lights and torches, there were also 2 blazing fire pits which gave the impression of warmth! An excellent brass quintet playing arrangements of a good selection of well known carols certainly lifted the spirits, and a scratch choir of 9 provided some singing which was encouraging after nine months without any live singing. We heard the well known bible readings, and Rev Brendan gave three short reflections on

Christmas. He spoke of the first Christmas with the child born to suffer, then the traditional Christmas and how very different it would be for everyone this year, and finally how this Christmas would be a time of suffering, sadness and anxiety for those who have been grievously affected by covid 19. As they were leaving everyone said how much they had enjoyed this unusual but truly uplifting Carol service.

In Christmas week Rev Brendan had to do some quick rethinking when we heard that due to the escalating number of virus cases, no one from Kent was permitted to attend church in another area. This brought home to us how many of our congregation, including Imtiaz our curate, live 'over the border'. After much thought, the difficult decision was taken to cancel the Christmas Eve Crib Service which was to have been held in the paddock, and put it online. The result was a charming presentation of the Christmas story done outside by our children and young people which was watched on Face Book and YouTube by about 300 households. For the first time in living memory there was no midnight communion service held in the Parish as most of the advanced bookings were cancelled. On **Christmas morning** services were held in both of our churches. As Imtiaz, who was to have led morning services on 27th December was unable to 'cross the border', Lesley Lynn stepped in to lead a joint service of Morning Prayer in Eridge church. Thanks to our ministry team who met all these challenges with quick thinking and imagination, Christmas was celebrated in both of our churches.

FUND RAISING: The situation this year imposed severe limitations on fund raising events. Concerts which in past years have been a major source of fund raising were reduced to one event held in February just before the first lock down. As well as losing income from not being able to hire out the Stables, we were unable to use it for our own regular events. We lost the regular income from weekly Coffee Mornings, Little Fishes toddler group, Ignite after school club and Encounter youth group.



Other events which couldn't be held were the Village barbecue in the summer and the Harvest Supper. The absence of all these events meant not only loss of income, but loss of very valuable opportunities for fellowship and outreach in the community. We have relied very much on people being faithful in direct giving, either through the Parish Giving Scheme, the bank or regular giving envelopes. We were also very grateful to all those whose generous donations enabled us to build our new office.

CHARITABLE GIVING: This year as part of our Harvest giving and our Christmas giving, we supported the *The Diocese of Chichester Family Support Work*, a charity which provides help to all kinds of families in Sussex, those of all faiths or none. Families which are struggling with issues such as poverty, ill health, learning difficulties, bereavement, family break up and domestic abuse. We were able to send gifts of food and also items suitable to give as Christmas gifts for all ages. For many years now we have, as a Parish supported the West Kent



Women's Refuge, a report on which is included below. The sending of shoe boxes to eastern Europe which we have done for many years had to be suspended this year, instead we were asked to send money. The response was as always good and we sent £300 to enable families with very little to receive a little Christmas joy.

Early in the year, before the first lock down, it was clear that there were those in our communities who for whatever reason would be unable to cope during the long periods of lockdown without support and assistance, so from our existing Pastoral Care Group a 'Coronavirus Community Care Group' was formed. A report on the activities of this group is included below.

Another thing that has been missed in the village over the past year is the sound of the bells. Hopefully now before too long the bells will be heard again on Sunday mornings and for lots of weddings.

THE CHURCHYARD: This is the one area of church life which has been almost unaffected by the Covid virus. There was a minor and temporary disruption by a badger (probably), but the grass has been cut, saplings have been cleared, leaves have been swept and our churchyard looks as lovely as ever thanks to our faithful team of volunteers.

The horrors of 2020 will be remembered for years to come, but we must remember to give thanks for the good things which happened.

- People helping out neighbours they didn't know before, with lifts, food and help. At Christmas we were able to give more to charities to help families in need.
- We have increased the number of people who connect with church through online services (over 10,000 views of our services during the year).
- We started Festival Church and experienced the joy and fun of outdoor worship. Furthermore, we hope to be able to build on this and to inspire other rural churches.
- We built a new office which was in use early in 2021
- New people gave towards the work of the church, and established members of our congregation stepped forward to help us financially through this crisis
- Youth Worker, Ed, completed Forest School Instructor Training, leading to our outdoor children's groups and to expanding our work with Frant School.
- We established our Forest School area in our woodland.
- We maintained our ability to pay towards our running costs to the Diocese despite the huge loss of funds we have suffered.

We are indeed blessed!



HOLY TRINITY ERIDGE

It is rather a massive understatement to say that a year with three Covid lockdowns was a difficult time, but nonetheless church life continued as best it could.

Every Sunday during lockdown (when it was legal) Lesley Lynn said Morning Prayer to maintain the continuity of worship. In between the first lockdowns we were blessed with sunny weather and outdoor services were held in the Garden of Remembrance. The outdoor services always attracted good congregations and made us realise the advantages that we enjoy with our well maintained churchyard. Volunteers cut the churchyard hedges in October and also worked on the Garden of Remembrance, so we are looking forward this year, while pandemic restrictions continue, to more outdoor services.

Two events which did take place were particularly appreciated in this year of restrictions on social activities.

- A takeaway Harvest supper which was prepared by a team led by Dawn Redman was held in Anthony and Christine Freeman's barn.
- Stephen and Alison Barns organised a virtual bridge drive.

Both of these events made very significant contributions to church funds.

The church financial situation has deteriorated because of the loss of collections during lockdown and the cancellation of the planned extra fund raising event that we often have in a non Fair year. The redecoration of the interior of the church has been postponed until the financial situation is clearer.

The Eridge Fair will take place on Sunday July 4th, which, God willing, will be just after the end of the Covid restrictions.

PARISH NEWS:

I imagine all annual reports this year will be slightly different from previous years! Parish News is no different. It does, however come with some positive news. Firstly, lockdown did not prevent Parish News from being distributed. Technology played its part and the magazine was prepared in the usual way but those issues that could not be distributed through doors due to the restrictions were distributed digitally. As ever, in a community with so many volunteers doing their bit, the magazines were sent out on platforms including the "Friends of Bells Yew Green" newsletter, "Eridge Round Up/WhatsApp Group" and also accessible as usual on the church parish websites.

At such a difficult time for many, I feel that keeping this going helped with connecting with the residents, not just the contributors to the magazine but also the readers. Some wrote in thanking those in the community for being so supportive.

On the advertising/financial front, here is Sue Piccioni's summary for the year:

"The ads position last year was I think quite satisfactory. We had 3 spaces available at the start of the year but these were filled.

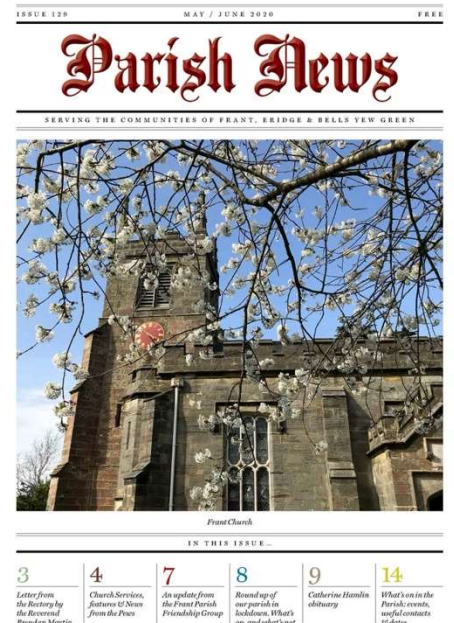
There were 30 advertisers and the amount invoiced was £3362. In addition, the Parish Council gave £650 towards the cost of printing. Two issues were not printed but distributed digitally which resulted in a saving on printing costs of £840".

So, what lies ahead for 2021? Here is some more good news! Having produced the digital magazines in full colour, it has been agreed to continue with the colour throughout for future editions. We must give huge thanks to Colin Webb, our printer at LR Online Print Services who has looked after us so well for over a decade. He has kept his costs to a minimum and will produce the colour versions for only a fraction more than we have been paying for part colour. Thank you, Colin.

More thanks, as always to our designer, Jonathan Christie. His incredible skill never lets us down when he transforms my word document to beautifully produced pages. Susan Piccioni has done a sterling job in overseeing the advertising - this is a significant amount of work. She is also a member of the delivery team covering many households in Frant. Thank you, Sue, and all of the delivery team for your much appreciated efforts.

Last but not least all those who take the time to write in and share their information/stories.

Carmel Kinley



FABRIC REPORT:

Collapsed Harriet Georgiana Grace Wall Memorial: On New Year's Day the wall memorial to Harriet Georgiana Grace fell from the wall. The brunt of the fall was taken by an oak pedestal table which saved the marble tablet with the inscription; just one corner broke off, but the heavy slate backing stone was smashed into many pieces and could not be saved. Our insurance provided by Ecclesiastical agreed to cover the cost of repairing the monument but not its re-installation and, in addition, agreed to pay for a replacement oak table. Peter Pritchett, the Church Architect, was instructed to seek tenders for the work which was subsequently awarded to the stonemason Jon Tilley.

Concern was raised about the safety of other wall-mounted memorials, and four others were identified as requiring some form of stabilisation as a precautionary measure. These memorials were included in the scope of work provided to Jon Tilley. Inevitably the process was delayed by Covid 19 and then we received notice from the Chancellor that a Faculty would be required unless we were able to successfully trace the heirs-at-law to the persons memorialised. Given the size of that task for five memorials, a Faculty Application was duly submitted in October with approval finally granted on 1st March 2021.

New office building: Having received enough donations to substantially match the cost, an 'Elite Garden Office' with a 20ftx10ft footprint and fully insulated was ordered from Skinners Sheds in Paddock Wood in August. This was installed in November on the patio outside the Stables and with the help of volunteers the exterior was painted with three coats between first and second fixes. There was a delay in the provision of the sliding doors but these eventually arrived and were installed in the second week of December.

Felling of a sycamore tree: A sycamore tree was felled on the southern boundary of the Churchyard on 4th May at no cost to the Church. Not only was this tree damaging the stone boundary wall, but it was taking away the light from neighbouring properties as well as being a potential danger to them if left unchecked. Unlike the yews and other conifers, this tree was self seeded and considered by the team who look after the Churchyard as a weed. Our attention has now moved to a number of other sycamores in the south-west corner of the Churchyard for which planning permission would be required to fell. *David Torr*

WEST KENT WOMEN'S REFUGE

2020 was particularly tough for the West Kent Women's Refuge, as it was for many charitable organisations.

From the first lockdown in March and throughout the year the Refuge was unable, due to risk of infection from covid, to accept donations of second-hand items. It was sad to have to decline offers of bedding etc which were made throughout the year. During the summer however we were able to donate a sandpit/paddling pool for the garden.

Following our Harvest Festival in October we delivered all donations received to the Refuge. Again at Christmas, following a collection for toiletries, we were able to provide a good selection of items together with a £90.00 cash donation, from a collection at the December Church Service. At Easter we were able to give them Sainsburys vouchers for £100.00.

We have new contacts at the Refuge as staff move on, and look to being able to develop a good relationship, when conditions allow. *Philippa Mumford*

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AT RISK:

There have been no “**Safeguarding incidents**” to report.

However, in September 2020, we received a letter which included a number of questions. The whole letter was vague and did **not** include any specific allegations. So, I was unable to give specific answers to any of the questions, in the interests of being accurate, not being misleading in any way and ensuring that I did not divulge any information that could be misconstrued or misapplied to any one person.

I replied to the writer by

- asking for clarification;
- giving my assurance that we are not trying to put the writer off;
- confirming that we will address any specific concerns that the writer has; and
- expressing our willingness to arrange any help and support that may be appropriate.

The writer responded to my letter, expressing the desire to take up the offer to arrange help and support. This letter also included the name of a person who they wished to have investigated. Neither the writer of the letter, nor the person about whom they wrote, is (or was) a member of either of our churches, nor a resident of this parish. I referred the matter to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, who confirmed that he would deal with the matter in its entirety, including responding to the writer. He advised me not to enter into any further correspondence on this matter, but to pass anything that might be forthcoming to him for attention.

I received a further letter from the complainant. As arranged with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, I passed this letter over to him, without responding in any way to the writer of the letter.

DBS checks and Safeguarding Training:

Currently there are 42 people who have key positions in our parish, who are, therefore, subject to consideration for undergoing DBS checks and Safeguarding Training.

All Self-declarations and DBS checks, where necessary, are up to date.

4 people still have to complete the **Safeguarding training** that they are required to undertake.

Festival Church - Youth and Kids:

During the summer/autumn, there was a flurry of activity as Festival Church was being organised. We received a number of offers of help from volunteers. The paperwork for these was completed, so that we were able to comply with the “leader/young people” required ratios for youth activities. All that remains to be done is for the 4 people, referred to above, to complete the Safeguarding Training. I will be encouraging this once we come out of the “limbo” we are in at present.

Past Cases Reviews (PCR)

The Past Cases Review is a major national project, being conducted across the Church of England, as one part of our ongoing determination to ensure that children and adults are safe in our churches and communities. The PCR involves providing independent safeguarding experts with full access to what is known about allegations of abuse or neglect across the Church.

The purpose of the PCR is to ensure that all known cases of concern about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children and vulnerable adults have been dealt with appropriately. In order to achieve this, incumbents have been asked to check that all known instances within their

parish(es), both historically and currently, have been reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, and to ensure that any that have not, are now reported immediately.

It is recognised that this is a sensitive task which may require looking at parish files and making some discreet enquiries. For instance, it may be appropriate to consult a previous incumbent or other church officer, where possible, in order to clarify the details of a case of which we, the current Rector and Safeguarding Officer, have only limited knowledge or none at all. We all recognise the importance of being as sure as possible that all known instances of concern have been properly addressed.

The main purpose of PCR is to ensure that any allegation against current or former church officers has received a proper response. Additionally, it is an opportunity to ensure that all safeguarding casework across the Diocese is being properly managed.

PCR is a major undertaking, but it is a crucial step in ensuring safety and building confidence within our church community. It is a project that requires and demands our diligent attention.

The bulk of the work on this has been completed. We will be submitting our formal Declaration Form in March 2021.

Safeguarding Information on Church Website:

There is a requirement that *“there should be a safeguarding link on the home page of our church website, with clear directions about whom to contact in case of concern”*.

The information, contacts and links on our website are exactly as recommended by the Diocese. The website is under constant review and all appropriate changes are made as and when any new guidelines or instructions are received.

Annual Report:

There is a requirement that *“The annual report shall include a statement as to whether the council has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishop’s guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).”*

All relevant people, i.e. members of our Parochial Church Council (as Trustees), everyone who works with children and young people and those who visit people, who are “at risk”, in their homes, have been made aware of their responsibilities. These are set out in the following documents:

- “Policy on the Safeguarding of Children and Adults in the Church”,
- “Best Practice Guidelines for Leaders of Young People”, and
- “Guidelines for Good Practice in Pastoral Care”.

We continually review our responses to the guidelines that are issued and identify the training that is required, so that we maintain a high awareness and compliance in fulfilling our duties and responsibilities.

Roy Buchanan. Safeguarding Officer and Recruiter for the Parish of Frant with Eridge

Tel. No. 01892 750791. Email: roybuchanan1102@hotmail.co.uk

PASTORAL CARE GROUP:

Our report for 2019 included the following:

Role and Purpose of the Pastoral Care group (PCG):

Following the arrival of Brendan as our Rector, and guided by him, we identified the role of this Group as being:

- The eyes and ears tuned into the congregation and community, so that we did not miss anything of a “pastoral” nature;
- Having an on-going perspective of what we should be doing to support anyone who needed it;
- Being a friend, a “neighbour”, a listener;
- Our pastoral care should be part of our outreach.

2020 was an “interesting” year!!

It seemed to start off so well..... as we began to plan for the implementation of the work and method of operation of the group, with the promise of good and exciting things being outlined.....

Ministry Team

At the beginning of January we had a very thought-provoking discussion about how we “do” Pastoral Care, including Prayer Ministry. We agreed that we need to recognise that good “Pastoral Care” is not only about visiting **OR** chatting **OR** offering prayer - it is more than any one of these - it is about the possibility of **ALL** of them, engaging with the “whole” person in the way that is right for each individual - meeting them where they are.

We further agreed that we need a Team which will be able to offer this, as and when needed. Our Pastoral Care Group could develop into a Ministry Team.

In addition, our aim should be to encourage people in the community to feel “comfortable” about being able to pop into the church for a chat and for prayer if desired, during a pre-advertised time/period - say an hour or so on a particular day during the week.

Brendan also suggested that we should have a time of prayer, say about 10 minutes or so, in the vestry before all services. This could involve two people from the Ministry Team on duty that day.

Pastoral Care, and all that is involved in it, including visiting and prayer, must be owned by the PCC and be made know to everyone in the congregation every week. We discussed a number of other ways in which we would develop and “deliver” the new arrangements, including strengthening the Pastoral Care Group, so that it did become a Ministry Team, and that, within the team, we had people who could relate to a range of age groups. We even had a timetable for introducing the plan.....

That was right at the beginning of the year.....

And then along came Coronavirus !! - and all that that involved.

So, the plans to set up and develop a Ministry Team had to be shelved.

We concentrated our efforts into making all the necessary arrangements to comply with the Government’s guidance and planning our response as to how we could/would respond to needs of the community within the restrictions.

Coronavirus Community Care Group

We set up, and publicised, this Group which offered:

.....friendly people eager to help in the community, including helping people who were self-isolating

- Keeping in touch with the community or church
- Friendly phone calls
- Picking up and delivering urgent supplies, i.e. medication, etc.
- Picking up and delivering shopping
- Sending mail
- For those who would like it, offering to bring the latest church news or offering to read psalms or prayers.

We invited people to contact us if they were willing to be a Community Supporter, as follows:

“We would like to ‘buddy’ people up to help and support each other, particularly for those isolated. We want to try to prevent people feeling cut off from the community and other people, to encourage them to follow government guidance, to help them to be able to isolate safely, and (where appropriate) to encourage one another to look to God for his help and guidance through these difficult times.”

We also invited people to contact us if they would like to take up offers of support.

We received **offers of help** from 17 individuals/couples.

We received **requests for help** from 12 individuals/families.

We ascertained and publicised local shops willing to make home deliveries within the parish.

The majority of requests were to pick up and deliver prescriptions/medication.

However, during the Lockdown, we received a request on behalf of a family who live in our Parish, and who had many needs. We were able to respond to the original request to provide transport for medical appointments. As time went on, it became clear that there was also a need for food and provisions for every-day living, and that there was an urgency about meeting this newly identified need. With thanks to some kind individuals, we were able to meet the immediate need.

Requests for more help followed. So, we made a referral to one of the local food banks. They delivered provisions suitable for the family for quite a number of weeks spread over 5 months, to help the family to get back on their feet again. Subsequently, we referred the family to the Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work for on-going support. This seems to be working well.

We were able to provide quite a large delivery of suitable food and supplies, including a few small presents, to this family for Christmas. We received the following letter:

“To Everyone who Helped

I Would Just like to Thank everyone involved in Gathering Food for over Christmas. Been a very hard couple of months for me and my Little Daughter and I know if no one had Gathered & Donated such great amount of stuff we wouldn't off had anything over Christmas. You have all made me and my Daughter very happy and I really appreciate everything every single one of you have done for us in such hard times like this. I can't even begin to explain how thankful I am but I hope this gets to everyone that helped. This has meant so much to us and we will never forget it.

I hope everyone has a Fantastic Christmas & New Year

Thank you everyone”

A second family came to our attention. There was an urgent need to provide some funding, which was addressed by the Rector and the Treasurer.

We have established a good working relationship with Nourish Community Foodbank in Tunbridge Wells. We also have had very positive conversations with the co-ordinator of the Community Storehouse (the food bank in Paddock Wood). So, through the co-operation of the foodbanks, we can arrange for food to be provided to needy people.

In addition to these practical needs being addressed, we have kept in touch with people by phone and email. The Rector issues periodic Newsletters to the Church Family. We follow those up with phone calls to ensure that people, especially those who live on their own, are receiving this information and just having chats with them about how they are, to ensure that we become aware of any particular need that we could help with, and to let people know that we are there for them when they do need us.

Safeguarding and DBS Checks:

All members of the existing Pastoral Care Group have completed training to the required level. In addition, Self- declarations and DBS checks have been completed for all members of this group.

Roy Buchanan Co-ordinator, Pastoral Care Group 01892 750791 roybuchanan1102@hotmail.co.uk



CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK

This has been an unprecedented year for our Children's and Youth Work. We have been limited, due to restrictions in what we do and have had to either temporally stop groups or find other ways to run and interact with our young people and their families.

Pre-School

LITTLE FISHES – This is our parents and toddlers' group and was going from strength to strength before having to stop because of Covid. During the club there are plenty of toys to play with, a snack time which is very popular, and then the highlight continues to be a time of singing accompanied by Brian Gill or Ros Burgess on the piano! Jill Clark and Jenny Searle kindly come to make refreshments for the parents each week.

The overall leader is Julie Pascoe, supported by Margaret Wickens and Jenny Buchanan, and the group has 40 children on register. This group has not been running since March 2020 due to lockdown restrictions. We hope that it can start again as soon as possible.

Primary School

IGNITE - This is our after-school kids club which stopped just before lockdown. Ignite has been developed to best achieve the aim of bringing school aged children to know Christ and develop an atmosphere which reflects a loving community where the children feel safe enough to ask questions and develop their character.

It focuses on children in school years 3-6 and runs each week as a Church based afterschool club. We operated a walking bus from the school to The Stables and had a Bible based talk, along with individual and group games and we are seeing a positive community with the children developing.

We are currently looking at the best form of after school club, whether the same, other initiatives or a combination.

SCHOOL - Every Week Brendan or I have led an assembly at Frant School, which is such a blessing especially as more and more schools in this country are turning away from Christian based assemblies. We also speak at or lead special school services, such as at Easter and Christmas.

During the pandemic, we have continued this in a virtual way, online. Even when children were working from home, our assemblies were still sent out by the school for the children to watch. We were asked a while ago if they could send our assemblies out to ALL four schools in the federation which we were happy to have happen.

During the lockdown period when the children were not attending school, the teachers asked if I could offer up any material for other Christian assemblies during the week so I put them in contact with CrossTeach and I have heard that CrossTeach are not only going to supply material for now, but when restrictions are lifted, they are going to come to Frant School each week to take an assembly. This is really encouraging, as then we and CrossTeach will be going into school each week, helping the staff with Christian assemblies.

I have now helped on two school residential trips and they had invited me back for this last year. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown, this had to be cancelled but they are keen to book me for this year's residential, having already given me the dates.

The school has now proposed that after Easter I might go into school and take assemblies in person. This will be a great chance to reconnect with the children and staff.

FOREST SCHOOL – When the children have been at school, I have run a weekly Forest School for an intervention group. This group of children were identified as needing more practical, out of the classroom based educational activities, and Forest School has had a positive impact on behaviour and social skills, as well as developing practical abilities like hand-eye coordination, memory enhancement and creativity.



This has gone very well, receiving very good feedback from the headteacher and I hope to start it again when the school allows.

Secondary School

ENCOUNTER – This is our youth group for secondary school aged young people. During lockdown we have taken this group onto zoom, creating 6 mini groups, each of between 2-3 young people. We had 3 young people leave us for university last September, and 4 young people join us, mainly as they became old enough to join the group. We currently have 13 young people who join us each week, we praise God for all of them! My wife, Julie, and myself have also met with the young people on a one-to-one basis.

All the groups have Bible based teaching, from myself, and discussions as well as socialising together. It has been great to see them grow spiritually, and I am really grateful to the leaders who help me each week, namely Mary Fisher, Karen Murdoch and Julie Pascoe. Rev. Brendan has joined each group twice now to discuss Church with them and gather thoughts and ideas, as well as getting to know them better.

Frant & Eridge Churches

FESTIVAL CHURCH KIDS – This is our Sunday school at Festival Church which uses the template of 'Forest School'. Forest School is an alternative way for children to learn and develop using natural surroundings, including activities such as fire lighting, woodworking, den building, natural craft and exploring. We split the group into 2 smaller groups in order to make the teaching, games etc age appropriate. Before the second lockdown, we had 30 kids on our list, and had a small waiting list.



I could not do this venture without our great volunteers, including Penny Kift (who is also a Forest School instructor), along with Uju Esalomi, Mary Fisher, Kris Torr, Carmel Kinley, Roo Froud, Nicole Harris, Juliet Nightingale, Jane Emler and Jayne Crookshank. They give their time and effort to Bible teaching, leading the group and so much more! I thank God for all of them!



SUNDAY CLUB – This is our Sunday school during our church morning services. It consisted of 2-3 groups, depending on ages and number of children, and taught the young people about the Bible using games, discussions, teaching, music and craft. This has not been able to take place during the last year because of restrictions but we are keen to start it again once we feel able.

Other Churches

HARTFIELD & COLEMAN'S HATCH – I have been doing Hartfield and Coleman Hatch's weekly youth online services for Sundays, involving youth talks, challenges and songs. I have also been organising and running their online zoom meetings for their young people. They are short on volunteers to help run these at this time so asked us for help.

They also have asked us to help them to set up Forest School type activities for their young people when restrictions allow. The idea is to help with initial set up and planning, then help them run a 6-week programme, by the end of which I will hand over to volunteers from their churches to run, and I can be on hand to offer advice in the future.

ST MARY'S, CROWBOROUGH – Brendan and I met with St Mary's as they asked us to help them set up Forest School type activities for the young people at their village school. They are in communication with us for advice, and look to run a 'forest school day' for their year 6 class in June, which they have asked us to help run. This looks to be a great new initiative for their church and school combined.

Future Initiatives

ARCHERY – In June, I am booked on an Archery Instructors course, by the end of which I will be fully trained as an archery instructor and licenced to teach beginners archery. Brendan is in the process of clearing a site behind his house, which is an ideal place in which to operate this type of activity. We hope to start this from September 2021 as either a stand-alone after school club, dad's and kid's group, or as part of something wider like Festival Church.

Eridge Church Forest School – We are looking to set up a Forest School at Eridge Church, either in the form of a holiday club or after school club or Sunday School. The church has some land in the churchyard and the car park area, and there are many members of the church who have land, some of whom have even offered to loan us some. This would mean that we could interact more with the young people in Eridge and even make it a focus point of the community for children.

Prayer Points for Youth and Children's Work

- ✓ Praise God for all that He has done, does, and will do
- ✓ Thank God for Rev. Brendan and that he has a heart for young people
- ✓ Praise God for all our wonderful leaders and helpers
- ✓ Pray that God will give wisdom to the leaders
- ✓ Pray God will grow all the young people spiritually
- ✓ Pray for new initiatives, especially helping other churches
- ✓ Praise God for all the young people and their families
- ✓ Pray for the glory of God to be revealed in all we do