

Newsletter

*Bruton**Pitcombe**Redlynch**Brewham**Shepton Montague**Wyke Champflower*

Readers of this Newsletter probably do not need to be told that all our parishes struggle to raise sufficient funds to meet their costs. The major elements of our parish expenditure are a contribution towards the paid ministry we receive (i.e. the Rector), a contribution to the cost of central Diocesan support services, the maintenance of our church buildings and our insurance and utility bills. We have very few people making regular donations towards those costs and the aggregate amount of those donations falls a very long way short of covering the costs.

One option, of course, is for members of our congregations to increase the amount of their donations to a level that meets our costs. Simple

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as that may sound, it is probably unrealistic to expect this to happen. Unlike some other churches, and of course with some welcome exceptions, those who worship within the Church of England rarely donate a substantial proportion of their income to the Church. Average weekly giving in the Church of England in 2020 was around £14.80 for each giver. In this Diocese, the figure is lower, at £13.20. Most of this giving is not index-linked, so it decreases in value over time, as costs rise. This is less than half what is required to meet our costs.

Another option, and one that is likely to be increasingly necessary, unless our congregations grow substantially both in number and in the amount they give personally, is to develop additional sources of income. That is now a pressing challenge for all our parishes as we seek ways to balance the budget without reducing our activity. When deciding how we might develop new sources of income, there is a single and simple starting point: our assets. The very best projects grow from developing those assets that already exist within the organisation (this is often referred to as Asset Based Community Development), rather than dreaming of large-scale benefactors or pining for assets that we lack. This approach starts from the premise that God provides for all our needs; which is not to say that cash will mysteriously materialise in our bank account, but that the God of abundance gives us all that we need to flourish. We live not in scarcity, but abundance – but we need to see that abundance and join in making it grow.

This invites the question: what are our assets? What do we have that is good; what do we have that might grow into something even better; where do we discern the movement of the Holy Spirit?

If you have something to contribute to a future edition of this newsletter, do please send it to the Rector at the benefice office address.

Easy-to-follow details of how to receive this newsletter by email can be found on the St Mary's website, or email benefice@stmarysbruton.org. If you are aware of someone who might like to receive it but does not use email, please consider printing a copy yourself and delivering it to them.



Sexey's Hospital has appointed a new chaplain. We look forward to welcoming Fr Barrie Gaskell when he arrives in August.

Following the success of their inaugural exhibition, Bo Lee & Workman Galleries are planning to hold another exhibition at St Peter's, Redlynch in late August.

The series of Moviola Film Nights continues at St Peter's, Shepton Montague with a screening of The Duke on 14 July at 7.30 pm. Tickets are available on the door.

Penny Ashton, who is a reader serving in Wincanton, completed her placement with us. Many of you will have met Penny during her time in the Benefice. Penny commented how welcoming and friendly everyone was, which is good to hear. Thanks to all who made Penny feel so welcome.

A delegation from the Diocesan Advisory Committee has visited St Mary's to consider outline proposals for a toilet and servery. We are awaiting their formal feedback before developing more detailed plans, but we were encouraged by their comments.

On 30 June, St Leonard's hosted the annual leavers' service for Bruton School for Girls. With the announcement of the closure of the school at the end of this term, this was a poignant occasion for all those present.

Bishop Michael Beasley has now been legally confirmed as the 80th Bishop of Bath & Wells at a ceremony in Lambeth Palace. He is expected to take up his role in the autumn, but no date has yet been fixed for his enthronement.

There are plans afoot for a major celebration of the life and ministry of St Aldhelm on 20 May 2023. The idea is for communities with a link to St Aldhelm to come together to have fun and celebrate this Saint. More details will follow in due course, but the day will include a pilgrimage to Sherborne Abbey or St Aldhelm's chapel and a pageant at Sherborne Abbey.



SHARED LOCAL MINISTRY

As mentioned in the previous edition of the Newsletter, a letter has been sent to the Diocesan Board of Finance, expressing concern at some of their proposals relating to the number and deployment of stipendiary clergy and possible revision of the formula for calculating Parish Share. The short response we received from the Chair of the DBF was as follows: 'Thank you for your response to the consultation. We are conscious of the delicate balance we need to strike between reducing costs and maintaining a visible clergy presence on the ground, which you highlight so eloquently. At the same time, the option of doing nothing is not sustainable either as our current model is clearly a failing one and we need to find new ways of 'being church' in our communities. With best wishes to you all'. A very similar message was received in reply to a separate letter sent by the PCC of Shepton Montague.

In short, it seems that the perception of our ministry is that we are failing and change will be introduced. It is for this reason that the Rector (in his sermons on 26 June) asked for your thoughts and suggestions about what we think our purpose is as church and whether we think we are failing or succeeding. Thank you to those who responded (only 2 people have responded so far – maybe others are taking time to consider?). These discussions need to continue as we consider how to respond.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A message from the Diocesan team for young people (the Go Team):

'Over the last two years the Go Team have been acutely aware of the need to support churches to better engage with young people. We recognise that some churches already do this incredibly well and they can be a fantastic resource to others. We also concede that for many churches, engaging with children and young people is a real challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact across all generations, not least those who are older or more vulnerable. We are also acutely aware of the disorientating impact for many young people as they struggle emotionally, physically, mentally, educationally, and for some, spiritually. It would be impossible to think the church has the answers, the expertise or the resources to meet every challenge that young people

currently face. However, the church could be a sanctuary for reflection or prayer or provide safe, welcoming spaces to meet and chat with others. Some churches might also be able to provide a listening space for young people and their families to air their concerns, fears and questions.

Before we consider what we might be able to offer, let us first pray for this generation; hearing what God might be saying to us, followed by a time of listening to young people and hearing their voice.



Week of Prayer
for young people
with young people
their families and
their schools & colleges
3 - 9 July 2022 

During the week of 3–9 July 2022, we are planning a focussed week of prayer for young people, their families and their schools. The Go Team and some of our colleagues will be praying together from 12.00 to 12.30 each day and we would love churches across the diocese to join us. This could be at the same time as us or at a time that best works for you and your church. We would love churches across the region to join us in prayer from wherever you are. Prayers can be online or in person, silent or spoken; it is up to you and your church. The only thing we ask is you pray for young people.'

BENEFACTIVE SERVICES

Following the request in the last issue of this Newsletter for your thoughts about the Benefice Service (on the 5th Sunday in the month), a very small number of responses was received, and only 1 displayed any enthusiasm for any form of Benefice Service, which suggests we should abandon this service. This gives rise to interesting questions if we wish to maintain regular worship in our churches with a reduced number of clergy.



Rev'd George Beverly, the chaplain at King's School Bruton, was among those ordained priest by the Bishop of Taunton in Taunton Minster on 25 June.

It was a very happy and encouraging occasion and we wish George well as he begins his priestly ministry.



ST. MARY'S COMMUNITY FETE



St Mary's will be hosting a community fete on 16 July at a new venue: the Unionist Club. King's School were unable to offer Abbey Field this summer due to other bookings, so we are trying a new format at the Unionist. There is plenty of opportunity to participate and support the fete by running a stall or helping with the set up and take down. Please speak to Harry Mills, Juliet Bowell, Jane Bennett or the Rector with offers of help.

DIARY DATES

- 3 July – Baptism, St Leonard's, Pitcombe at 11.00 am
- 9 July – Wedding, St Mary's, Bruton at 2.00 pm
- 10 July – Baptism, St John's, Brewham at 2.30 pm
- 13 July – Bruton PCC meeting, Bruton Library at 5.30 pm
- 14 July – Moviola at St Peter's, Shepton Montague at 7.30 pm
- 16 July – St Mary's Community Fete, Unionist Club, Bruton from 11.00 am – 4.00 pm
- 18 July – Brewham PCC meeting, Colinshayes at 7.30 pm
- 24 July – Baptism, St Mary's, Bruton at 11.00 am
- 30 July – Wedding, St Mary's, Bruton at 1.30 pm

Further ahead...

- 13 August – Coffee Morning, Wyke Manor at 10.00 am
- 27 August - Shepton Montague Fete
- 5 October - 'Sailing around the world', a talk at St Leonard's, Pitcombe at 5.30 pm
- 12 November - chamber music concert at St Leonard's, Pitcombe at 3.00 pm



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