

# ALL SAINTS, STRANTON CHURCH HARTLEPOOL

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2013



*God's light on a hill  
in the heart of the*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PRIEST IN CHARGE AND CHAIR OF THE PCC REPORT	2-3
ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	4
STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT	5
ELECTORAL ROLL	5
FINANCE REPORT	5
BUILDINGS AND FABRIC OF THE CHURCH	5-6
DEANERY SYNOD REPORT	6-7
SAFEGUARDING REPORT	7
PASTORAL GROUP	7
MUSIC GROUP	7
MOTHER'S UNION	8
CHILDREN AND YOUTH GROUP	
STRANTON TODDLER GROUP	8
MESSY CHURCH	8-9
SUNDAY CLUB	9
MATT'S MATES	9
BEFREE	10
YOUTH FELLOWSHIP	10-11
UNIFORM GROUPS	
RAINBOWS	12
GUIDES AND BROWNIES	12-13
BOYS BRIGADE	13-14
BELLRINGING	14-15
BURBANK REPORT	15-16
YFC GAP YEAR STUDENTS	16-17
ST MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY CENTRE	17-18

## **REPORT FOR ACPM 2014**

### **Norman Shave (Priest in Charge and chair of PCC) April 2014**

Looking back over the last year I feel the most important thing is to say thank you. Thank you to God for his faithfulness and provision. Thank you to each and every person who contributes to the life of All Saints' and its associated ministries. The year past has been one more of consolidation than major growth, but none the less there is much for which to be grateful. When I write about All Saints and associated ministries I think it's important to recognise that as a church we have at least four overlapping areas of ministry:

1. The ministries linked with the church community and building, including the occasional offices
2. The ministries associated with Burbank Community Church and Clive Hall as community worker
3. The ministry and work based at St Matthew's Hall
4. The ministry to young people and children

Many of these ministries will be reported on elsewhere but some of the positives in the last year include: The St Matthew's Hall weekend including an All age service in the Hall, the visit of Bishop Mark on Stranton Sunday, growth in the Youth fellowship which now has its own study group and youth band, the continued ministry of 7 home fellowship groups, our links with local schools, a flourishing Toddler group, our links and practical involvement in the Hartlepool Food bank and the generosity of the church members that have enabled all the bills to be paid, some investments for the future and some increased giving to mission at home and abroad.

I think it is also important to acknowledge the year has included a number of struggles and challenges along the way. Angela Hall's illness in the summer of last year put considerable stress on Clive and the whole family. Those who were close to the situation experienced a significant test of faith but friends family and church community also pulled together in a really positive way. Last autumn the lightning conductor was damaged and lead flashing pinched from the south roof. We anticipate these problems will be remedied during the summer of 2014. Several long term and committed members of the church community have died within the last year. Perhaps the most high profile of these was the death of Ray Waller following the diagnosis of terminal cancer in March 2014. The funeral itself was a very positive occasion with many people pulling together as a team.

In the summer of 2013 PCC, helped by discussions in the shared ministry development team, set three priorities for the coming twelve months. The first priority, following the diocesan 'preparing the ground for growth' initiative, was the encouragement of prayer. Several events have taken place including the Labyrinth at Ward Jackson School in September, a morning of prayer in January and the 'Come to the well and Drink' course through Lent. We also welcomed Francis and Elaine Wainana for some training in prayer ministry. Whatever else we do prayer and worship has to under gird our life as a church.

The second priority was to invest time and resources in Pastoral Care. Sarah Jay has been working with the pastoral team to improve communication and develop the team. Following discussions about confidentiality we committed ourselves to acting in ways that build open and honest relationships. I think we need to acknowledge this is not always easy but something we need to strive for. The main focus of the pastoral team is visiting those of our church community who are unable to get to Church. Since beginning to emphasise this ministry the numbers visited have increased. In the near future Sarah and the team will be looking to find additional volunteers to help with this work.

The third priority was to establish and support the YFC gap year team in its first year. We applied for and received a very generous grant from the diocese of £10,000. This enabled us to employ a coordinator, Angela Hall, for the first year of the project. Working in partnership with three Baptist Churches we welcomed 4 YFC volunteers in September. Jess Woody and Stephen Bell are linked with Stranton and Burbank respectively. They have been a great help supplementing our existing ministries to children and young people, alongside the work they do with the team in local schools. PCC have committed to two further gap year workers in the coming year as part of a second Hartlepool team.

On a personal note Julie and I moved to the new vicarage in early December. The move itself went very smoothly, but getting ready for the move and coping with the delays produced significant demands on both of us as a couple. We would like to thank the church wardens, staff team and authorised ministers, including Alison Stewart Smith our student, for their support during that time. Working together they enabled all the services through advent and Christmas to go well. The diocese is now moving forward with the process to sell 34 Westbourne Road and any remaining items in the house or 'den' will need to be cleared.

The next few months will be a time of transition for all of us. Clive and Angela Hall have been part of the Church here for the last 11 years. They now feel that God is calling them to move on in the summer. They have used their gifts to do an amazing job mainly in Burbank but also across the rest of the church and town. I'm sure we all want to thank them for their contribution to our community life and we will miss them when they go. PCC has already discussed what to do when Clive leaves and we have committed in principle to replacing Clive. This is a long term commitment for the PCC and as a Church we will need to continue to fund this post as a priority. In June we are also looking forward to welcoming Nick and Bekah Moore as Nick begins his curacy. Nick is originally from Durham but has completed his training at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford. Nick and Bekah will live in the diocesan house in Browning Avenue. As a church we anticipate working together to make them welcome in their new home. Andrew Craig after working for the last 15 months in Billingham is currently on sabbatical and we look forward to welcoming him and his ministry amongst us from mid-June.

At times the complexities of this parish and demands of ministry in our 'post-Christian' culture can become overwhelming. Let's resolve together to continue to give thanks for and value the variety of contributions that different folk make to our community life, worship and witness. Once the period of transition is over I believe the time will be right to prayerfully seek God for a fresh parish vision setting our priorities in line with that vision. Remembering that God can do more than we can ask or imagine, may he clarify the direction in which he wants us to travel and enable us to walk that road in a way that honours and glorifies him.

Norman Shave            April 2014

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

All Saints, Stranton Church is situated in Church Row, Hartlepool TS24 7QT. It is part of the Diocese of Durham within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Stranton Church Office, St Matthew's Community Centre, Arncliffe Gardens Entrance, Hartlepool TS26 9JF.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission

PCC members who have served from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 until the date this report was approved are:

<i>Priest in Charge:</i>	The Rev'd Norman Shave	Chairman
<i>Reader:</i>	Mr Alan Robertson	
<i>Wardens:</i>	Mrs Kathy Webster	
	Mr Alan Robertson	Vice chair (from ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
	Mrs Sylvia Shepherd	(until ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
<i>Representatives on the Deanery Synod:</i>		
	Miss Pamela Harkness	(from ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
	Mr Andrew Rogers	
	Mrs Sylvia Shepherd	
<i>Elected members:</i>		
	Mrs Maureen Anderson	Secretary
	Mrs Barbara Busby	
	Mrs Barbara Butcher	
	Mr Ian Campbell	(until 12.10.2013)
	Mrs Angela Craig	(from ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
	Mr David Craig	Treasurer
	Mr Frank Endean	
	Mrs Diane Greenwood	
	Mrs Jeni Hart	
	Mrs Joan Herbert	(until ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
	Mrs Cheryl Mills	
	Mrs Lynda Parvin	(from ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
	Mrs Catriona Robertson	(until ACPM 2013 - 21.04.2013)
	Miss Mary Robinson	
	Mrs Jacqui Rogers	
	Mrs Faith Barton	

### *Staff members:*

Rev'd Andrew Craig  
Rev'd Sarah Jay  
Mr Clive Hall

The full PCC met seven times during the year with an average level of attendance of 72%. Committees met between meetings and minutes of their deliberations were received by the full PCC and discussed where necessary.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

### **ELECTORAL ROLL**

There are 140 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, parish. 1 name was added during the year and 6 were removed.

### **FINANCE REPORT**

Overall the church accounts show a breakeven position for 2013, with a small deficit from Church activities compensated by a small surplus on St Matthews Community Hall.

Highlights of the year have been a well supported Gift Day which supported both mission support and local activity, and also some additional expenditure on repairs and maintenance.

The Church met its Parish share contribution to the costs of the diocese, amounting to £1,000 per week, which helps to cover not only ministerial stipend pension and housing costs but also the mission educational and pastoral support provided by the Diocese: in this regard we received back a £10,000 mission support grant for the Youth For Christ Team who are with us until July 2014: two thirds of this grant is treated as deferred income to the 2014 financial year.

Planned giving increased slightly, with a small number of donors significantly increasing their regular direct financial support. We also received specific donations for support of music development and a small legacy.

St Matthews Community Hall is now fully paying its way, meeting all of its insurance and running costs and charging back the use of the hall for the Church office and other meetings: I value very highly the work of the Hall Committee which continues to develop and maintain the facility in partnership with the Residents' Association, attracting grants for major repairs and improvements and ensuring the hall continues to meet the needs of the whole community. On a "cash" basis the hall payments exceeded its receipts, but the payments included two years' insurance premium, one of which was a prepayment for 2014, therefore the hall returned an accounting surplus.

The main new challenge in the future is to maintain the Burbank and youth work with sustained increases in the current level of giving required once the short term Grant has expired this summer

**The accounts were approved by the PCC on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 and signed on their behalf by Rev'd Norman Shave (PCC chairman)**

### **BUILDING AND FABRIC OF THE CHURCH**

2013 was a quiet year with regard to the fabric of the church, with only routine service and maintenance carried out.

We have had to replace light bulbs at regular intervals.

Routine maintenance was carried out on the organ, fire extinguishers and the burglar alarm system.

A Log Book is kept and all alterations, additions and repairs to the church are entered. A complete inspection of all articles belonging to the church has been carried out.

Sadly, during the year we had part of the lightning protection conductor system stolen together with lead from the part of the roof that was repaired in 2011. A temporary repair was carried out immediately on the roof to stop water getting into the organ. Since this has happened, we have met with an architect and in 2014 will see us having a new lightning protection conductor and the roof having the permanent repair.

Work has been carried out on the bells and bell tower and our thanks should go to the bell ringers as they did much of the work themselves.

Norman and Sylvia had a look around 41 Arncliffe Gardens and there were a number of small jobs to be done on the house, but unfortunately, the fence blew down in December and will have to be renewed. There is a very good tenant in the house who keeps the property well looked after.

At the end of 2012, the gas fires in the Burbank Street house were condemned and in January 2013 a fire surround and gas fire in the front room and a gas fire in the dining room was fitted.

The Churchwardens would like to thank especially Andrew Rogers, Mike Weimer and Ken Shepherd for the support they have given, as well as the teams of people who regularly turn out to clean the church and tend the flower borders at the front of church.

Kath Webster and Alan Robertson, Churchwardens

## **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

During the past year we've had a change of Area Dean, with Chris Collison stepping down from the role, being replaced by Janet Burberry. Janet's very keen for us all to identify with the Deanery and encourage collaboration and friendship among the parishes.

As you'd imagine, the thorny topic of Parish Share often dominated proceedings. However, we've enjoyed a number of illuminating talks and presentations throughout the year

**In last May's Synod**, the Deanery day feedback was discussed at length. Points noted included:-

Comments from the Church of England Statistics Unit that unless changes happen quickly, our congregations will be 10% of their current size in 2040, meaning our church buildings will be redundant as we could all fit inside the cathedral with only the 2 bishops and, say, only 40 other clergy being required.

Bp Mark believes that main Sunday services will not secure the future of the church

We should remain focused on the reason for our existence and beware of becoming an exclusive club.

Seemingly, many people would like to come to church – we need to address what to do about this.

Janet Burberry and Norman led a discussion aiming at creating a vision for the Deanery.

**In last July's Synod**, Janet lead reflections on the purpose of the Deanery, reminding us to know no fear but recognize the difference between faith and foolishness.

The Deanery Website was discussed and agreed, as a £1,000 Mission Grant had been received for it's development. Tim Hyde, the minister at West View Baptists agreed to assist with the site's creation and management.

Janet also suggested an “Out & About “Day when we could visit other churches to get a feel for their communities and styles of worship. There was general agreement but concerns over the practicalities.

Graeme Buttery gave a report on the General Synod in his customary wry, witty and incisive manner

**In last November’s Synod**, the Rev’d Ray Simpson lead a reflection about the community of Aidan and Hilda of which he is a guardian. The community aims to encourage people of all denominations to live the depth of monastic traditions in the midst of modern life, following Hilda’s call to all people. 5 characteristics of Hilda still resonate today; being, a light in a dark place, giving hope in exile, showing warmth in a cold place, creating growth in a deserted place and being a bridge builder in a place of conflict.

2014 is the 1,400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hilda’s birth. St Hilda’s Church is anticipating running a series of events to mark the anniversary.

Andrew Rogers

## **SAFEGUARDING - CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION**

A new safeguarding policy was adopted by the PCC in January. Peter Hart is now acting as safeguarding officer with Norman as priest in charge holding overall responsibility for safeguarding. A safeguarding audit of all young people's and children's groups has taken place. Where deficiencies have been identified appropriate action is being taken. A full questionnaire has been completed for the diocese regarding this area of ministry.

## **PASTORAL GROUP**

See chair’s report.

## **MUSIC GROUP**

Our aim as a team is to enhance and deepen our worship at Stranton, to encourage us all to draw closer to God and be open to his Holy Spirit.

This year has not been without its difficulties, and my own illness meant I had to take leave for a month in November. Thanks to Julie who led in my absence.

We are open to new members. Being an absolute virtuoso musician is not required, more important is the desire to worship God and to serve. We meet Thursday evenings not only to practice music, but to reflect together about worship and to pray.

With Luke at university we are missing a bass player in term time. We are delighted to have welcomed Hannah and Melanie into the team recently.

We are grateful for a donation which has enabled us to purchase some vocal radio-mics, which will give us more flexibility and reduce the number of cables needed.

*Kevin Tones*

## **MOTHERS` UNION REPORT**

In October 1913 there was an inaugural meeting of the first branch of M.U. in Stranton and another in St. Matthew's. 76 ladies attended and in the following March another 56 became probationers. Out of four branches in the town at that time we are the only one surviving.

Unfortunately moving with the times we only have 17 members, small in number but faithful to the cause of the M.U. Janet Short died after many years a member of Stranton. Meeting once a month we have a variety of subjects with speakers taking us on travels to the Inca Trail, the Orient Express and the fjord of Norway. We look to our Christian roots with a Lady Day Service, Advent thoughts and a moving visit by Chris (an ordinand) at the time.

We support Diocesan events such as the Festival Service, I.M.P.C. service, Council and All Committee days. Having visits from the Vice President and a Diocesan Officer encourages members and hears what is happening at national level..

We appreciate support from the church when holding a soup lunch and strawberry tea which enables us to send funds for various projects. Some members are not very active but gifts were given to the Women's Refuge at Christmas, trauma teddies knitted for use in the visitors centre in Durham prisons also toilet bags for the hospital.

We hope to have a celebration in the autumn for 100 years of M.U. at Stranton and look forward to 2015 when M.U. in Durham Diocese will be 125 years.

Kathy Webster  
Branch Leader

## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH GROUPS**

### **Stranton Toddler Group**

The group is continuing to thrive in St Matthews Hall and draw in many families from the local community. The children enjoy small toys, puzzles and crafts around the tables in the small hall and larger toys – bikes, scooters, slides and see-saws in the large hall. It is a good place for parents, grandparents and child-minders to meet one another whilst encouraging the children in their care to learn new skills and interact with one another.

A second session has started this term on a Friday morning from 9.30 -11.00 in addition to Tuesdays from 9-11. I am very grateful to those who come to help me on a Tuesday, both in the setting up and the preparing and serving of snacks. Due to the large numbers who come, this is a big commitment but a great way of serving our local community and making links with a lot of local families.

Julie Shave

### **Messy Church**

Messy Church has grown steadily over the last twelve months, usually drawing in 20 children and 20 adults. We meet on the third Sunday from 4-5.30 pm in St Matthew's Hall. After some table top games, we go through to the large hall for a bible story, song and prayer. The children then choose from the 6 crafts linked with the theme, enjoying as many as they can fit into the 30-40 minutes available.

We then enjoy tea together where there is more time to chat to the children and adults who come. After tea the children enjoy a run around with Jess and Stephen.

We have a wonderful team who plan the sessions together and give their time to set up and help with the activities on the day and the ladies who co-ordinate the food and man the kitchen are a real blessing. There is always room for more help!

Julie Shave

### **Sunday Clubs**

This year has seen one or two changes.

Firstly, the group has been split into 2, with children in school year 6 or over going into the choir vestry whilst the younger ones remain in the Fulthorpe Chapel. It was felt that the older children might benefit from a different style of teaching, enabling the leaders of both age groups to cater better for their children.

There are also some new helpers on board, with some of the longer running leaders stepping back a bit, but helping, gladly, as and when required.

Although both groups have about half a dozen children on their registers, the numbers that turn up are normally between 1 and 4 for each group.

The leaders are aiming towards meeting more regularly this year, with one of the topics for upcoming discussion being the split age groups.

Lynda Parvin

### **Matt's Mates**

Matt's Mates meets weekly on a Thursday during term time from 3.20-5.00. Our aim is to provide a group where primary school children can be part of the church, learning about how God wants us to live as we spend time together.

We have a team of three church members Barbara Busby, Mel Hutchinson and Diana Wanduragala and two members of the gap year team, Jessica Woody and Stephen Bell. We really appreciate the work Jessica and Stephen do. Right from the start they have been excellent role models and teachers and developed good relationships with the children.

At the moment we have about 10 children attending the sessions aged between 7 and 11. Until Christmas our age range was 4-11, which is a very wide age range, and we took the decision to work only with the older children. This means that we can all enjoy the activities better.

Each time we meet we have a bible story, games and a snack. We sometimes have a craft activity or singing. During the summer we had some outdoor sessions in the Burn Valley and at Eldon Grove Tennis Club. Our latest topic has been The Fruit of the Spirit and we have looked at these different qualities week by week since Christmas.

Barbara Busby

## **Befree**

Over the past year Befree has enjoyed an interesting programme. We have most recently enjoyed our messy night, Angus' quiz night and everyone's favourite – pancake night! We are currently looking forward to Stephens 5 minute movies and an Easter eggstravaganza!

Our leadership team is very much the same with Mary, Angus, Mat and Alice, along with Stephen and Jess from the YFC team. We are thankful for their help at Befree; they have a great amount of energy and are loved by our young people.

As a leadership team we are the first to admit we are not the greatest at making sure we have weekly bible studies or making sure we have something spiritual in our Thursday evenings, but what we do have is a great fellowship with our young people. As we said in a signpost article a few months ago, we believe it is through how we act as Christian role models, that our young people are encouraged to develop a relationship with God and into the church.

Once again it has been great to see more and more of our young people attending churches all across the town. It's always great to get another message on facebook or a text asking if we are walking to church and can pick someone up on the way. It is a blessing to be part of their journey as they move into the wider church.

Befree recently shared a great week away with YF at the Jonas Centre, Redmire. It was lovely getting to know our young people more. We enjoyed a fantastic treasure hunt around Layburn (even if it did involve getting lost and a trip to the tea pot factory for one team), a visit to Bolton castle, some great worship around a campfire, a trip to the prayer barn and a number of great bible studies. The theme of the week was fellowship and it was amazing coming back with a greater sense of unity between our young people. The young people are asking for another trip away soon!

We ask for your prayers as we say goodbye to many of our older young people this year, for energy for our leaders and another great year for Befree.

Mary Robinson



**THIS YEAR HAS BEEN ANOTHER GREAT YEAR FOR YF**, with another increase in numbers. Our first night in September started with over twenty people, including our new American friends. Though numbers have dropped since then, we've consistently got around 14-15 young people each week, which is an increase of two or three from last year. We've also not had lower than ten during the year so far. We have lost a couple of members over the past few months, with college work and busy lives been responsible for the most part, but we are concerned about some of the lost members. We have a couple of new members, one of whom started as a non-Christian but was invited by a friend and is starting to come to faith. We are hoping this trend will continue during the year, and are planning to

encourage more of it next term. The groups' overall faith and commitment to Christ continues to grow, and they are enthusiastic about sharing their faith and supporting one another.

This year, we have taken a long look at Jesus' life; the September-December term was designed to lead up to his birth, with topics such as prophecies, relationship with God, and why Jesus needed to be born. The second term looked at his life, with sessions on his miracles and parables, leading up to his death on the cross. Our next term will look at the effect his life had, focusing on Acts and the Epistles. We were able to arrange a residential trip in February, four days in the Jonas Centre in Redmire. Eleven young people went, including several from Be Free. We led six sessions on the topic of fellowship, as well as praying around camp fires and playing worship music. The week was a huge success, and we are already talking about a repeat adventure next February. We have a sleepover booked for a few weeks' time, with a Harry Potter theme.

The group continues to use Facebook to organise social night between them, and it's a rare week that there isn't at least one prayer request, blessing, edification or Bible verse posted on the group's pages. The group really considers themselves to be family, and a church body to themselves.

This year, the group has started up our own band – the Children of God – who practice in Stranton on Sunday afternoons and at Oxford Road Baptist Church on Mondays. The band has played at several churches since they formed in December, including at Alice's baptism and the Americans' commissioning service. They have also played at two YF-led church services, at Stranton Church and at Burbank Church; these services have given the young people an excellent opportunity to lead, pray and speak at church services. They have risen to the challenge and to the responsibility admirably, and it is encouraging to see so many of them have potential to lead future services or becoming youth workers and church workers in later life. I have spoken to several of the young people about leadership training and one-to-one discipleship courses for those who are interested in building their faith further. For the older members, the Tuesday night study group Seed is continuing strongly, particularly with the help of Jess and Stephen. Seed usually has 6-9 people, and takes a deeper look into the Bible than is suitable for YF, and deeper relationship-building than is possible in the larger group.

As of March, we have also started collecting Bible study books, devotionals and prayer guides into a YF library, which the young people can lend books from should they so desire. We hope to add to our collection over time, to encourage home study or smaller house groups.

Finally, we have been grateful for the extra support provided by Stephen and Jess this year. With the increased number of young people, it has been a great relief to have extra people working with us and sharing the teaching. On Sunday nights, we now also have the ability to talk in smaller groups, or for a leader or two to break off if a member needs to ask a question or pray. Both have led several studies and sessions, and as we work together to plan next term we are keen to have them lead more sessions. They bring a fresh approach, different perspectives and a clear enthusiasm for the Word that makes the young people equally excited.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. We will, as ever, appreciate your prayers.

Ian Taylor



After a small dip in numbers at the beginning of the year, we are back up to our maximum capacity with children coming from across the town to join us.

Over the past year we have done some exciting badges including 'Going on a bear hunt' where we learned how to read maps, looked at healthy eating and stretched our imaginations doing our own bear hunt in the hall. We completed another Roundabout badge where we need to look, learn, laugh and love and started to explore our new promise.

Girl Guiding hit the headlines not so long ago as they decided to drop God from the promise in favour of thinking about beliefs on a wider scale. We however, as leaders of a church linked Rainbow group feel it is important to continue to talk about our belief being in God and we encourage the Rainbows to do the same. We continue to talk about Noah's Ark and the importance of what a promise is and how once made we should do our best to keep it.

We are currently enjoying the book 'God's wonderful world' and are creating our own wonderful world and exploring how we can keep it wonderful. We are looking forward to start a new series of badges including 'Ready, Steady, Glasgow!' in aid of the Commonwealth games and 'Girl Guiding goes to Hong Kong' for the Girl Guiding International Conference.

Mary Robinson



**Brownies** the numbers have remained constant but not increased during the year, so have a few spaces available. It has been another busy year and at times have struggled with Leaders. Claire had a baby, Eliza Joyce Sedgwick on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2013, missed at meetings until Easter when she came back. All are doing well. Thelma has had health problems struggled to get to meetings but is improving but not back to full health and Steph is unable to come because she is working. The pack has been involved in activities outside the hall, swimming, bowling, visit to beach to build sandcastle which we managed to do this year. We have covered World Guiding and lots of crafts quizzes and games. They have been to Eggheads – which is a popular event, harvest both being linked to Church.

**Guides** have a leader who is unable to come because family commitments and were also missing Claire & Steph. The Guides have been involved in lots of different activities during the year building up the team approach. They have completed team player and party planner which both went well, were learning to work together and have an outcome have at times been difficult but have been overcome. They have been skating at Billingham, bowling and out for meals. The big event was the trip to London for the Big Gig on October 12<sup>th</sup>. The weather in London was amazing so we were able

to walk around sightseeing – then off to the gig, which was very good but noisy!!! (for the leaders). We ate before the return journey on the train. We left home at 6.30am, arriving home at 12.40am on Sunday. A long day but was good especially as the travelling was by train (3hrs) and not bus (6hrs) as in the past.

Brownies & Guides have had joint events for Thinking Day Celebrations in the hall and with the Division at Throston School. Sandcastle building on the beach with chips after! We have run Fundraising events during the year to subsidise activities for all the Brownies & Guides so that all can enjoy the activities.. Thank you to all who have supported these events during the year, it is very much appreciated.

Cheryl Mills



## **Boys Brigade**

### **Anchor Boys** (6 -8 year olds)

We attract around a dozen lads to Anchors with activities such as crafts, games, quizzes and lots of fun. The Anchors also took part in the Fun night held at St. Matthew's in February. We are hoping for an end of session recruiting build up to give us a good start in September.

### **Juniors** (8 -11 year olds)

Our Juniors have taken part in several battalion competitions including Arts, Hockey and 5 a side all of which were held in St. Matthew's.

We have encouraged the year 6 Boys to take part in Badminton with the Company section so that they know each other when they go to our Holiday Camp and in the Company section.

Activities have included gym, trampolining, keep fit, crafts and hand bells.

Both Anchors and juniors took part in Easter Eggheads.

### **Company Section** (11- 18year olds)

We entered the National Competitions in Badminton and Masterteam Quiz which kept us busy until the end of February.

The Lads have cooked, made collections, played various games and taken part in a lot of team building exercises.

We have a week of holiday activities booked at the end of July including a Camp at Birch Scout Hut near Scarborough.

### **In General**

The Company took a major part in the Battalion Service at Stranton and we have encouraged the juniors and Anchors to come to Sunday Club on a more regular basis and hope to improve on this during the year. Our Older and younger Lads take part in Bell Ringing at Stranton every Wednesday. Leaders at this moment - we have 3 leaders in their 20's which is the first for a long time and hopefully if careers and life do not get in the way too much we can secure a long healthy future for

the Company. Fund Raising - we are always collecting Bric a Brac for our Summer and Winter sales and welcome any extra donations.

And finally I would like to our Friends at Stranton and at St. Matthew's for the support they offer the Company throughout the year.

George Bainbridge, Leader in Charge, 4<sup>th</sup> Hartlepool Boys Brigade

## **BELLRINGING REPORT**

### **Recruitment and teaching**

We are still recruiting new learners to try and establish two regular Sunday service bands, one at Stranton and the other at St Aidan's. This year most of our new ringers are young people from Stranton youth groups, especially the Boys Brigade.

ITTS is a national training scheme providing accreditation for ringing teachers and mentors. Two ringers have attended the teaching course and our newer learners have been registered on the "Learning the Ropes" course. Our learners are really benefiting from this. We now have 25 ringers in Hartlepool who can handle a bell on their own and ring at least rounds as well as 6 newer learners.

This year we have experimented with using different towers on our practice nights. On Wednesdays we practice at Stranton, on Tuesdays at other churches in the town. We have had a lot of support with the teaching from other ringers who have visited us on our practice nights.

### **Ringling for Sunday Service**

Ringling to call people to worship on Sundays is the priority for any local band of ringers. Last February we began ringling at both St Aidan's and Stranton every Sunday. We ring rounds and call changes on 6 bells at both towers most weeks.

### **Achievements**

There have been lots of individual achievements over the last year. Several ringers have progressed to the milestone of ringling for their first Sunday Service. Three ringers have rung their first quarter and three others their first peal. Our biggest tower achievement was a quarter peal by an entirely local band to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. We look forward to lots more local quarters in the coming year.

### **Involvement in the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers**

We hosted the Association AGM and eight bell striking competition in April 2013 with ringling at all the Hartlepool towers. The meeting and lunch were held at Stranton and all the ringers were involved in one way or another, making the day enjoyable for our visitors. Members of the band have attended ringling meetings. During the year we changed some of the association membership details to reflect the reality that some are ringling at St Aidan's regularly on Sundays and should be shown as attached to that tower.

### **Safeguarding**

We are not a children's or young people's group but it is really important that we ensure that younger ringers are safe during all our ringling activities. We have recently introduced some changes that are in line with the PCC's new policy.

## **Bell maintenance**

The bells, frame and fittings are all in working condition but we have carried out some routine maintenance this year. A new set of ropes has been fitted, the roof trapdoor has been repaired and is now closing properly and the mesh over the louvers has been replaced to try to minimise damage from the weather. We have swept the frame and the floor under the bells to remove stone dust and sand. The bell frame will need cleaning and painting within the next two or three years but no major maintenance tasks are planned.

Barbara Busby

## **BURBANK ANNUAL REPORT**

**Burbank Community Church** – I was making up a members list to use at the morning prayers and I noticed it was quite long we had 51 names on it, including children. Our numbers have crept up and it was good to see.

I have also been having a few Sundays off preaching because this year has seen Mary, Emmanuel, Stephen Bell and Matty all have had a go at preaching for the first time. All did really well.

We had a really good Labyrinth again this year and I must say if you missed it you missed out. I always look back on it and remember it had one of those days when God turns up!

**Ward Jackson School** – Still have a very good working relationship with the school. We have increased the number of assemblies we do in the school because Norman and Julie have also joined the rota. Plus Maureen Anderson who is a Governor also comes in to help with reading with the children.

Mary Robinson and Jeni Hart both work there now also. The amount of Christian input into this school is amazing and a blessing.

**Community Work** – I have stood down as chair of resident association but I am still on the committee, helping to encourage others to take on more engaging roles within the group. We have been running a drop in for people on the estate to come along and use computers or receive signposting on to other services providers. One of the main things at the moment we have been doing is having resident meetings with Bill Rowntree who is going to be building Bungalows for people with special needs and hopefully a new community building with a bistro and shop and rooms for community to hire and use. This will be a little like a mini version of the Belle Vue Centre, which will hopefully help to develop the Burbank Estate further.

**Foodbank** – This has now become a Charitable Trust which I chair, we have also employed a coordinator Al Wales. Andrew Craig did a brilliant job in making this happen. We are becoming busier as time moves on. January was our busiest month ever and we wondered if we would then slow down? February then became our new busiest month. March had set off at the same pace!! So please no slowing down on food donations!

We have also noticed that people are sharing more deeply with us and we do hear very sad life stories and people are very appreciative of the full treatment they get from us. Al did go on a course for people who are feeling suicidal and of course within a week met a person who was feeling just that.

I also got the opportunity to go along to the Labour Party Conference and sit on a fringe debate panel on Heating or Eating. This I felt of a great opportunity for me to give a voice for the voiceless.

**Pizza & Prayer** – 18 people in our front room was a peak we reached this year. We are actually glad numbers went down to a more manageable weekly 14. It is still an encouragement to listen to

teenagers praying. This group of youth are growing closer to each other and God at a steady pace all great to see.

**Bridge Builders** – This year we have continued with a steady number of about 16 every week. We have used Bridge Builders almost as a training ground for the American team that work with Angela. We have made them into the main leaders running the games and stories etc. We have watched them develop from reading 15 minutes of scriptures into doing great up to date stories and dramas and getting alongside the children that come along.

This training was really shown when Nate arrived with his team. Bethany had people over from her home church and she worked with that team for the week. She came to Angela and excitedly told her how she had been doing games and stories and helping the team do things in a certain way, that she now understood was because of Bridge Builders.

**Personal News** – I have now been working for Stranton Church for over 10 years. We believe God is calling us to move on. I am in the process of looking for a new job.

When I reflect back over the years I have been here there have been just so many wonderful experiences. I have enjoyed greatly my time here. I have personally grown and developed in lots of ways. The amount of experience I now have with chairing meetings and groups and the amount of community involvement and working with lots of service providers is amazing.

You might think that preaching 2 or 3 times a month you might a little tire of it. I personally still love it and enjoy reading and preparing for every sermon. Not sure what the congregation think about that one!!

I would close with an African saying which we used on an Explorers camp.

Ubuntu which means, I am who I am, because of you.

A lovely sentiment with is so true.

May God bless you all richly as you move on together.

Clive Hall

### **YFC Gap Year Students**

I can't believe that YFC Hartlepool has only been going for 7 months!

God has opened doors for us to go into four primary schools and two secondary schools!

The team have been taking assemblies, R.E lessons, discussion groups on cultural differences and beliefs.

This term they have started mentoring children on a one to one basis. I know the pupils love the team going in especially when they get to play with them at lunch time!

Half of the team started an after school basketball club at a Secondary school. They were able to pray with the team, build up their confidence and try to teach them how to be a good team player!

The other half stayed in the library homework club playing cards and talking with other students.

At the start of this term we had an opening, due to some Christian students, in the Sixth Form College to start a lunch time discussion group. We are really excited at what opportunities this will open to share Jesus to interested students!

A highlight for the team has been a Talent and Testimony night that we hosted along with a team from Nassau Bay. At one of the secondary schools we handed out flyers to the event. On the night we had 50 young people attend and through fun games, a spoken word, drama and testimonies the gospel was preached! Many lives were touched and some were prayed for.

We are looking into repeating events like this and inviting all the church youth groups across the town and making it a youth church event.

Each team member is also involved in individual church youth groups as well as the schools work so please pray for protection and continued strength.

Angela Hall (Co-ordinator)

## **ST MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY CENTRE ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT**

In the past year St Matthew's Community Centre has continued to improve its premises and serve the community. The area adjacent to the small hall, having been cleared, partially resurfaced, fenced and gated, is now used as a car park for the Centre as well as a space for outside activities. It is proving a great asset and we are grateful to the local Council for leasing it to us at a token rent for 25 years. We thank our local Councillors for their support in securing this facility.

Unfortunately, during the period when temporary fencing was in place, vandals gained access to the new garden area to the rear of the small hall and destroyed some of the new decking. HBC did offer to repair this but nothing has materialised, so we have now commissioned repairs to be done ourselves.

As indicated in our last report, we have received support from Niramax to replace the old pitched roofs with water-proof membrane and new slates. The roof at the East end of the building has been completed and work on the main roof is expected to begin in April. We are very grateful to Niramax for helping us with this big but necessary project for our 111 year- old roof! No more leaks in the coming year, we hope.

Also, the male toilets have been upgraded, the Jim Thompson Room re-painted, electrical wiring inspected and a new electric oven installed in the small kitchen. Repainting of the kitchen is planned for this year. A new part-time cleaner has been employed.

The small meeting rooms continue to be used on a regular basis. Besides the Church Office and the Community Drop-In, a thriving Beading Group and a Craft Group meet every week. Various community and Church groups and private bookings also use the rooms from time to time.

The main hall is used by four different badminton groups; the Teesside Twirlers, (baton twirling), twice a week and are gaining success in national competitions; two 'Zumba' sessions, Monday morning and Thursday evening; and recently an extra session of Stranton Toddlers has started on Friday mornings.

In the small hall: the Natalie Ward Dance Group meet on Tuesdays after school; a small independent church group meet on Sunday mornings until they can fund their own premises; Burn Valley North Residents Association; HBC community consultations; and all the regular church affiliated groups: Wednesday Communion, Mothers' Union, Matts Mates after-school club, Be Free junior youth club, Stranton Toddlers, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Boys Brigade. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts no longer meet for various reasons, after many years under the leadership of Sylvia and Ken Shepherd.

A Community Christmas Week-End was held again for the third year in a row, with a Craft Fair, children's activities, refreshments, a pantomime and this year, Stranton Sunday Morning Worship came to St Matthew's too. It was a wonderful week-end, for which many thanks are owed to volunteers from BVN Residents Association and the team from St Matthew's.

I would like to thank all the St Matthew's Community Centre Committee for their hard work and commitment over the past year; Trish Playfor, in her role as church administrator, welcoming people into the building; and all those who help out in other ways in the life of the Centre.

Diana Wanduragala

Chair of St Matthew's Community Centre Management Committee