

APCM Report of Pastoral Committee

Members of the Committee:

Sue Powditch (Chair & Secretary) Nicky Gibbard
Anne Cheeseman Revd Alec Gill
Sarah Shackleton

Specific pastoral situations were discussed as they arose, during the year, and various members of the team undertook to ensure that support and encouragement would continue to be given to the people concerned.

When considering the overall pastoral care at St John's, it was realised that, although we have had a considerable number of new people coming into the church over the last year or so, several of them have only come for a few months or weeks and then stopped. Although we seem to be good at welcoming people into the church, we're not always successful in integrating them into the church family.

There could be many reasons for this. It's noticeable that young people with families integrate quite easily into that part of the St John's family. However, people who come on their own or couples who aren't in the bringing up children phase, are not necessarily becoming part of our family. Whilst the fellowship after the main Sunday service is well supported, and some of us do look out for and engage with anyone on their own, a lot of people sit with the people they already know well, and form what looks like a clique that anyone coming from outside would hesitate to 'break into'.

The committee feel that everyone should be encouraged to engage with people they don't know or don't know well. It was also felt that there needs to be occasional events – like the games afternoon – to which people can be invited, that would give them the opportunity to do something together as well as enjoy fellowship and refreshments. Sue is organising one of these, Cardmaking exclusively for adults, in October.

'Messy Church' events last October and February and April of this year were much enjoyed by all who helped and took part, and the Quiet Contemplative events in the church were equally appreciated. However, the Committee, and those who have volunteered to help with Messy Church events, recognise that it will take some time before this initiative will bear fruit in terms of encouraging people on the fringes of the church family to become more engaged, and that we have to keep things simple so that it doesn't become a huge burden. The next event is to be held in September with the theme of Harvest.