**Mission & Outreach Committee – 2018/19 Annual Report**

When the committees were set up in 2017 we had a great start at getting out in to the village and running events that alerted people to the presence of the church and the facilities/support/groups that it offered. We have continued to build momentum in the past 12 months, with many successful events held and we think it has been another really productive year.

As we said in the last report we are a living, breathing, vibrant church full of welcoming people, who are passionate about sharing God's gifts with the wider community – and it is crucial this is how our community pictures us. We still feel that this is absolutely at the core of all that we do in order to help grow the church and welcome new people in.

**Events in the last 12 months**

On Easter Sunday 2018 we held a very successful **Easter Egg hunt** in the church and surrounding grounds. Over 100 people in total (children, parents, grand-parents etc) enjoyed egg hunts, music, dancing, chocolate prizes and the real Easter message as well.

Back by popular demand, later in April we held a **village quiz** in the church itself with largely local themed questions. This included a pie and pea supper and was attended by around 60 people, with a mixture of people from the church congregation and wider community.

A fabulous day had by all at our **Sunday Supplement BBQ** on 8 July 2018 – with bouncy castle, BBQ, music from the worship group and games for all to enjoy. The weather was kind to us this year and allowed everyone to enjoy relaxing in the sun with their picnic chairs and blankets. Around 100 people attended the event during the course of the afternoon.

Another early morning in September meant another successful **Breakfast outreach event** at the train station in South Milford. We handed out a bag with breakfast items and a leaflet outlining upcoming church events to about 250 locals. We received wonderful feedback and were able to make contact with commuters, parents, school children, exercise class attendees and general passers by.  Thank you to the mid-week fellowship group for packing the bags the night before, and to members of the congregation who got up early and came to support this event, it was lovely to have you as part of the team bringing smiles to the villagers.

**Our second Alternative Halloween event was held on October 31st, allowing children and families a safe place to go and have fun on Halloween instead of walking the streets. This seems especially popular with the families of young children. The theme this year was a** "light party" and how we can be the light in the world to others, whilst showing Jesus as the light in our world too.

We took part in hosting a **Tearfund Quiz** in November which was part of a national Tearfund event. Those who attended enjoyed a delicious pie and pea supper prior to the fun quiz and helped to raise money for a great cause.

**Christmas Wreath making – another back by popular demand, we ran this event in mid November for 50 ladies, the vast majority of whom were from outside the church congregation. The ladies made beautiful wreaths for their doors, whist enjoying a social evening with mince pies and mulled wine/spiced apple. This event is an excellent opportunity for people to come alone and meet new people. We were blessed by Margaret Fiddles running an excellent evening with her colleagues, and teaching us all the tricks of the trade.**

A **candlelit procession** was held after the Carols in the Park village event, allowing families the chance to walk with a candle from the park to the church, where they leave the candles at the front of church. The candles stayed lit for the village carol service that followed. Some of the families stayed and enjoyed a glass of mulled wine and mince pie before the carol service, and some stayed for the service itself.

**Nativity on the Streets** was held on Saturday 22nd December and was an excellent idea thought of by Craig! It involved a walk around the village acting out the nativity and bringing it to life in a new way. There was a short scene acted out at each location and the whole group sang an appropriate carol at each location. Cast members were great sports in dressing up and it drew a huge crowd of over 100 people in total, most of whom moved from place to place around the village.

**Regular events that continue to thrive:**

* **Sunday evening service** – we would like to continue and grow this as the congregation has grown (around 20 is fairly typical) and this relaxed, informal worship (with our worship band) offers something different to traditional Sunday morning services. We would like to move to weekly services, however this will not be possible at the current time (with David leaving and no new vicar in post as yet). However, the monthly evening service will continue after David has left, led my Alex and supported by others including Craig as worship lead.
* **Wednesday evening fellowship** – we would like to keep this open house, informal discussion in a relaxed welcoming environment. Alex and Oana will be hosting this once David and Liz move on.
* **Beer and banter** – This has grown over the year and now has around up to 20 attendees who drop in from month to month to enjoy a chat with other men in the village.The attendees of this are not all regular church goers but very much part of the church family. This year they have got involved in the grass cutting rota, played roles in the Nativity in the streets and have helped set up for events. Church is not just on a Sunday but about building relationships with our neighbours year round in a relaxed setting.
* **Tea and Tots** continues to be a wonderful event held fortnightly at Grove House, where the elder generation enjoy time with the tots of the village over a nice cup of tea.
* Whilst not organized by the mission group, Wednesday groups of **Drop in and Caterpillar** offer weekly gatherings for adults and parents/babies respectively – these are enjoyed by many and show the church reaching out to the wider community in a positive way.

**Possible future events / activities**

* **Another summer BBQ** for the church congregation and wider community with fun, games, and worship music.
* **Another village themed quiz** – probably being held around June/July time.
* **New Years Eve early party** – the idea behind this is that by starting early, families can attend. We were considering the idea of New Year around the world, getting your passport stamped at various stations (corresponding to the time New Year occurs at different places across the world) and trying different foods and activities. Only at the thought stage but certainly an option to be explored.
* **Couples course and** **Parenting course** – One or both of these could be run later in the year. The idea would be to have these in someone’s house, playing videos and having discussions, once a week for four weeks, with a meal at the start of each evening. Aimed at those due to be married or who have been married for years or adults with young children.
* Later in the year we suspect we may repeat the following successful events from prior years:
  + Breakfast outreach
  + Alternative Halloween party
  + Christmas flowers / wreaths evening
  + Candlelit procession linked to Carols in the Park
  + Nativity on the Street, take two!

We would encourage people with ideas for new events to be bold, come forward with ideas and/or offer to help organise them, with the help of others in the congregation as required.

As ever, the regular church events (such as patronal festivals, the Harvest Supper and the Agape meal) require lots of support and effort to ensure they run smoothly. We would encourage all members of the congregation who are able to offer their support to these events to do so – this will ensure that these events continue to run smoothly and that all the work is not done by a small group of the congregation. Offering to help move furniture or serve refreshments is often a task that gets overlooked but is essential to making these events a success, so please offer to help where you can.

Similarly, many of the outreach events require support and manpower to ensure they run smoothly. If people would like to help with this, please make themselves known to the Mission & Outreach group, and we would welcome your support.