

GURNARD: Dance afternoon



WORSHIPPERS at All Saints, Gurnard, held a fun dance afternoon to raise money for the Isle of Wight Parkinson's Society. Fitsteps teacher Ali Hinde provided the music and choreographed dance routines. Around 50 people packed the church to try their hands at tangos, jives and quicksteps. It raised £230 for the charity.

NEWPORT: community groups



ST JOHN'S Church has a busy, well-used hall which hosts two weekly clubs for older folk, two toddler groups, an Alzheimer's cafe, dancing groups and social events. The church-run toddler group attracts 20 under-fives and their carers each week. Its 2020 Vision aims to refresh the building with extended community facilities. Fundraising and consultation is in hand.

NITON: Stonework repair



WORSHIPPERS at St John's Church, Niton, are celebrating after the confirmation of a £106,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Work will start this summer to repair its stonework. There will also be a programme of heritage events taking place in 2016, a bell-ringing demonstration and a heritage picnic. Find out more at 10am on February 28 in the church.

GURNARD: Community cafe



THE chance for people to chat over coffee at All Saints proved so popular that the event has outgrown its original meeting room! On the fourth Thursday of each month, the church offers free coffee and people who will listen. It's the perfect place for a friendly chat or to share a confidential problem. Churchgoers invite neighbours and friends, and it's usually full!

CARISBROOKE: Knitting group

INSPIRED by our Pentecost 2013 celebrations, the Carisbrooke Society of Crocheters and Knitters have met monthly in the local pub ever since. One project is to make blankets for the local hospital's children's ward. In 2014 and 2015, they held Wool Festivals, decorating St Mary's Church and selling items they had made, which brought many into church.



VENTNOR: Messy Church



MESSY Church was relaunched in June 2014 in St Francis Primary School, once a month on Saturday afternoons. Between 30 and 60 children and adults get the chance to enjoy messy arts and crafts, a time of worship and a meal. Most have no connection with local churches, and some share their troubles with the helpers as they eat together.

COWES: Schools outreach

ST Mary the Virgin, Cowes, is used by Cowes Enterprise College and Cowes Primary School, among other local organisations. For the primary school's Christmas service, there were 1,000 people in the church over two services. There is a growing congregation, and all the major services, concerts and events over Christmas were better attended.



Island churches celebrate as joint deanery launched

More than 300 Christians from Island parishes gathered for the official inauguration of the Isle of Wight Deanery.

Excited worshippers gathered at Cowes Yacht Haven for the event that would bring together the former East Wight and West Wight deaneries.

Bishop Christopher, senior members of diocesan staff and Bishop's Council members joined Island churchgoers to hear the formal reading of the Pastoral Order that would inaugurate the new deanery.

Also present were the Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, Major General Martin White, and the High Sheriff, Ron Holland, with leaders from other denominations and heads and chairs of governors from church schools. They saw displays about the important work being done by parishes all over the Island to reach out to those who don't yet go to church - some of which are reproduced on these pages.

The head boy and head girl from Christ the King College gave Bible readings, a joint choir of more than 80 people from across the Island sang anthems, and a music group led songs of praise.

A short video entitled 'Your Kingdom Come' set the scene, explaining why the Isle of Wight is such a special place. You can see it too on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/IoWPlan.

Members from each of the six clusters brought forward symbols to reflect characteristics of life on the Island: an ancient book to remind people of its history; some toy sheep to reflect its agricultural industries and rural landscapes; a bucket and spade to represent the important of tourism; a carrier bag from one of the Island retailers to represent commerce; a white ensign for the sailing tradition and industry; and a set of ferry timetables, because they play such



large part in every Islander's life.

Archdeacon Peter Sutton gave an update on the Isle of Wight Plan, which had been originally drawn up last year.

The Rev Nigel Porter, the Isle of Wight's lay ministry development officer, spoke about the success of the lay pastoral assistant courses; and the Rev Ruth Tusching, diocesan spirituality adviser, spoke about the spirituality days and pilgrimage trails happening in 2016.

Victoria James, diocesan stewardship adviser, talked about the island-wide stewardship programme for 2016-17, and the Rev Amanda Bloor, who was recently appointed as priest-in-charge of Bembridge and associate diocesan director of ordinands, spoke about plans for nurturing vocations beginning with a vocations weekend in April.

Bishop Christopher preached and read the Pastoral Order that created the new deanery, which was followed by an act of commission and prayers for the work and ministry that lies ahead.

The bishop said: "We gather here today

to celebrate one very particular and special place: the Isle of Wight. The symbols you've brought today remind us that we experience life on the island with all our senses - with the smell of the sea air, the taste of the food that's grown here, the sound of the announcements on the Isle of Wight ferry, the sight of tourist attractions that people travel miles to enjoy, the touch of money changing hands and goods exchanged.

"Each of these experiences deepens our love for this place and our belonging together. And they are the gifts that, as one united deanery, form the core tools of your witness as together you minister and teach, comfort and evangelise in Jesus' name.

"Whether you choose to provide encouragement in the form of chocolates from Ryde or Godshill; whether you provide hospitality perhaps including some locally grown garlic or chillis or tomatoes; whether you decide together to launch a new mission to the boating community on the island or sense God's call to reach out to tourists in fresh ways,



the advent of the new deanery releases you to work collaboratively in fresh and exciting ways. You all have a stake in tourism; you all have a stake in agriculture, in the poorer estates of the island, in the sea faring communities, in the history and heritage of this place.

"So work together, grow together, enjoy this opportunity to make new friendships between individuals and fresh connections between parishes that previously had little contact. And do so always in the name of Him who, in the words of St Paul, "by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" - Jesus Christ our Lord."

As part of the Isle of Wight Plan, new clergy appointed will also be given other specific island or cluster responsibilities. Among those who have already taken on extra roles are the Rev Sue Theobald, who has responsibility for developing ministry to the elderly, and the Revs Allie Kerr and Veronica Brown, who will help inspire young vocations.

Others will take charge of liaison with prison and hospital chaplaincies, communications, schools and education, children and young

people, tourism, festivals, stewardship, spirituality and pilgrimage.

To deepen discipleship, there will be a common Lent Course this year to help parishes tackle these issues. It is called 'Five Words: Open, Pilgrim, Disciple, Servant and Mission.'

And to heighten the sense of pilgrimage, some pilgrimage trails will be introduced this year, incorporating churches that have been designated as pilgrimage churches. Bishop Christopher will launch the first of these trails on July 31. And in March 2017, the Archdeacon will lead an Isle of Wight pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

After the inauguration, people went home with a specially produced 'inauguration carrier bag' containing the latest version of the Isle of Wight Plan and leaflets about activities and events on the Island in the coming year.

And Archdeacon Peter said: "It is difficult to imagine quite what the Church will look like in the years to come, but this plan should have a real impact on our future as a joint deanery.

"What is critical to the development of the Church on the Island is the commitment to collaborative working and engagement with community as we seek to live, pray and serve."

(Left and above): Some of the 'success stories' from Isle of Wight parishes on display at Cowes Yacht Club during the evening; (below, left): Islanders were led in worship by a special choir and music group from across the Isle of Wight; (below, right): There was fun and laughter on a special evening. See www.facebook.com/CofEPortsouth for more. (Photos courtesy of David Bennison and Mandy Meadows)

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