

She's run this club for more than 25 years

WHO is our unsung hero this month? Shirley Oliver, from St Francis Church, Leigh Park.

Who has nominated her? Fellow congregation member Beryl Jones.

Why is she a hero? Shirley has been running the social club in St Francis church hall for more than 25 years. It does a fantastic job of providing a night out for parishioners who might otherwise find it hard to meet others.

Every Friday, she buys the rolls, then turns up in time to prepare refreshments for the first guests to arrive at 5.30pm. She calls the bingo numbers and organises the raffle prizes, as well helping people feel at home.

On top of that, she also organises the rotas for servers, intercessors and Bible readers on a Sunday morning at church.

"Shirley's husband Bill was churchwarden and they both work so hard for the church," said Beryl. "Shirley's not been in great health and walks with two sticks, but she never complains."

Why does she do it? Shirley and Bill originally started coming to St Francis back in 1981 when they accompanied their son to the

unsung hero

We're highlighting those unsung heroes in our congregations, who volunteer to do the behind-the-scenes jobs in our churches, like cooking, cleaning and tidying. Do you know someone in your church who you could nominate to be featured on this page?

church – and they've kept going ever since. Shirley offered to help out with the social club when the previous leader retired, and found herself in charge. It attracts 30-40 people, many of whom come each week.

"It is a very friendly church, and this was just one of those jobs that needed doing," she said. "There's a group of us who help, but I do the calling of the bingo numbers, and we'll sit talking to people while they have their tea."

"A few of those who come go to church, but most of them are from the local community. Sometimes it's the only day of the week they'll go out. If they have a problem, we can nip into the church and light a candle, but we don't push our faith onto people."

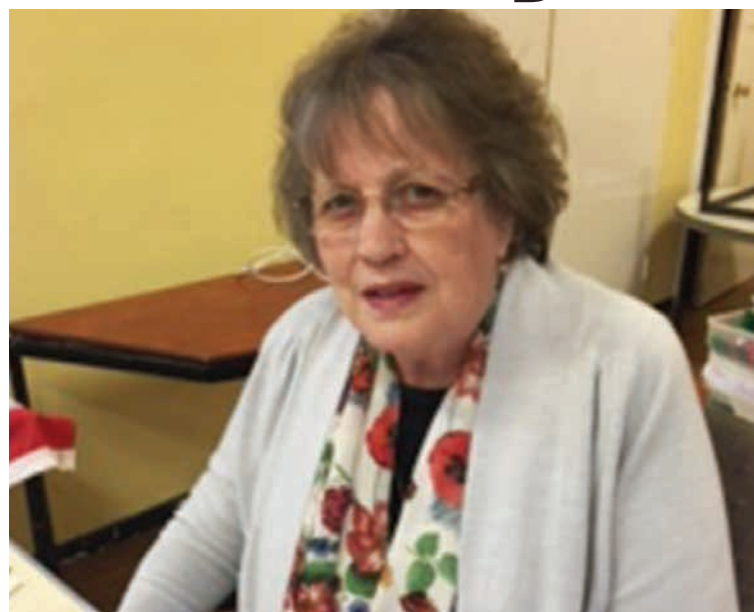
"We give them rolls, tea,

coffee and chocolate, and we offer them raffle prizes – I spend quite a lot of time looking for prizes!

"And it raises money for the church – about £4,000 a year on average. Of course we don't do it for the money, we do it to help people. And of course they all help each other out too. It's a good meeting place for people."

● Is there someone in your church who works hard behind the scenes, but rarely gets any public thanks? Why not nominate them as an unsung hero in the Pompey Chimes?

Fill in the form here and send it to Pompey Chimes, Peninsular House, Wharf Road, Portsmouth, PO2 8HB, or email neil.pugmire@portsmouth.anglican.org.



Shirley Oliver at the social club in St Francis church hall

I'd like to nominate _____
 from the parish of _____
 as my **unsung hero**. This is why: _____

 My name: _____
 My phone number or email: _____

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