

In the **Havant deanery**, some of its curates decided that they would form a Cairn together, as they face similar challenges as newly-ordained deacons and priests. They have met regularly to eat, study and pray. Their specific way of working was always to provide afternoon tea for each other - with teapots, cups, saucers and a cakestand.

The Rev Lizzie Davidson, curate at Warblington-with-Emsworth, said: "I've found it to be a safe space where we as curates can share what's going in our lives and in our curacies. We all support each other, can pray for each other, and can keep accountable to each other."

"We've valued it, and I'd encourage people to create Cairns for their ministry team because it's so good to have a support group of people who know the context you are in."

The Rev Neil Smart, who is our Lead for Revive, sees Cairns as essential to the wellbeing of our clergy and lay leaders, allowing them to be both centred on Jesus and seeking God's kingdom.

He said: "A big part of my role is to create a culture of wellbeing for all those who live and serve in the diocese. I see Cairns as a crucial component in making this happen. Research has shown that isolation is a key factor in damaging clergy wellbeing. Cairns can counteract that by providing places where trust and vulnerability are allowed to grow in compact, safe peer groups."

"The basic structure is to pray, eat and study together in order to support, encourage and remain accountable in our lives as disciples. Our hope is that this pattern will flow out to all those who seek to follow Jesus across our diocese."

To discover more about Cairns in our diocese, and to read some advice about how to create your own Cairn, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/Cairns.

Cairn leads to new toddlers' group

ONE of the things to emerge from the Cairn in Cowes is a brand new toddler group at All Saints Church, Gurnard.

'Cloud Tots' was launched earlier this year for under-5s and their parents and carers. They meet each Monday morning to play, share food, hear stories and join in songs.

It is being run by Willow Jordan, its new part-time children's and youth worker. She'll also help to create groups offering spiritual input during Sunday worship during the autumn as part of a plan to reach young families in the area.

This has happened because clergy and lay leaders in St Mary's and Holy Trinity, Cowes, All Saints Gurnard and St John's Northwood worked together in their Cairn to devise some plans, which will be paid for by strategic funding.

As well as the work with children and young people, the funding will also help to pay for the hospitality associated with discipleship groups such as Alpha, the Bible Course and a new course on developing the Christian spiritual life.

Among the parents enjoying the new toddler group is Bonnie Doble, who brings her two-year-old daughter Shekinah.

"We live just up the road, so it's really great to have this here," she said. "This has a calmer and more peaceful vibe than other toddler groups that I know. The volunteers set the atmosphere by being chilled out, and that rubs off on the rest of us. And I grew up in a church community, so I feel very comfortable here."

The team typically choose a Biblical theme for each week - such as Noah's Ark - and design a session with toys, song and stories around that theme. Parents and carers are given hot drinks, while children enjoy fruit and snacks. And it all takes place in the nave of the church itself, with chairs moved to create a play space.

And Willow Jordan, who brings her own two-year-old son Archie to the group, said: "I was involved with the toddler group anyway before I was appointed, and I knew they were looking for someone. I also enjoy the peacefulness of meeting here."

"We'd love to re-establish a Sunday School, maybe called 'Cloud School' to fit in with the toddlers' group. We could organise events, including Nativities at Christmas, maybe a barbecue or a picnic - we don't just want to be

confined to being inside church. We also want to encourage events to be multi-generational, with parents, grandparents and others."

The Rev Ryan Cook, priest-in-charge of Cowes and vicar of Northwood and Gurnard, explained that the Cairn had audited the churches' strengths and weaknesses before deciding to prioritise work with children and families, supported by funding from the national Church of England.

"There was also some additional legacy funding available in Gurnard, which we will use to support our children's and youth worker," he said. "The Cairns process has given us the confidence to take the risk and to spend this money - it's a step of faith."

"Because we're reaching out to young families, our Sunday School will initially focus on those aged up to six years old, but we're also growing a group for teenagers as well."

"And as far as our discipleship groups are concerned, we want to make sure we offer either Alpha, the Bible Course or our new course about spiritual life each term."

"The hospitality for these groups is important to make sure the people who attend feel welcome."



Top: Shekinah Doble, aged two, in the Noah's Ark created at Cloud Tots in All Saints Church, Gurnard; below: children taking part in the stories and songs with their parents and carers



Clergy and lay leaders meeting at a previous Diocesan Conference

Conference to include small groups

CAIRNS will play a big part in our Diocesan Conference this September - as we try to learn from God and from each other about how to be 'Jesus-centred' and 'Kingdom-seeking'.

The conference is the first our diocese has held since 2018 and will bring together more than 170 lay and clergy leaders for three days at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hertfordshire from September 8-10.

The whole conference will be structured around those delegates meeting in specially-created Cairns to share their

response to the input they receive. Each Cairn will be curated to ensure a good mix of backgrounds.

The conference will feature a conversation with Father James Mallon, the Roman Catholic priest based in Canada who wrote the *Divine Renovation* book that our Cairns have been studying. It aims to help parishes to develop vibrant faith communities centred on missionary discipleship.

And comedian Neil Mullarkey, a founder member of the Comedy Store Players, which specialises in

improvisation, will also take part.

He will lead an after-dinner session which aims to help clergy and lay leaders to teach their congregations more effectively by honing their improvisation skills.

All those who are coming to the conference have already been invited. As well as clergy, the delegates will include some Readers, Anna Chaplains, youth and children's workers, and deanery synod lay chairs.

More details are available on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/conference