

Church opens doors for community lunch

WORSHIPPERS in a Gosport church have marked a year of offering hospitality via a weekly lunch.

Twelve months ago, Holy Trinity Church discerned a fresh call to be more visibly present in the heart of its community.

Nestled among five tower blocks, home to many single-occupancy households, the church recognised an opportunity to offer companionship and welcome to those who might otherwise feel isolated or just wish to connect with others in their community.

From this prayerful reflection, the idea for a weekly Community Lunch was born.

Each Saturday, from 12noon to 2pm, a faithful team of volunteers prepares a simple meal – sandwiches or warming soup in winter – followed by a yummy pudding and, most importantly, good company. The lunch is offered freely, and guests are invited to linger, chat, and enjoy the shared time together.

Rather than hosting the lunch in the upstairs function room, they chose to gather in the church foyer, allowing guests to take in the beauty of its light-filled Romanesque interior.

Many are drawn to the sound of the organist practising for Sunday worship, and some venture further



Above: volunteers from Holy Trinity Church with the Mayor of Gosport; left: the cafe set up for the birthday lunch



into the sanctuary to explore or sit quietly.

The open doors have welcomed a rich variety of visitors: passers-by, neighbours responding to posters in their block, tourists from elsewhere in the country who found the church online, and even a French sailor who had just arrived in Gosport having capsized and been rescued from the Channel – thankfully, one of their regulars was able to connect him with a French-speaking neighbour who could assist.

At the end of October, worshippers marked one year of the Community Lunch with a joyful celebration. They

were honoured to welcome the Mayor of Gosport, Councillor Kirsten Bradley, her consort Jonathan, and ward councillors Lesley Meenaghan and June Cully.

They shared a special cake and homemade scones, courtesy of one of their volunteers, and were able to show their civic guests the quiet work of hospitality that unfolds each week.

Volunteer Helen Kendry said: “As we look ahead, we remain open to where God may lead. We hope this is just the beginning of a deeper, two-way conversation with our neighbours – one that draws on their gifts, stories, and hopes.

“We continue to listen, trusting that God is at work in the connections we make and the welcome we extend.”