

Group for dads and kids marks its first birthday

WHEN Jordan Hancock moved to Liss 18 months ago, he didn't know any other dads.

Then his wife came to the playgroup at St Mary's Church, and saw there was a group where dads could bring pre-school children on Saturday mornings.

Jordan and his children Vera, 4, and Alexander, 2, came to Who Let The Dads Out? – and became regulars. The monthly group includes coffee, bacon sandwiches and newspapers for dads, while children enjoy climbing frames, toys, and art and craft.

The group has just celebrated its first anniversary with cake and candles. And Jordan is among many who have appreciated what the group has to offer.

“It's a nice atmosphere, there's bacon butties and other dads to talk to, so I really enjoy it,” he said. “Vera would spend all her life doing craft, so it's great that she can do that while Alexander is building trains or going down the slides.

“It's a nice open space and it's never too busy, so you can always keep your eye on them. I recently started working from home, which means I can often do school runs and so on. But I know that's not the case for all dads, so the chance for them to spend quality time with their children is great.”



Paul Mills with his son George, aged 3, and daughter Emily, 1, at Who Let The Dads Out? in St Mary's Church, Liss; left: the Rev Richard Hutchins with the first birthday cake



The Liss group has attracted a dozen or so families most months. Volunteers remove the chairs from the nave and set up climbing equipment, toys, model cars and train sets, as well as art and craft activities.

“In a place like Liss where men typically commute to work during the week, it's great to provide a space for them to be with their own children and to meet other dads,” said Richard.

“There aren't many other places in Liss that could host such a group. We're also an unashamedly Christian group, so we may well also have interesting conversations about faith with some of those who attend.”

For details about how to set up such a group in your church, see: www.wholetthedadsout.org.uk.

The Rev Richard Hutchins, who is curate at St Mary's, launched the group in early 2018 after launching a similar group at his previous church, Christ Church in Portsdown. It's aimed at dads, uncles, godfathers, grandfathers and other male carers.