

Irfon Valley Parishes

ANNUAL VESTRY REPORT 2013

MARCH 9TH 5 PM



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Minutes from last year

Sunday 10th March 2013 Cilmerly Hall

Present: Reverend Lucyann Ashdown (Chair)
Melanie Hardwick, PCC Secretary
David White, Benefice Warden
Chris Fairhurst, Treasurer
James Ashdown
Judy White
David Brown
Jacquie Brown

Opening Prayer

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and noted from:

Richard Davies, Mary Richards, Mathew Wilson, Anne Brown, Dee Marshall, Giles Marshall, Gaynor Jones, Trudy Jordan, Richard Hussey.

Minutes of last Annual Vestry Meeting – 22nd April 2012

The minutes of the last Annual Vestry Meeting held on 22nd April 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

Matters arising:

- a. **Bligh Family:** MH has been given an address of the Bligh Family. MH and LA to meet to draft a letter.
- b. **Llangammarch Organ:** It has come to light that there is not so much work needed to the organ as first thought. It was noted that some cleaning can be undertaken by us.
- c. **Llangammarch Carpet:** Not yet done.
- d. **Llanganten – Harmoniums:** These have not yet been disposed of.

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

LA welcomed everyone to the IV Parish Annual Vestry Meeting and thanked them for attending.

Thanks were expressed to everyone in the Parish for their continued hard work and dedication.

The Parish remembers Enid Lennard and Bryan Watkins, faithful church members who sadly passed away in 2012/12.

Open Book and Messy Church are proving a success and The Wesley Festival will take place in May.

Reports

- a. **Ruridecanal Conference:** No report
- b. **Diocesan Conference:** No representatives attended the meeting. The next meeting would take place in October. At the last conference held in October 2012 the Diocesan Vision was discussed and some concerns were raised as being a rural parish.
- c. **Llanfechan Church:** Noted church report, a copy of which is filed in the minute book. Some work needs to be undertaken on cutting back some trees in the churchyard. LA to contact Danny Hope. LA expressed her thanks to Mary Richards and Melanie for their continued dedication to the church.
- d. **Llanganten Church:** Noted church report, a copy of which is filed in the minute book. Repairs to be undertaken to the building (vestry). Thanks were expressed to David White for taking the Christmas service and also to all members of the Worship Team. Church members would like to attract more families from the village to attend church.
- e. **Llanlleonfel Church:** Noted church report, a copy of which is filed in the minute book. Many events held – BBQ, opening of memorial garden. Drawings and Spec have been drawn up for the work on the ramp. In September the church lost a faithful member, Mrs Enid Lennard. The road to the church has been cut up due to the wet weather. The Christmas Carol service was well attended but it was rather wet and this affected the parking. The carpet has been ordered and will be put down shortly. Work needs to be done to the trees in the churchyard.
- f. **St. Cadmarch's Church:** Noted church report, a copy of which is filed in the minute book. In the cold weather the church is cold and this has affected the congregation attendance. Currently awaiting plans from Bryan Jones for the Screen area and Toilet. Evening prayer is now held on a Monday and Wednesday evening and is going well. A rota for cleaning/reading has been set up and is working well.
- g. **Fundraising Report:** Noted fundraising report, a copy of which is filed in the minute book. The Fundraising Committee is working well and holding a variety of events to raise money for the IV Parish.
- h. **Benefice Choir:** Noted Choir report, a copy of which is filed in the minute book. DW expressed his grateful thanks to Heather for being so helpful and encouraging. LA expressed her thanks to David White for his hard work with the choir and for the choir enhancing services.
- i. **Mission:** Open Book is going well. A stall at the Llanwrtyd Farmers Market raised £160 towards this. Messy Church is going well and attracting good numbers. More helpers required for this. The Wesley Festival will be held in May. This will hopefully attract the wider community. It was agreed to look at the Parish vision in more detail after the Wesley Festival. JB suggested establishing a Food Bank. Community Transport and Debt Advice could be incorporated into the Parish mission.
- j. **Meditation Group:** Christine Cornelius to be asked to write a report.

- k. **Lent Group:** There is an appetite for a small group to undertake group work which could be held at other times.
- l. **Wedding Prep Day:** LA informed members that she had held a Wedding Preparation Day on Saturday 9th March. 4 Couples had attended (out of 6 couples) preparing for marriage this summer.

LA agreed to do a supplemental report for the Annual Vestry Report 2012/13.

Finance

CF provided members with a fully comprehensive update in respect of the Parish Finance. During discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- £29,638-44 currently in the Bank (General Fund, Churchyard Fund, Restricted Fund).
- **Parish Share:** The 2012 Parish share has been paid.
- **Chancel Repair Fund:** It was noted that this funding was hard to access.
- **To date balances:** At the time of this meeting, both the General Funding and Churchyard Fund have a minus balance. Money come in is down on previous.

LA expressed thanks to Chris for his continued work on the Accounts. The work being undertaken is greatly appreciated.

CF to circulate the Budget for 2013. Members agreed the budget in principle.

Elections

- a. **Safeguarding Officer:** Trudie Jordan (proposed by JA and seconded by DW).
- b. **St. Cadmarch's Church Wardens:** Giles Marshall and Jean Booker.
- c. **Llanfechan Church Warden:** Melanie Hardwick
- d. **Llanganten Church Warden:** Richard Davies and Jacquie Brown.
- e. **Llanlleonfel Church Warden:** Chris Fairhurst and Mathew Wilson (LA to check with Mathew).
- f. **Benefice Warden:** Formal thanks were given to Jacquie Brown for being a Benefice Warden for many years. Her work has been greatly appreciated. Jacquie wishes to stand down. David White agreed to continue until April 2014. Thanks were expressed to David for his continued work and support to the Parish.
- g. **Health & Safety Officer:** David Brown (proposed by DW and seconded by CF). David expressed his wish to stand until April 2014. Thanks were given to David for his continued work on a job with increasing responsibility. Fire Risk Assessment reports have been undertaken for each church.
- h. **Sidespersons:** Individuals or by Church rota (proposed by JB and seconded by CF).
- i. **Treasurer:** Chris Fairhurst (proposed by MH and seconded by DW).
- j. **Diocesan Conference Reps:** James Ashdown and David White to continue.
- k. **Auditor:** Bryan Price (proposed by CF and seconded by JB).
- l. **Secretary:** Melanie Hardwick (proposed by LA and seconded by CF). LA expressed her thanks to Melanie for her hard work.

Grace

The saying of the grace closed the meeting.

All members were invited to stay for tea.

Lucyann's report

I can hardly believe that another year has passed, so much has happened and it seems only a blink ago that I was sitting down to prepare for last year's meeting. The word that characterises the past year for me is energy; a great deal of energy produced a number of different events that have taken place and activities that have taken root. We had the wonderful May weekend for the Wesley Festival, which involved many people from the Churches and the local communities. This generated a great deal of creativity, hard work, occasional moments of friction, moments of sublime beauty and all in all culminated into a very successful and memorable celebration. So a huge thanks to all of you who contributed to this event. It also helped us to keep our finances on an even keel, providing us with another reason to be thankful.

Ever aware that we need to be proactively reaching out to children and families, it is good to see that our 'Open the Book' team are now in their second year of presenting Bible stories to children in our local primary schools. The core team is a small, very committed and ecumenical. At times, it can feel precariously small, but God provides and somehow there always seems to be just the right number of people needed each week. Our thanks to Ruth Stickland for her incredible support and enthusiasm in getting us off the ground, Ruth has handed the leadership baton onto Rob Thomas, who is doing a great job. Messy Church continues to meet quarterly, moving around the various villages in the parish and drawing in a good number of families, as well as an enthusiastic team of willing and generous helpers. Our worship has been varied and this is largely thanks to the commitment of lay worship leaders, Readers and visiting clergy enabling us to sustain a vibrant pattern of services to nourish, challenge and inspire. We are also blessed to have the Benefice Choir whose increasing skill and confidence enhance our worship.

Given our 8 churches it's easy to focus on our buildings, but it is the quality of our relationships that demonstrates Christ's love and presence among us. It is my privilege to bear witness to the love, support and service you give to, one another, the community and to me, through your continued commitment to the people of these parishes.

As we meet this year, we are looking forward to the proposed changes heralded by The Church in Wales Review; these changes will reshape us, particularly as we begin to graft with the 4 parishes from the Upper Wye Group. Change like 'death and taxes', is always present, yet never ceases to surprise and disturb us. At times seeming to obscure our vision of God's plan and purpose within it: so as we celebrate what has passed and look to what lays ahead, may we hold onto God's promise to be with us, to guide and us and carry us, until we feel able to stand confidently in the new pasture that has been prepared for us.

Lucyann Ashdown.

Priest in Charge. Lent 2014

Growing more like Jesus

Praying together

The Christian Meditation group, which identifies with the John Main tradition in association with the World Community of Christian Meditators, continues to meet at 7.30pm on a Wednesday evening. During the cold winter months Mrs Christine Cornelius has very kindly opened her home to the group. The core group is small but faithful, with occasional attendance from others in the parishes. We are grateful to Andrew and Delyth Creswell for their continued commitment to facilitate the group.

A small group continue to meet for Evening Prayer at 6pm on Monday and Wednesday evenings at St.Cadmarch's church, Llangammarch and featured a celebration of RS Thomas during July 2013. Sadly due to illness and other commitments, there is currently no regular weekday prayer at St. James Church. Llanwrtyd Wells.

Exploring God's word together

This year a Lent Group has met in Llangammarch Rectory to explore the theme of Prayer, which has involved looking at different ways of praying. Overall, there has been a greater attendance this year, with people from across both benefices attending. We had also tried to convene a group in Beulah but without success. However, a request was made by a few for a Bible study group, as a result, a group met over in the autumn to explore Mark's gospel, this was led by James Ashdown.

Gathering in God's name

As well as our usual pattern of Sunday worship, we have discovered that people enjoy gathering together in nature. This was illustrated by the attendance at our invigorating sunrise service on Easter Day on the Epyynt. Rather amazingly it was a clear bright morning, with ice and snow, Simon Fraser on the bugle, ending with the timely and breathtaking emergence of the orange sun disc on the horizon. As well as this we had a little group gather for the pilot pilgrimage from Beulah to Llanfiangel, Abergwesyn in September.

In between these events we had an amazing May bank holiday, Wesley Festival, celebrating our connection through Llanlleonfel and Garth House, with Charles Wesley and family. Due to the exuberance and talent of David White and the hard work, support and generosity of a great many people; particularly The Fairhurst Family, Judy White, Caroline and Matthew Wilson and a good many others without whom the festival could not have taken place. We gathered inside on Thursday evening to hear Lord Leslie Griffith of Bury introduce us to the Wesley brothers. On a windy and wet Friday to watch children from Irfon Valley School and Ysgol Dolâfon re-enacted the wedding of Sarah Gwynne to Charles Wesley. We gathered on an improving Saturday to hear wonderful music, from choirs, musicians both young and old and an inspiring address from Reverend Pauline Warner. We ate cake, watched dramatic interpretations of conversations between John and Charles Wesley and enjoyed the beautiful flower arrangements and historic information and photographs. On Sunday we had to guard against sun burn as we were accompanied by the Cor Dolâfon and inspired by Reverend David Gamble. We held our breath as horses whinnied and reared during communion and as if that were not enough; we were treated to incredible concerts on Saturday and Sunday evenings, leaving us, inspired, exhausted and elated at what had taken place.

Not to be lost among these events are the many times we have gathered together over the past year; partly to raise money but also to offer an opportunity to gather with our neighbours. We've gathered in a variety of imaginative and enjoyable ways, whether by joining in a quiz night, a pancake lunch, a walk over the hills ending, in the pouring rain, to be revived by afternoon tea! We've gathered for evenings of Cawl a chan (soup and song), afternoon fetes and mornings of providing breakfast for the intrepid runners of the Man v Horse race. In all of these gatherings, we have been blessed by so the generosity and hard work of so many people. We enjoy so much good will among our communities and give thanks to God for this privilege and opportunity.

Rev Lucyann Ashdown Priest in charge

Messy Church

This has now entered its second year, having met 5 times over 2013. We were astounded, delighted and slightly overwhelmed to have over 80 people attend the first Messy Church in Llangammarch last February. In June we were underwhelmed by having less than 20 due to not anticipating the timing of the dates with half term and the subsequent impact on communication. Overall, the average attendance seems to average 29 adults and 30-5 children. We always have a great deal of fun and make a lot of mess. We've made pigs out of marshmallows for the 'prodigal son'; created salt dough figures of temptation, last lent; and decorated cakes for our Pentecost party, to name just a few of our activities.

Initially, we met together to plan and pray, but now it seems to work better to plan by email. There is a team of very generous helpers who provide food, refreshments, craft materials as well as their time, patience and a desire to see children and their families exposed to the Gospel.

We've been supported financially by the Llanwrtyd Festival Committee, a sponsored slim by Jenny, Marion and Victoria at Llangammarch Post Office and donations from those who attend. My thanks to all of you who enable this important mission initiative, whether through your presence, your giving or your commitment in prayer.

Lucyann Ashdown Priest in Charge

Open the Book

"Open the Book" offers a programme of themed and dramatised Bible stories presented by our small Team of volunteers to our two local Primary Schools, Irfon Valley School at Garth and Ysgol Dolâfon at Llanwrtyd. Along with "Messy Church", it is a means of reaching out into the local community. It is an unfortunate feature of our lives today that in many parts of the country children could go through their entire life without ever learning about Adam and Eve, Noah, David and Goliath, Jonah, etc. – or even the life and teachings of Jesus and the stories of the New Testament. Indeed research tells us that there are now two generations who have had no or very limited exposure to the Bible.

Our task is therefore to present meaningful dramatised stories to children of Primary School age in a lively, engaging, informative way. Each session when presented at a School Assembly is around 10 minutes long and we use drama, mime, props, our version of scenery, colourful costumes and some of the children themselves to present selected stories from the Bible using "The Lion Storyteller Bible" for each of our presentations. After each

story there is a time for reflection and prayer, for this aspect of the assembly we use the prepared materials from 'Open the Book' organisation, which recently merged as an umbrella organisation, as a member of the Bible Society.

During the course of last academic year and now the present academic year we have presented a variety of Old and New Testament stories. Currently this Term we are involved in delivering short stories from the New Testament illustrating the work and teachings of Jesus. The children (and staff) are always excited to hear we are coming and are very responsive to our visits. They enjoy the presentations and like to participate. The encouraging feature is the evident fact that so many remember the previous story and stories and feedback from both pupils and school staff has been very positive. Indeed, it is very satisfying to be addressed in the street by a school pupil and be recognised as "Jesus", or "Jonah", or "you are from Open the Book".

Our Team holds a practice rehearsal in Church (St. James') every fortnight on a Tuesday afternoon, in preparation for the presentations that are then held in schools the following week. If anyone feels that they would like to participate and join in with our programme, please do not hesitate to contact us! You would be very welcome.

Rob Thomas Open the Book team leader

Benefice Choir Report

Our Benefice Choir can report a year of consolidation and considerable development. We have established a loyal and consistent membership from across both Benefices and even beyond. We meet on a regular basis of fortnightly rehearsals when we prepare for joint benefice services and other special occasions. It is these special occasions which have extended our capabilities and range. Over the year we made a contribution to the Wesley Festival in May and for a wedding in September. Special services have included a memorable contribution to the service commemorating Ann Griffiths at Llanfechan Church when we sang a specially composed setting of Ann Griffiths' poem "Wholly counter to my nature" by David White. While our basic function is to enrich eucharist services when the whole Double Benefice comes together we also sing for special services such as All Souls at Llangammarch and the deanery service for Epiphany at Eglwys Oen Duw in January.

The above demonstrates the range of what we have done over the year. Our repertoire is modest but is becoming more ambitious as we gain confidence. It was nice to be mentioned kindly in despatches at the joint Benefice PCC review in January. We are proud that we are representative of the whole Double Benefice in our membership and we like to feel we make a substantial contribution to the sense of belonging together of all our churches.

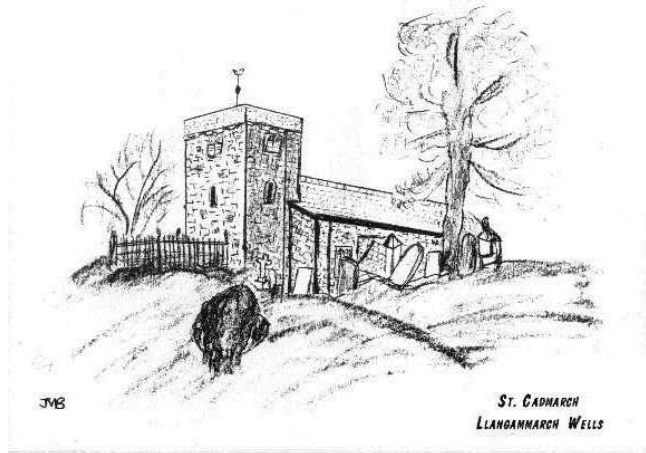
We would love to welcome new members. People are very welcome to talk to choir members or to David (01982 552251) Practices are informal, last just an hour, and are held at the Annex at Eglwys Oen Duw on Monday evenings. Members often tell their conductor what to do and correct his singing. Sometimes they tell him how they should sing and point out what he has not heard correctly, and remind him what he has put in his diary.

David White

Church Reports

St. Cadmarch's, Llangammarch

We have maintained the usual pattern of services throughout the year, with some inevitable alterations around Christmas. Notable additions to the calendar were the Advent Carol service and a concert by the Builth Male Voice choir. Congregations have been fairly stable but we do not seem to be capitalising on the success of "Messy Church" or turning the wider community support for church events into increased Sunday attendance. Evening prayer continues to be a peaceful and enriching time for the few participants.



Several funerals have precipitated the decision of the Archdeacon that the churchyard is now full and alternative solutions are being investigated. The churchyard has been mown and tended to a standard commensurate with our funds and guided by wildlife advisors. Outstanding matters include the safety, or otherwise of the larger ash trees, and the possible instability of a box grave behind Church Cottage.

The building itself has had some remedial pointing done on the vestry, the consumer unit has been upgraded and all portable valuables have been treated with Smartwater. A quote has been received for the drawing of plans and building of a toilet block. Quotes have also been sought for a sound system and hearing loop from two contractors. It is intended that a faculty be applied for and grant aid sought.

Giles Marshall Church Warden

St. Afan's Church, Llanfechan

In 2013 we reduced our Services to 6 per year. We held 2 Communion Services (One at Easter and One at Christmas) and the other services were the Harvest which we held in Garth Hall jointly with Llanlleonfel Church which was a nice change followed by the supper. We also had, a Service focusing on Anne Griffith (Poet) and one other service which had to be cancelled. As the reduction of Services seemed to work well it has been agreed to continue with 6 services in 2014 and the following services have been arranged:-



Sunday 23rd February – Communion and Baptism of Owain Wyn Davies (11am)

Sunday 25th May – Service 'Blessing of the Fields and Livestock (afternoon service)

Sunday 10th August – Evensong with Celebration of John Penri (6pm)

Wednesday 8th October – Harvest Festival (7pm)

Saturday 1st November – All Souls Services (6pm)

Sunday 21st December – Christmas Communion Services for the IV Parish (11am)

I would like to thank Lucyann for all her help with the setting of our services.

The congregation of Llanfechan Church remains small but when services are now held, support and attendance from the wider parish for these services is very encouraging and the Church has been full.

My grateful thanks go to Miss Mary Richards for her dedication and faithfulness to the Church and for being our Organist.

The Church remains in a good state of repair structurally however work to the electrics at the Church needs addressing in due course. The path has become worn and is uneven however signage has been put up to warn visitors of this.

There has been no Weddings, Baptism or Funerals in the Church during 2013.

No fundraising events have been held of late but it is hoped that we can have some sort of a combined Summer Fete in 2014 with Llanlleonfel Church but this is yet to be decided.

Melanie Hardwick Church Warden

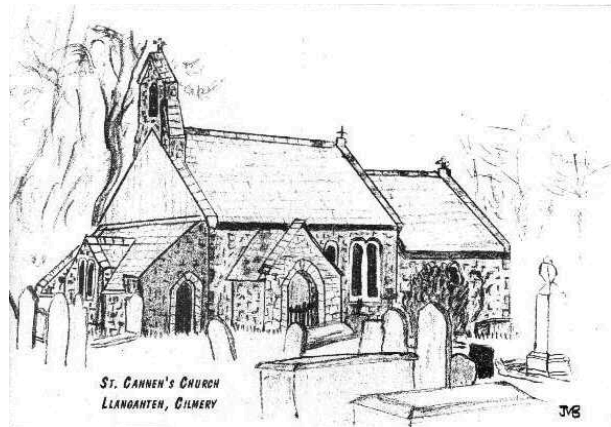
St. Cannen's Church, Llanganten

We had a quiet Christmas this year in Llanganten but lovely and meaningful.

General

We were very pleased to receive £1000 bequeathed from the family of the late Mr Eric Smithwaite (which will be used towards Llanganten Church repairs).

Thanks to David White, the Benefice Choir are organising an excellent programme of music to sing at the Parish's Ash Wednesday Service to be held at Llanganten on Wed 5th March. We will do our best to advertise the event and to welcome everyone to our Church.



Special Services

We have not had any baptisms, weddings or funerals recently. Harvest and our Christmas Service in Church went very well. As usual, Carols in the Prince on Christmas Eve set things off to a good start for Christmas. Led by Lucyann with readings by locals it was very well received. No-one from Cilmeri was confirmed this year.

Normal Services

First and third Sundays in December, were cosy. We have held regular services on the 1st Sunday in the month (led by the Worship Team or James Ashdown) and 3rd (Eucharist) Sundays. The children and young people who came regularly two years ago have now reached their teens and seem to be involved in sport and weekend jobs, preventing them from attending Church regularly and we do miss them. Illness has also played a part to reduce our numbers slightly over the winter. However the Worship Team work hard to produce first Sunday services to suit a wide range of tastes.

Fabric

We are waiting for the electrics to be upgraded. One of the fires requires a new element but this may mean a new fire will be in order. The torrential rain has also not helped with the damp problems, especially in the Vestry.

Fundraising

We are aware that we need to keep up the good work of the fundraising team. The annual summer fete went well in August. Thanks to all helpers for an excellent Harvest Festival in September.

Other

Although a former Church Hall, we have made very little use of the Village Hall during 2013, and we do hope that we can organise some Parish events during 2014 as well as the Summer Fete in August, e.g. a coffee morning or car boot, to help bring the community together as well as to welcome some new neighbours to the village.

Jacquie Brown Churchwarden

Llanlleonfel Church

The beginning of the year was very busy with the lead up to the Wesley Festival that took place in May.

In May the new carpets came for the alter rail, choir and organ area with enough left over to carpet the pulpit. These were given by the late Mrs Enid Lennard.

The Wesley Festival turned out to be a great success, all the events were well supported and it was nice to see such activity around the church and village. The weather played its part and gave us a rain free weekend culminating in the most memorable morning service that I can recall. The sun shone and people came, over 120 attended, some in costume others on horseback and some in just tee shirt and shorts. The Festival raised over £3,200.00. I'd like to thank all those who attended the various events and those who helped in all sorts of ways to make the whole event so successful. On the 6th July the wedding of Rachel Jones to Paul Sutton took place and on the 7th July Noah Cotterill was baptised.



The only highlight in the autumn was the Harvest Service and supper which we held jointly with Llanfechan. The service was held in Garth Village Hall followed by supper. Numbers were up and the supper, with hot food, was a real treat. Thanks go to all those who contributed with the food and decorations, the hall looked fantastic. We had the first 200 club draw after supper.

In November Chris Jones and I inspected the trees in the churchyard. He recommended one larch tree to be removed and two trees on the boundary with the Meakins to be pollarded as the first option but if either were hollow then it should be removed. One dead tree by the style at the old entrance could be trimmed of any dangerous bows but left standing for wildlife. Others trees require general maintenance to keep the in good order for the future. The two trees on the boundary are to be removed in March weather permitting.

Services continued on a monthly basis, attendances remain steady. Over the Christmas period we had our usual carol concert and this year it was our turn for the Christmas day service. The carol singing around Garth was again successful and raised £100.

On the 4th February Mr FA Wilson, who was church warden for over 40yrs, died at home after a short spell in Hereford hospital. The funeral service took place on Monday the 10th February. Over the years Mr Wilson worked hard to maintain the church and ground in the excellent condition it is today, he will be sadly missed in the community.

There have been no alterations to the building or grounds.

Chris Fairhurst Churchwarden

Diocesan Conference

12th October at Brecon Cathedral 2013

I was impressed by how little time the formal part of the Agenda took –up, from agreeing the minutes of the last conference through to unanimity on the accounts for 2012 -2013 and the election of members of the Local Ministry Development Group et al.

The essence of the conference was a series of Talks very different but clearly underpinned by Diocesan Vision. We are a family rooted in Christ and transforming lives by:

- Gathering as God's people
- Growing more like Jesus
- Going in the power of the spirit,

Talk 1- Presentation – The Lab, introduced by Bishop John and Canon Dr Ian Davies. This was followed by Worship led by the Lab

Talk 2 – Ministry Teams introduced by Ven Alan Jevons.

Talk 3 – Vision Stories introduced by Canon Janet Russell

Talk 1 and the subsequent Worship were from my perspective the most uplifting, emotional and spiritual experience, coloured by the fact that I lived on a council estate and my parents lived for 20 years in Newport, the city where The Lab is based.

Some 7 years ago the Rev Justin Groves converted his thoughts into action by co – founding The Lab – a missional community of young adults. Justin is clearly a man that has the spirit of the Lord within him which he displayed during the Worship that followed the Talk. Briefly, in attendance from the Lab was James Henley Team Leader. He's been with the Lab for 6 years and develops young leaders and provides the vision for all they do. James is currently training for "Ordained Pioneer Ministry" He was supported by: Matt Davies – Away Community Leader; Sarah Gregory Eli Music Leader; Abbie Cook – Eli Music Leader; Phillipa Traynar – Youth Work Apprentice; Troy Cousins - Youth Work Apprentice. Each of the above contributed to either the Lab presentation and / or the Worship playing instruments, singing and leading prayers. All are under 25 at a guess. The Lab is a community of missional people, groups and initiatives. They are all about encouraging experimental forms of church and mission in and around Newport Gwent.. This seems to be achieved by growing "new forms of church" with those that have no church background. Also serving local communities, particularly working with young people in areas of deprivation and producing young leaders who will lead the church in the future – this is vital component of what they do. Their thrust is:

- Missional - serving those outside the church

- Formational - growing disciples of Jesus
- Ecclesial - forming mature church communities
- Contextual - listening to people and entering their culture.

The Lab comprises several different entities which have their own focus and identity but firmly grounded in church. Each community is committed to be God's hands and feet in a given locality or cultural grouping, developing initiatives which help to meet the wider community and growing expressions of church

The Lab - Alway

The Always estate is at the edge of Newport Gwent, It is recognised as one of the most deprived areas in Wales and therefore sadly by default the UK with over 60% of the population being under 25. The Lab began work there in 2008 and formed a residential community of young adults to invest time in their community and help build relationships in turn with other local young people.

The Cwtch is the Labs new city community.

The objective is to create a safe, honest space to worship, doubt, love and trust each other. They share stories of hope, joy, beauty and creativity and at the same time share the burdens, worries during these desperately hard times.

The Lab - Duffryn

The Duffryn is another deprived area of Newport and in 2012 one of the Team Leaders, referred to earlier and his wife moved to the estate in partnership with the Duffryn Community Church. They are in the process of developing links with the local people.

Eli Music is yet another Lab initiative which provides opportunities to children and young people to develop through music.

Newport County Council in 2012 significantly reduced the Music Support Service funding, many children of disadvantaged backgrounds no longer having free access to musical coaching. Eli Music stepped in providing workshops that develop musical ability as well as supporting the social development of the disadvantaged young children.

For me, these young Christians are doing wonderful work and we should all applaud their efforts and unbounded enthusiasm. The presentation was followed by Worship led by James Henley. Each of the Labs' young people mentioned previously joined in with gusto, praising the Lord with such joy, using guitar, electric organ and an improvised drum. The latter played by a young apprentice recruited from Duffryn. The Rev Justin Groves, the visionary behind the Lab was clearly and demonstrably uplifted as were some of the attendees!

Howell Evans

Deanery conference

The deanery conference was on the theme of lay ministry and the keynote address was given by James Ashdown, one of our Readers. He provided a brief analysis of the deep rural context in which we are seeking to minister and based on a reading of the Feeding of the 5000 suggested we needed to draw on our own resources with an entrepreneurial attitude which was also compassionate. The shape of the rural church is going through a period of critical change and will not remain the same, but the message of the Feeding of the 5000 is that whatever happens there will be sufficient.

Margaret Mead provided the following thoughts on the day

POSITIVES:

1. Good mix of diocesan staff, clergy & lay people.
2. Good to see lay people leading sessions (particularly the intro by James).
3. Very positive approach and feedback from people who are involved in lay ministry in the deanery and who are clearly enthusiastic and enjoy what they are doing.
4. Acknowledgements of the difficulties of rural ministry but no moans and groans or negative 'we can't do that here' stuff.
5. Good to see how much is being done by lay people and the variety of work being done.
6. Affirmation of lay ministry by 'the powers that be' – not just using us because of a lack of clergy.
7. Very good venue, food etc. Made to feel welcome.
8. No mention of lack of money, fund raising or parish share!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

NEGATIVES

1. Average age of participants over 50yrs if not more – a reflection of our congregations.
2. Clergy too quick to jump in with the answers – very intimidating for a lot of lay people.
3. Some clergy obviously still finding it difficult to get away from the 'them and us' syndrome, I got the feeling that some were very uncomfortable with the whole thing. They need more training in the value of lay ministry. We don't want to feel patronised by the boys club, or inferior to it!
4. I think all the lay people who were there are already involved in lay ministry so preaching to the converted

Fundraising

The small band of members of the IV Parish Fundraising Group has worked tirelessly and effortlessly and have raised to date just over £1,000.

In 2013 we held a variety of events. The Walks followed by food proved to be popular; of course some were hampered by the elements. We also held events such as an Easter Bingo, a Quiz Night and a Concert with Builth Male Voice Choir at St. Cadmarch's Church.

In 2013 the Wesley Festival took place which was masterminded by David White. This event generated just over £3,000 for the Parish. Thanks must go to David White and all other individuals who helped.

Church fetes were held in Llangammarch and Llanganten as well as Harvest Suppers and this raised £1,565.

Our group remains small and new members on the Group would be very much welcome. If you know anyone who would like to be part of our 'team' then please get in touch.

We have recently planned a varied calendar of events for 2014 which are:-

FEBRUARY: Quiz at The Cammarch, Llangammarch

MARCH / APRIL: Possible Pamper Day (TBC)

MAY: Sunday 4th - Concert in Garth Hall at 6.30pm with local Talent

JUNE: 22nd - Duck Race, Walk and BBQ at Pwllgwilym c/o Richard & Jane

JULY: Cream Tea and Walk at Tynllwyni c/o Dee & Giles

AUGUST: Garth Walk & Church Fetes

SEPTEMBER: Car Treasure Hunt

OCTOBER: Quiz at The Cammarch, Llangammarch

NOVEMBER: Talk by David White and John Wilson **Sat 8th**

DECEMBER: TBC

IV Parish 200 Club

The 200 Club is a great success with a constant flow of new members and is generating income for the Parish. We continue to hold 4 draws a year with the winners publicised on the Parish web site and in the Signpost Magazine. New members always welcome. Thanks must go to Chris Fairhurst for all his work with the 200 Club.

Melanie Hardwick

On behalf of the IV Fundraising Committee

Finance

Accounts for 2013

		2013	2012
Total Bank Balance bfwd at 1st Jan		29638.44	25834.25
Income 2013	Planned Giving	7481.00	7949.60
	Cash	3263.73	1803.04
	Donations	3003.34	7220.00
	For Mission	99.38	0.00
	Tax Refunds	0.00	1712.72
	Legacy Gifts Received	0.00	0.00
	Grants	0.00	1500.00
	Money Raising	7757.00	3716.65
	Fees	1568.50	1339.76
	Investment Income	4.87	3.06
	Other Income Resources	5927.11	2118.59
		£58,743.37	£53,197.67
Expenditure 2013	Parish Share	9347.25	12475.00
	Clerics Expenses	3885.03	4475.76
	Other	0.00	0.00
	Maintenance of services	594.28	92.00
	General parish expenses	614.88	113.02
	Maintenance of churches	8731.99	5873.45
	Maintenance of other prop	0.00	0.00
	Exceptional Expenditure	667.00	0.00
	Parish	709.66	180.00
	Home / World	50.00	350.00
	Capital payments	0.00	0.00
	Cost of money raising	2658.13	0.00
		£27,258.22	£23,559.23
Total Bank Balances as at 31.12.2013		£31,485.15	£29,638.44

The above balance is split into three separate accounts as follows:-

General Account	£4,579.56	}	£31,485.15
Churchyard Account	£2,947.11		
Restricted Account *	£23,958.48		

* The restricted account for use only by named church is split as follows:-

Tower Fund		16108.05	}	£23,958.48
Benifice Choir		60.00		
St Cadmarch's		1180.00		
St Afon's		246.17		
Llanlleonfel		74.95		
Wesley Festival	Gen Fund	474.22		
St Cannen's		5750.00		
Messy Church	Gen Fund	65.09	}	

Balance at 31.12.13 **£31,485.15**

Debits

Churches	
Together	41.97
Tony Price	
(repairs)	320.21
Parish Share	3115.75

Total Debits **3477.93**

Credits

	0.00
	0.00
	0.00
	0.00
Total Credits	0.00

Irfon Valley Parish Total Account for 2013	£28,007.22
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Budget

			Annual	Month 2	
			Budget 2014	Actual 2014	Diff +/-
General Funds					
Support for Ministry	Parish Share @ 50% of £24,242		12,121.00	3,163.81	8,957.19
	Parochial Expenses of Clerics				
	Assume 50% of 4500.00		2,250.00	47.55	2,202.45
	Other			0.00	0.00
Parish Activities	Maintenance of Services		400.00	291.36	108.64
	General Parish Expenses		700.00	0.00	700.00
Church Property	Maintenance of Churches inc. Water	580.00			
	Insurance	1910.21	3,326.21	320.21	3,006.00
	Elec	576.00			
	Repairs + Heating Oil	800.00			0.00
	Maintenance of other property		100.00	0.00	100.00
	Exceptional expenditure			0.00	0.00
Grants and Financial Support	Parish Signpost etc.		200.00	0.00	200.00
	Home/World		200.00	0.00	200.00
Other Resources Expended	Capital payments		300.00	0.00	300.00
	Cost of Money Raising		400.00	60.00	340.00
Churchyard	Grass cutting		2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
			£22,497.21	£3,882.93	£18,614.28

Monthly income required to
maintain services

£1,874.77