



Looking Ahead

The last couple of months have continued to see small steps taking place as we 'return to normality'. Churches Together in Alresford held its first ecumenical service "in person" in a long time at St John's on 25th July with more than forty people present. Singing together and meeting again under the same roof was such a privilege and while we gave thanks for this, we also remembered those who were not able to be with us on that occasion. The service included CTIA's brief annual meeting at which Gary Carter stepped down as Chair to be replaced by James Pinniger for the next two years. The Committee is very grateful to Gary for having extended his term as Chair by an additional year and for guiding CTIA during the past three years with such sensitivity and positive outlook. We are delighted and grateful that he remains part of the Committee. Jon Whale continues as Treasurer (whilst truly ecumenically taking on additional responsibilities as the new Treasurer of St John's) and the rest of the Committee remains unchanged (see below). The existing committee would be delighted to hear from any member of our congregations interested in taking a more active role in Churches Together in Alresford and in joining our Committee.

Over the past 18 months or so the CTIA committee has embraced Zoom and whilst proving useful to enable the members of the committee to remain in contact with each other such meetings lacked the spontaneity and heartwarming – and on sporadic occasions hilariously chaotic - interaction of 'regular' in person gatherings. The Committee was delighted to meet in person in early August and hopes that nothing will prevent it from doing so on at least a quarterly basis from now on. At the August meeting the Committee was able to start outlining its plans and priorities for the coming months including a commitment to support Winchester Youth Counselling for an additional year since for obvious reasons our planned fundraising events had to be put on hold this year and last. We hope that our worshipping communities and the wider local community will help support our fund raising efforts for an organization whose value cannot be underestimated enough at present. Details of events will be shared as soon as possible.

In the meantime, there are other dates for our diaries. CTIA will again be supporting the Rotary Wessex Christmas shoebox appeal for disadvantaged children in eastern Europe. Please see the Alresford Rotary article in the October Arle Valley Voice or Alresford Rotary's website (www.alresford-rotary.org) or contact any CTIA rep for further particulars. It is hoped that this year nothing will prevent the CTIA Shoebox packing party taking place at St. Gregory's pastoral centre on Sunday 7th November from 2.00 p.m. We hope to be able to celebrate Advent and Christmas with a carol service and on Saturday 18th December by singing carols outside Wessex Pharmacy from 11.00 a.m. Please keep an eye on church notices for up to date information.

The return to normality must be a gradual one and for that reason the CTIA committee envisages that its next Away Weekend will not take place until at least 2023 but in the interim it is exploring other possibilities to enable us to enjoy together the fellowship and enriching conversations that such event always fosters.

Laura Brill

THE CTIA Committee currently consists of:

St John's: James Pinniger (Chair), Jackie Connell and Sarah Wilding

St Gregory's: Gerard Daley, Piers Armstrong, Rosemary Chambers and Laura Brill

Alresford Methodist Church: Gary Carter, Jon Whale and Ruth Wintle