

Annual Report of St Mary's Parish Visiting Team (PVT) for the period ending March 2020

The PVT has been established a number of years now and most of the team have been there since it began. A great deal has happened since then but our main aim of providing a listening ear, together with friendly and supportive discourse, remain central to our visits. Primarily, we assist and support the Rector and Ministry Team in the provision of pastoral care to the Church congregation and the wider community.

We are, by designation, a Christian body but this, in no way, limits or dictates our referrals nor the content of our conversations. We aim, above all, to provide companionship. Since referrals can be made directly, or through a third party, then each one has individual needs. They may be terminally ill or just under the weather. They may live alone, in isolation, or have many friends and relatives. They may not have any contact with St Mary's or they may want updates during a period of non-attendance. The permutations are endless but the common factor is that of companionship and possibly...a cup of tea!

There are many support agencies available to those in need. In no way do we wish to replicate these. We do though, seek to be both professional and confidential in all we undertake, including in the participation of Safeguarding training. We have had a very interesting and informative talk, given by Sarah (chaplain and assistant) from St Barnabas Hospice. This was also attended by members of the West Chilton PVT. They are a newly formed group who were trained by members of our own Team. Sarah's input gave us much to reflect upon in connection with visiting the terminally ill.

In the course of the last year we have added two new documents viz: *Remit of the Pastoral Visiting Team (PVT)* and a *Role Description* complementing the already active policies on *Lone Working* and *Group Supervision*. We have also discussed and adopted the policy of *Safeguarding* (bespoke version for the PVT) provided for us by St Mary's Safeguarding Officer, Mrs J Lee.

An audit taken in January 2020 showed that we have eight volunteers (including the Rector) and a list of twenty persons being visited. This is about average over a normal year and for obvious reasons varies month to month. Some of those requiring our intervention will welcome it for the rest of their lives. The requirements of others may be for much shorter periods of time.

Whatever their needs, we are privileged to be welcomed into their lives and to give as much support as we are able.

Stuart Lee