



Issue 15, 5 August 2020

Dear Reader, welcome to issue 15 which summarises the results of the recent readership survey and sets out a plan for the next two months i.e until the end of September 2020.

Survey Results

Thank you to the 30 readers who responded to the short survey questionnaire included in issue 12, circulated on 28 June 2020. Your answers and thoughtful comments have helped and given me a clear indication on the future direction for Keep Connected!

All responses were positive and supportive; none were negative. In summary:

1. Is Keep Connected! helpful, relevant and entertaining? - *'Yes, I look forward to each issue.'*
2. Do you want it to continue? - *'Yes, definitely!'*
3. What changes would improve it in your view? - *'Add events and things going on in Mottingham.'*

Answers to this last question provided a number of valuable suggestions on improvement, scope, remit and frequency of publication. These will be incorporated into the paper I'm preparing for the St Andrew with St Alban PCC meeting on 23 September. This paper will outline a new approach and a vision for the future. Subject to PCC approval, the outcome will then be presented at this year's delayed Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 13 October.

Whilst the lockdown continues, I will continue to produce issues of Keep Connected! in the existing format based on news, views and your input. Please let me know your views and do continue to send me your contributions.

You will now find Keep Connected! in the website's main menu. Selecting this opens a sub-menu with tabs for News Sheets, Photo Galleries and About Keep Connected! Take a look now if you can!

KEEP CONNECTED! with:

Community & People

Beverley & Geoff held a coffee morning in their large garden for some of the older and less mobile members of our community last week. Socially distanced, seated at three well-spaced tables and waited upon, the 'customers' enjoyed a great social occasion in lovely sunshine. Among the guests was soon to be nonagenarian *Jim Thomas* who will celebrate his birthday on 8 August with other home group members in *Bob & Alison's* garden.



When serving coffee and cake at the coffee morning *Ray & Tessa* were able to answer questions and show photos of their daughter *Victoria's* artistically designed and bespoke glass and kitchen products. For more details visit the *Victoria Ballard* glass products website: <http://originalsinpencil.co.uk/>



I've called in to see *Imogen, Jack, Sophia, Rafe and Theo* a couple of times recently to share some of our home-grown produce and enjoy a coffee with them. As you can see, *Sophia* and *Theo* bounced for joy, while *Rafe* was helping Mum and *Jack* was setting off for London. *Theo* was keen to show me his piano skills before I left. He is making great progress and will no doubt soon be accompanying his opera singer parents!





Julia and Eliza have just returned from a well-deserved week's holiday on the IoW. Life in lockdown has been especially stressful for Julia, who has a senior role in the world of theatre. Eliza revealed her lovely *Creation* painting at the end of the Trinity 8 Zoom service. All children who have produced paintings are welcome to send me their photos for the next issue.



Meanwhile, *Marley* has started his 'chemo' tablets and is now more interested in eating, exercise and leading *Thelma & David* in the right direction!

Environment & Nature: The Little Quaggy featured in issue 11. It joins the Quaggy near the A20 end of Mottingham Lane and is fed by the outflow from the Tarn in Court Road. Quaggy Waterways Action Group volunteers recently working alongside the A20 have cleared it of Himalayan Balsam - pretty pink flowers but an invasive species. Meanwhile, a few days ago they discovered an eel swimming in the clear waters of the Quaggy itself! See for yourself - <https://www.instagram.com/p/CDQd1IsHAYL/?igshid=q484dsy1cys1>.



Church Matters: Revd Ian closed the parish office (situated in the rectory) when the lockdown was imposed. Our parish administrator, *Sue Wood* has not been able to access the office to do her job since then. A Zoom meeting on 15 July confirmed continuing closure and now that the parish office has to be moved (required by the CofE code of practice), she reluctantly tendered her resignation on 3 August 2020, after 22 years of loyal service. This sad state of affairs could so easily have been avoided.

Sue has offered to help with the transition, but the prospect of that happening before the re-opening of our church buildings in September appears remote. On behalf of the entire community and your friends at St Andrew with St Alban, a very big thank you from all of us. We owe you a great deal and hope you will Keep Connected!

A Case For Change: This cartoon heads an article on the case for the CofE becoming leaner and fitter. Revd Stephen Trott sets this out in the 10 July 2020 issue of the Church Times. He says, "There is too much control from the centre and power should be returned to the parishes." "The difficulties posed by the coronavirus crisis have exposed fault lines and weaknesses in organisations around the country - and the Church of England is no exception.

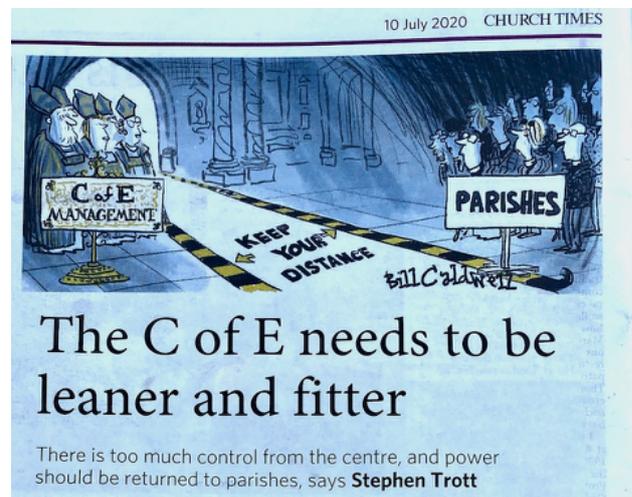
Its already tightly strained finances are under immense strain, with every church in lockdown for months and no income from church collections or visitors, but still a significant payroll to be funded. Eighty percent of its income comes from generous giving and donations. Unlike some Continental state Churches, it receives no funding from the Treasury.

The problems have been accumulating for many years. In the 1970s, with the best of intentions, most of the financial assets accumulated by parishes over 1000 years were nationalised by the General Synod to ensure that all the clergy received the same modest stipend.

But this apparently benign reform had unexpected consequences. Transferring the money to central bodies signalled a dramatic shift in focus from the local church as the centre of gravity to the diocese."

In highlighting these difficulties the author explores the need for a leaner and fitter Church. "Buildings and clergy are needed: what else do we need?"

The Revd Stephen Trott is Rector of Pittsford, in Peterborough diocese and a member of the General Synod. If you subscribe, see the 10 July issue of the Church Times for the full article.



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