Sleepout breaks £55,000 barrier

The original plan was for Sleepout 2014 to support a record ten charities, but as the planning progressed, two more requests to take part were received, from St Albans Women’s Refuge and Enfield Night Shelter. The way that Sleepout seems to work, this was not a problem. Rather than slicing up a fixed-size cake among participants, as each charity brings in new sponsored sleepers, so the overall cake grows.

Last year, this has proved to be spectacularly so as Sleepout raised a record £58,056, after all sponsorship money has been collected and any gift-aid tax reclaimed. This is £17,000 more than the previous year. This is the same amount, to within a few hundred pounds, as raised by the best supported charity this year, which raised £16,607. Brian Peyton, Chair of Sleepout said after the event: “The Sleep Out is always well attended but this year’s event turned out to be a bumper one with 470 people sleeping out under the stars, half of whom were under 18yrs. The youngsters created a very festive atmosphere and everyone was in good spirits”.

Speaking after the result was announced, he added: “It’s wonderful to see that both support for Sleepout and its capacity to raise money for homeless people has grown. This is all the more important as the numbers of homeless, especially among the young could grow significantly in future. I am particularly concerned about the effect of under 21s losing access to Housing Benefit which will dramatically affect the capacity of many charities to serve the needs of this growing constituency.”

New research shows that the number of young homeless could have been miscounted by a factor of three. This year, Sleepout is planning to support eleven charities.

The original ten charities receiving support from Sleepout 2014:

- Centre 33
- DENS - Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter
- Emmaus
- Herts Young Homeless
- LAMP - Luton Accommodation and Move on Project
- Leighton Linslade Homeless Service
- New Hope
- Open Door
- Stevenage Haven
- YMCA West and Central Herts
Sunday Trading: any advantage elusive

Chancellor George Osborne’s recent Budget included a proposal to allow local control over liberalising Sunday trading.

The campaign in the 1990s for more Sunday trading was presented as a matter of freedom: “We should be able to shop on Sunday if we want,” but it was not about creating a more just society – it was about trying to find business advantage. A determined lobby successfully argued against total deregulation to preserve some of the value of a shared day off and some protection for retail workers and associated employees.

The legislation, which was passed in 1994, was a compromise which tried to balance rights and opportunities for all sections of society. That must still be the objective today.

Retail and associated workers are hardly well off, and it is they who will pay the price of longer opening hours on Sundays. While most of their bosses will still enjoy weekends off, many retail workers already find they have no choice over Sunday working. They have lost, for a large part, the premium payments they enjoyed at first. In addition, they will face more childcare costs, which will probably be more expensive on a Sunday, or lose precious family time.

The same claims in favour of Sunday trading are being made now as 21 years ago – that the economy will grow and that people will not have to work if they don’t want to. This time there is even more compelling evidence about how wrong this is.

The 2012 Olympic Games experience, when shops were opened for longer hours, is not persuasive. The growth in business in large shops took place at the expense of small shops, which lost business. There is only so much money in the economy, and loading businesses with the greater costs involved in longer opening hours cannot lead to growth.

Some distinguished business leaders voiced these arguments, before and after the Olympics, for example Stuart Rose, former executive chairman of Marks & Spencer, and Justin King, when he was CEO of Sainsbury’s. The Association of Convenience Stores, another part of vital social fabric, has surveyed this and leading accountants Deloitte also take this line.

More Sunday shopping is at odds with the Big Society, the vision outlined by David Cameron in 2010. Greater human flourishing is unlikely to come from even more consumerism. Our laws need to encourage citizens to be good neighbours, volunteers, carers and parents, which requires a balance of work and rest.

Research from the National Centre for Social Research shows how important this shared day of rest is for families and for relationships to flourish. If the time available on Sundays for family interactions is diminished (through the need to work) it is not made up during the week.

Our heritage is six days’ work, one day’s rest. We are zealous about preserving built heritage, and pay the considerable price for that because we recognise the social benefit to be gained. Yet this piece of cultural heritage is just as valuable and worth retaining, because it has real value to shaping what kind of society we want to be. That should be at the heart of our politics.

This article appeared in The Tablet on 10 July

Bishop Alan also drew attention to welfare issues arising out of the budget in his Presidential Address to Diocesan Synod.

Bedfordshire’s hat-trick crowns diocese’s ringing success

Young Bedfordshire bell-ringers triumphed for the third year in a row in the Ringing World National Youth Contest. Hertfordshire took a silver medal to add to their distinction as winners of the first contest in 2011. The teams from St Albans Diocese were among over 200 young people in a record entry of 19 teams all aged 18 and under.

The day of the contest did not begin well for Bedfordshire. Shortly before they were due to ring, Natalie, one of their supporters and member of 2013’s winning band, collapsed. She was taken to hospital, and at the time of writing is still there.

As the Bedfordshire team ascended the tower to ring, their distress over Natalie turned to determination to ring their best for her. With only 15 minutes in which to ring, there is just time for making sure that the ropes are the right length, a quick practice to get used to the bells and ring a 5 minute test piece of call changes on 8 bells. Although allowed in the tower, coaches can only call the changes. Bedford’s coach, who happens also to be Bishop Richard’s PA, Linda Garton, admits that this rendered her uncharacteristically quiet. Afterwards, both teams were able to enjoy ringing at many of Oxford’s other towers, participating in handbell workshops, shopping and eating lots of cake!

Marking 19 pieces of ringing and maintaining consistency throughout is no mean feat, so this year the judges (1 adult and 3 young judges) were assisted by Hawkear, a piece of software which measures the gap between the strike note of each bell, although the final assessment of how pleasing a piece of ringing sounds was left to the ears of human judges.

Linda Garton said: “Young@Herts did really well coming 4th equal in the call change section and being awarded a Grade B and silver medals. The announcement that Bedfordshire were once again gold medallists and overall winners of the contest with an A* was greeted with a mixture of disbelief and delight by the team, and a euphoric reaction from their coach and our other supporters.” The Whitechapel Trophy was presented by the Alan Hughes, Managing Director of the Whitechapel Bellfoundry, believed to be Britain’s oldest manufacturing company, in business since 1570.”

A recording of Bedford’s test piece can be found on http://rwnyc.ringingworld.co.uk/

Regular monthly practices for young ringers are held in both Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, and ALL young ringers, whether just learning to ring or more experienced, are always very welcome. For more details see: Hertfordshire: http://www.hcacr.org.uk/youngatherts.php or email youngherts@outlook.com

Bedfordshire: http://www.bedsbellringers.co.uk or email president@bacr.co.uk
Bishop Richard spent a week at St Mark’s and Putnoe Heights Church, Bedford, during their mission initiative which touched on all aspects of Living God’s Love. Before the mission, thousands of homes were circulated with a special newspaper promoting all the week’s events, inviting everyone in the local community to attend. During the mission week, Bishop Richard visited all the local schools and a variety of community groups and charities associated with the Churches and their busy Community Centres and spoke about the Christian faith. In the schools he visited, pupils enjoyed seeing what a Bishop wears and how these things relate to what Christians believe. Everybody was delighted to see the Bishop and appreciated the time he took with them, explaining the Christian faith in clear terms. All those he spoke with felt valued and they appreciated his pastoral care for them.

Of all the events, the Caribbean social evening was a sell-out, but the highlight of the week turned out to be ‘Brass Band and the Bishop.’ While Bedford Town Brass Band played, people enjoyed refreshments and then submitted questions to Bishop Richard on any subject including about Christian faith and becoming Disciples of Christ. The evening over-ran because of the interest in what Bishop Richard had to say, indicating real spiritual searching and openness in the communities. The Church and the Parish Council together provided facilities for a Summer Fete for the local community. This included a ‘Messy Church’ event and an audio-visual presentation of the Christian faith: a valuable and rewarding opportunity to reach people and invite them to the Churches. As a result of this outreach to people ‘where they are’, the numbers doubled at church holiday club events the following week. At the Sunday services at the end of the week of mission, the Bishop invited people to Go Deeper into God and so become even more of a touching point for those with whom we live. The Vicar of St Mark’s, Canon Charles Royden said: “People came who we had not seen in church before and some folk were clearly considering the Christian faith, perhaps for the first time. They were able to ask questions and listen to Bishop Richard speak honestly and openly and explain what it meant to be a Christian and to live the Christian life and share their faith with others. We are grateful to all of those individuals and groups who invited Bishop Richard to meet with them during the week.”

The Reverend Dr Sam Cappleman, who was involved in organising the programme of events, was delighted that the mission enabled engagement with a broad range of people. He said: “Many people have been eagerly looking forward to the mission. It was a real example of the church and its people being able to come alongside those we live with and share our faith in an engaging and relevant manner. It was hugely encouraging to see the open welcome that schools or local groups gave to Bishop Richard.”
Three bits of encouraging news on money matters.

Parish share receipts
First, parish share receipts up to the end of June were more than 4% than those at this time last year: what is more, the rate of giving compared to what had been asked was also higher by 0.8%. So well done to all those people and parishes who are working so hard and giving so generously to help support our clergy and our parochial ministry because that is where all your parish share money goes. Indeed, more goes back to parishes in support than is received through parish share.

New professional donation management scheme
Second, we are going to make it easier for parishes to reclaim Gift Aid on planned giving. Later this year we will be trialling the Parish Giving Scheme that will enable parishes to receive the income tax refund, together with the net donation, within 14 days of receipt of the donor’s gift, made by direct debit. Of course, some parishes already have very efficient systems for doing this but there will be quite a number who will welcome the opportunity to help their cash flow and ease the burden on treasurers. This new scheme, pioneered by the Diocese of Gloucester, is now used by several other dioceses. It will be available to all parishes who want to adopt it as part of a planned giving renewal from early next year and workshops will be held. The modest running costs of the scheme will be borne by the diocese. The scheme will also allow donors to opt for annual increments in their giving in line with inflation and to remain anonymous if they wish.

Diocesan budget for growth for 2016
Third, we are finalising the diocesan budget for 2016 and it will be a budget that builds on what has been achieved so far. We will aim to again increase the number of candidates being ordained deacon and priest next year so that we are better placed to cope with the numbers that will be retiring over the next few years. And we are seeking to better resource Rural and Area Deans to enhance their role in supporting parishes. Further details to follow on what we see as a budget to grow our proclamation of the gospel in our diocese.

Call for parishioners to voice opposition to assisted suicide bill
A Private Members Bill to change the law on assisted suicide will be debated in the House of Commons on 11 September. In the run-up to the Bill, churchgoers are being encouraged to contact their MPs to highlight the risks involved in proposed legislation to legalise assisted suicide.

James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle, who leads the churches work in healthcare, has asked that parishioners either make an appointment to see their MP or write them a letter expressing their concerns about a Private Member’s Bill to be debated in the House of Commons on Friday September 11. The Bill is expected to seek to grant physician assisted suicide for mentally competent, terminally ill adults, who have six months or less to live.

Bishop James, the Church of England’s lead bishop on health care, said the proposed legislation, if passed into law, would have a detrimental effect both on individuals and on the nature of society.

He said: “Our concern about this proposed legislation is rooted in our practical care for the most vulnerable in our society. In our communities and through healthcare chaplaincy, the Church of England cares daily for the elderly, the ill, the dying and their families. If this Bill is passed we will have crossed a line that will make the future very uncertain and dangerous for a significant proportion of the most vulnerable people, including the elderly and those living with disabilities. This is a key moment for all of us as we decide what sort of society we want to live in and what future we want for our children and grandchildren, one in which all are valued and cared for, or one in which some lives are viewed as not worth living. I ask those who are happy to do so, to contact their MPs, either by making an appointment to see them in person at their constituency surgery, or by letter, to make it clear that they oppose this Bill.”

To hear a full interview with James Newcome on the Assisted Dying Bill listen here: https://soundcloud.com/the-church-of-england/assisted-suicide-01

Parliamentary Constituencies in the diocese are listed on the diocesan website here: www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/parliamentary-constituencies/
Petertide Ordinations, July 2015

PRIESTS:

Graham Adamson
James Faragher
Daniel Freyhan
Atalie Gaines
Emily Davis
Lennox (Rickey) Simpson-Gray
Philip Green
Alison Jackson
Christopher Jones
Sam Korn
Benjamin Lewis
Angela Lynam
Jennifer McQuaid
Jairo Nyaongo
Emma Young
Mary Fane de Salis
Ricky Turner

Bushey
St Paul, St Albans
St Nicholas, Stevenage & St Mary, Graveley
St Andrew, Bedford
St Michael, Bishopstortford
St Mary & St Paul, Hemel Hempstead
St Peter, London Colney
St Cuthbert, Rye Park
St Luke, Watford
St Mary the Virgin, East Barnet
St Mary the Virgin, Goldington
Cheshunt Team Ministry
Hitchin Team Ministry
Mill End & Heronsgate W West Hyde
St Augustine, Limbury
Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington & Weston
All Saints, South Oxhey.

DEACONS:

Paul Boulter
Philip Bryson
Lucas Durant
Daniel Foot
Gemma Foster
Helen King
Robert Kozak
Victoria O'Neill
Caroline Rolls
James Sawyer
Sharon Smith
Anne Underwood
Benjamin Weitzmann
Graham White

Christ Church, Bedford
St Paul, Bedford
St Mary, Wootton
St Swithun's, Sandy
St Paul's, Letchworth & All Saints, William
Aldenham, Radlett & Shenley Team
All Saints, Leavesden Church of the Transfiguration, Kempston
St Mary, Watford
Baldock and Bygrave
All Saints Caddington & St John's, Farley Hill
Parish of Bushey: St James, St Paul & Holy Trinity
Parish of Boxborough
Tring Team Parish
Sonya Brown, Priest-in-charge at All Saints Bedford, has changed her name to Sonya Wratten.

Louise Collins presently Vicar in the benefice of St Cuthbert’s, Fir Vale in the Diocese of Sheffield, is to become Team Vicar (with special responsibility for St Michael & All Angels, Borehamwood) in the Elstree & Borehamwood Team Ministry.

Mark Loney, presently Team Vicar (with special responsibility for Panshanger LEP) is to become Rector in the benefice of Dungiven and Bovevagh in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

Canon Richard Pyke, presently Team Rector of the Bishop’s Hatfield Team Ministry is to retire in January 2016.

Su Tarran, presently Curate (SSM) in the benefice of All Saints Hockerill, has changed title to Associate Minister and remains in the same parish.

Philip Waller, presently Vicar at St John’s Church, Long Eaton in the diocese of Derby and Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands, is to become Team Vicar (designate) in the benefice of Codicote and Associate Director of Ordinands (both half-time posts).

Dr Nicholas James Weir, presently Assistant Curate in the benefice of St Mary Eastrop, Basingstoke, in Winchester Diocese, is to become Vicar in the benefice of Frogmore.

Canon Dr Ian McIntosh has been appointed as the new Head of Formation in the Ministry Division of the Archbishop’s Council. Ian is currently Principal of the Eastern Region Ministry Course and recently served as president of the Cambridge Theological Federation. The new role of Head of Formation includes responsibility for the Division’s work in both discernment and initial ministerial education. Ian will take up his new role at the start of September 2015.

Jon came to work for the Diocese in February 1999 and had been County Adviser for Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education for Buckinghamshire County Council. The Diocese was very fortunate to find someone with his range of experience and his commitment to Church - he was already a Reader and has had an enduring interest in religion and science as much as cake and cricket, during his time. When Jon arrived, the Education team worked from Hall Grove in Welwyn Garden City, moving to Holywell Lodge in 2005. Over the years of Jon’s tenure, the number of pupils receiving an Anglican church school education in the Diocese of St Albans has increased considerably. There have been many developments in education over this time, and the Diocese, through Jon’s leadership, has made a major contribution: supporting three Local Authorities when revising the RE Agreed Syllabus; seeing schools through two sets of changes in church school inspection as well as controversial issues such as transport to church schools. Jon has also overseen many changes to the staff team with the creation of new or different posts. School buildings support has increased, Consultants have been appointed to support diocesan schools & senior leaders, Service Level Agreements have been introduced, a Bedfordshire Resource Centre, has been opened and a Diocesan teacher website has been set up. There have been closures, news schools and buildings, mergers and much more. He leaves to take up a post with Christian Aid working as a consultant on a project to increase and improve links between Christian Aid and CofE schools nationally. Saying farewell to Jon, Susan Pope, Diocesan Secretary, said: “I can imagine few people are better qualified for such a post and they are extremely fortunate. Hopefully it will mean that paths will cross and we will continue to keep in touch with you and your work. You go with thanks for all that you have done, and for all that you have achieved, and with our prayers and very best wishes for the future.”
**Concerts & Drama**

St Mary’s, Eaton Bray – Music at St Mary’s – Our next concert is to be performed by Min-Min Peaker, the remarkable soprano soloist on Saturday 15th August at 7.30pm and will also feature Richard Heyes (Head of Music at Bedford Modern) on organ. The concert is entitled ‘Motherhood and Music’. Numbered seat tickets £7.50 from 01525 222283

St Peter’s Church, Berkhamsted – Bridgewater Sinfonia Concert at 7.30pm on October 3rd. Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Mendelssohn and Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending with Soloist: Francesca Barritt. Tickets from 01442 873205 or from AITCHISONS, Berkhamsted. £16, £15 in advance, Under 18s FREE. Reserve Online www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk

**Open Days & Festivals**

St Lawrence Church, Ardeley SG2 7AH – Luscious Cream Teas on the first Sunday of the month of 2nd August and 6th September 2.30pm – 5pm. Pretty village with its beautiful 13th century church and thatched cottages round The Green. Proceeds in aid of St Lawrence church funds. For further information contact Wendy Waygood 01438 861260.

St James the Great, Thorley – Festival Of Flowers and Music on the theme “A Good Read”. Festivities include a tour of the village with its beautiful 13th century church and thatched cottages round The Green. Proceeds in aid of St Lawrence church funds. For further information contact Wendy Waygood 01438 861260.

All Saints Church, Hertford - Coffee Morning And Tower Open Day Saturday 12 September (Same Day as Bike & Hike) 10.00am to 3.30pm. Great Stalls, Music, Raffle, Refreshments and delicious light lunches. Plus visits our famous Tower with ten magnificent bells and fantastic views of Hertford town and countryside.

**St Mary’s Church, Kinsbourne Green, Harpenden** – Harvest Festival Service - Sunday October 4th at 10.00 am at Annables Farm School, Annables Lane, Harpenden AL5 3PR. Pet Service at St Mary’s Church - 4.30 pm on Sunday 18th October - all pets welcome! All welcome. Please bring donations of non-perishable food items (to be distributed to the charity NOAH) and financial gifts which will be given to the Bishop’s Harvest Appeal.

**St. Andrew’s Church, Biggleswade** – Country Fayre and Exhibition on “Our Biggleswade, Our Community” on Saturday, 19th September from 10.30am to 3.30pm. Free Admission. All the contributions raised from the Fayre will go to two local Bedfordshire Charities; Amicus Trust and The Kings Arms Project. www.biggleswadeparishchurch.co.uk

**Courses/Conferences**

**Equipping God’s People Courses**

www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/find-a-course

Home group/Bible Study group Leaders’ training course

Saturdays 26th September and 31st October, 9.30am – 1.00pm

Venue: St Luke’s, Watford

‘Leading small groups’ is a course run over two Saturday mornings for anyone who leads or would like to lead Bible studies/Home groups/Alpha groups etc and wants to learn more about how adults learn and the skills of facilitating groups.

Facilitator: Rev’d Jeanette Gosney

Booking: Essential. Please book online http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/find-a-course/ or contact: Gabby 01727 818141 pdadmin@stalbans.anglican.org

**Go For Growth Conference Saturday 3rd October**

The Focolare Centre, Welwyn Garden City

See bundle notices for leaflet or visit www.go4growth.org.uk

**Advanced Notice**

‘Journey of the Magi’ – A festive, witty and thoroughly Christmassy event for your church.

Springs Dance Company is now inviting churches to host a performance of Journey of the Magi, which will be available nationally from 21st Nov to 22nd December 2015.

This critically acclaimed production is set to be a joyful addition to the UK’s family Christmas theatre scene for the 19th year running. With sparkle and songs to keep the kids engaged, and plenty of in-jokes for the adults to enjoy, Journey of the Magi delights audiences of all ages. The show portrays the original Christmas story whilst drawing hilarious and poignant parallels with our own preparations for Christmas day. Further information can be found on the Springs Dance Company website by emailing Rebecca Bertram on touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk or call 07775 628 442

**Miscellaneous**

**BE A HOST!**

Make the world a little friendlier! Could you welcome an adult international student into your home for a day, weekend, or three days at Christmas? Many international students in the UK feel isolated and lonely and would love the opportunity to spend a short time with you, learning about British culture, experiencing UK home-life, and telling you about their own country. Hosting is a voluntary position suitable for all ages and available throughout the year with HOST, a charity set up in 1987 by the British Council. To find out more, please visit www.hostuk.org or call 020 7779 6292.