



St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action

In the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.
“When two or three are gathered together in
my name, there am I in the midst of them”

The SVP at St Bernard’s Report on activities 2019/2021

The last time we gave you our report, was for the 2018/19 year and what a splendid year it turned out to be for our beneficiaries.

In spite of the difficulties over the past two years, we have been active in trying, with your help, to aid the needy both at home and overseas.

Working as a Team, we started 2019/2020, as is our practice, with a clear plan of where to direct our efforts and the actions needed to achieve them.

Then **BOOM** ‘Lock-down’ made it impossible to carry out the plan.

Vacant looks all-round, now what are we going to do?



Somebody started humming a song from the 1936 film “Swing Time” Starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

‘Pick yourself up dust yourself off and start all over again!’

Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor when confronted with apparently insurmountable, often financial problems, was known to say;

“GOD WILL PROVIDE”

It is a matter of record that somehow the Cardinal usually proved to be correct and so it has been with your SVP group at St Bernard’s.

With your consistent support, we've been able to raise record amounts to support those in greater need.

“GOD HAS PROVIDED”

Thank you

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

Membership.

We are now a Conference of 16 people including 3 auxiliaries.

In 2020 our President Austin Bowers decided to pass the baton to Enrique Valles. Austin said with a smile “I took the job on as a temporary measure, that was 11 years ago. I'm very happy now to support Enrique who I know will do an excellent job as we enter our next decade.”

Thank you, Austin, from all of us, we look forward to your continued participation for many years to come.

With Fr Jack's support we have been blessed to have Fr Padraig Reagan CM, as our spiritual adviser, he is a Vincentian priest and has been a friend of our group for over twenty-five years. He has certainly given us wise counsel and testing spiritual questions to ponder. We hope he can continue with us for as long as his other commitments allow.

It is with great sadness we report the death of our dear friend Keith Smith. He was a full and very active member of our Conference who, in addition to his responsibilities as Membership secretary, which includes Safeguarding, Recruitment and Training, was always ready with his cheerful 'Can Do' outlook on life, to help others in any way he could. He is greatly missed by all.

Fundraising

The vast majority of our fund raising is organised through events intended to create an inclusive atmosphere for parishioners from St Bernard's and increasingly from Our Lady and St Peters. We aim to provide some entertainment in return for the purchase of a ticket. For example, the Jazz lunch in September 2020 sold out and raised over £1000 for the Sudan Baby Feeding Programme. The seasonal cake sales raised £450 and so it went on, with Zoom quiz contests, lunches etc.

The new initiative of eBay sales raised over £2000.00 including gift aid.

Perhaps the most surprising example of **'God Providing'** came from one of our Conference who said:

I'm not going to sit around doing nothing in 'Lock-Down' I'm going to do a sponsored walk!" I'll walk 1000mls in six months and raise £1000.00

While greatly encouraged by the group to meet her targets, she is, nevertheless, 74 years of age and all considered the target looked to be almost unachievable.

We were all WRONGOh! and so was she!!

She walked over 1500 miles and raised over £7000.00, which is already helping the needy in South Sudan.

The St Bernard's Winter Appeal for Crawley Open House is our only 'by donation' event. Thanks to both St Bernard's and Our Lady and St Peter's communities, we were able to raise almost £2000.00. Enough to provide 39 sets of Waterproof sleeping bags and Thermo Flasks to help those sleeping in the streets through the winter, plus extra help in the form of food.

Since April 2019, with your support, we have raised **£24,620.00** for the needy, at home and overseas.

Community.

Lock-down presented new challenges.

The SVP, being the only organised group at St Bernard's, was able to rapidly set up the necessary safeguards enabling the community to get back to church and attend Mass together. About 45% of the congregation returned.

This of course left 55% who for many reasons were unable to get to church. However, with the help of Our Lady and St Peters we were able to install 'Live Streaming' and figures show that in the region of 50% of those at home have been participating in Mass via the 'Live Link'.

By organising a fund-raising initiative, the St Bernard's community donated sufficient to pay for the facility at a time when the parish finances are under pressure.

Similarly, our group was able to organise the replacement of the 60-year-old kneelers at St Bernard's. The congregation contributed about one third of the cost, the remainder coming equally from Parish funds and thankfully from the 100 club.

These are all examples of group initiative with the full participation of our St Bernard's community.

Encouraged by these actions two new initiatives have started.

Tea and biscuits after Wednesday Mass and a monthly Soup and Bread get together for **anybody** who would like to attend and have a chat.

A new campaign entitled **'YOU HAVE A FRIEND IN LINGFIELD'** has also started to reach out to those who are lonely. We suspect there are many more since the pandemic forced the vulnerable to self-isolate. If you wish to have or know of somebody who would like a chat or a visit, please call us. **(call 07889 323431 Angeline, 07941 360194 Nicky, 07512 203744 Mary)**

We have a lot of rewarding fun together and are looking forward to new challenges as they are presented.

Why not consider joining us, just talk to any member and perhaps come along to one of our monthly meetings. The more hands and hearts we have the more we can help others and in so doing strengthen our Christian community.

By 'Turning Concern into Action'

We remain mindful of Fr Len Turner's wise words.

'You can't help everybody but be sure to help somebody!'

Members.

Enrique Valles President, Jenny Wilson Secretary, Austin Bowers, Liam Bauress, Mike Butcher, Nicky Daines, Denise Doolan, Mary Goodwin, Mike Goodwin, Zoe Jenner, Frank Lilley, Lala Micallef, Angeline Rosner, Lindsay Scott, Sarah Thilo, Mary Watson.

Reg Charity No 1053992

SVP St Bernard's September 2021

For more info SVP.org.uk