

Horsham Parish's role and involvement with Horsham Churches Together continues to be of real value to all.

The various events organized under the auspices of HCT have run successfully - from last year's Good Friday service on the Carfax led by St Johns; on through a Halloween event during the autumn half-term; to a packed Saturday in December with an open air Carol Service and Nativity scenes; and at the start of 2017 the week of prayer for Christian unity, with the service on the Sunday hosted at St Marys church and run by a team from the parish.

The Night Shelter also ran again over the winter months, and thanks are owed to all the volunteers from the churches that staffed and supported it, providing beds for 24 different guests across the season.

The running and success of these various events owes a certain amount to the roles of Rosemary Couchman who has been employed since the autumn as the Development coordinator, and to Amalia Lovett, who has taken on a part-time role as the secretary - enabling communications to take place more effectively again.

In other changes - Bryan Steele stepped down before the summer as HCT Moderator, and after no other candidates were willing to step forward the former deputy Tom Murray took the role on. This followed a productive meeting of the ministers from across the town in April 2016 to reevaluate the role of HCT within the life of the churches in the towns, and this focused meeting will recur in 2017 to ensure that our commitment to working together is still one that we share. There continues to be a couple of positions on the executive committee available after a number of members moved away or stepped back over the past 12 months.

Financially HCT remains afloat, although a hiatus in the giving from different churches means that the accounts over the past year are down slightly - and may necessitate a fresh look at the contributions requested from each church, and the basis on which this is calculated.

Looking forward, plans for next year's night shelter are beginning to be made, there are thoughts about whether the ecumenical Lent course might take a year off, and the usual events (Christmas, Easter, Halloween etc.) are being planned. More strategically HCT continues to have an excellent relationship with the District council - for example we were asked to step in at the last minute and run a "Messy Easter" event on Holy Saturday as part of the Piazza Italia, while conversations also continue with regards to the planned housing in north Horsham specifically about community centre's and schools.

HCT continues to be a real opportunity to show Gods love in the way that the churches of Horsham love both the town and each other.

Jimmy Young, April 2017