



# Over 65s Report for PCC – 9 March 2026

## Link club *Julie Hobbs*

We are a group for the over 65s with a main aim of connecting people with each other and enabling them to make lasting friendships and to participate in a variety of different social activities. Loneliness is a common circumstance for this age group and it is heart-warming to see relationships develop and extend outside of club meetings. The desire of the leadership of this group is that through our own words and actions we might draw people to Jesus. Some of our activities are overtly Christian and we always start our meeting with a prayer. However, we are mindful that approximately 75% of our members are not church attendees and we find that it is during refreshment time that we can steer conversations towards the Christian faith and indeed pray with people on occasion. It is during times of personal distress and illness that our members are particularly receptive to hearing about Jesus and the hope he provides for the future. We have a prayer book and many of our members write prayer requests in it and, if appropriate, these requests are shared with the whole group at the end of the meeting.

Several of our mission partners have given a talk at Link Club. People are generally moved by these talks and it is encouraging to see some of them offering a donation to the organization without any prompting. Examples of other social activities we have had include flower arranging, looking after your body as you age, keeping warm, musical, historical, and travel presentations, music groups, quizzes and games and Christmas and Summer tea parties. Our membership consists entirely of women, but men are not excluded and occasionally one or two will turn up for a particular presentation. There has not been a vast increase in people coming to church but there is definitely an increase in interest and questions about faith. One recent example is the decision by the Link Club committee to give a £100 donation to the Mission Support Hub in recognition of the work that is done in this area, and very recently I heard that my prayers based on Psalm 23 had been very meaningful to a member who had just been burgled.



## Monday Men *Jack McGinley*

We are an informal group of up to a dozen retired men who meet weekly. There is no programme and, as the founders decided, no specifically Christian content. The morning includes quizzes, jokes, the occasional presentation of something brought by a member and discussion of whatever someone starts to talk about - often sharing insights from our past experiences. We have an annual pub meal and the occasional outing. Some common-interest groups have formed which go out at weekends. There is a friendly atmosphere.

We care for each other giving support and transport where needed. News of hospital appointments and bereavements are shared. Christians are free to share their faith in a non-intimidating way and Ian (Malpass) or myself make sure that everyone knows what is happening at St Michael's. During the past year several non-church men have joined in events including: the Carol Service, Over 65s meals and Beer Tasting. Christmas and Easter are marked with giving cards and something different during the morning. Several men, especially those on their own, have volunteered what a difference meeting together has made. We pray that people will come to see what a difference Jesus makes. We value it when Tom calls in and wish he could stay longer!

## Beaufort Grange *John & Poppy Spens*

For the last few years, we have offered a fortnightly Songs of Praise to the residents of this Care Home. We sing six or seven well known hymns and think about one of Jesus' famous parables or read a Psalm together. We always pray and say the Lord's Prayer together, which almost everyone joins in. Around 6 to 10 residents attend this short and simple service but one man who has been attending for five years says it is the highlight of his week.



## Stoke Gifford Retirement Village

*John & Poppy Spens*

We have been regularly visiting the Retirement Village since it opened 7 years ago. We run a mixture of events each month, including a fortnightly afternoon life group, a monthly Sunday service and a monthly Songs of Praise. The highlight is the annual carol concert which can draw an audience of one hundred or more and ends with mince pies and mulled wine. These different events draw the Christians together and give them an opportunity to invite their neighbours, as well as to support each other through the good times and not so good. We visited one of the regulars recently in hospital and he said how he was missing the afternoon fellowship and how much he appreciated it. A good number from SGRV attended the Holiday at Home and really enjoyed it.

# St Michael's Church Centre (SMCC) Activities *Caroline Murphy*

The three ministries/community groups that I am involved on a weekly/monthly basis are Goldies, Stay Strong and Steady and Friday Film Club. All of these ministries have grown over the last few years; Stay Strong and Steady had their first birthday year last November. It's wonderful to see friendships grow and build in all these groups. The Coffee Shop benefits on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday as people meet for coffee and lunch before and after.

Local U3A groups share the details of the films we show and it's a great opportunity to show people around the Centre and point them in the direction of other community groups and services that happen at St Michael's. We have seen people from all three groups attend Midweek Communion, Evensong, the 8.45am, join the library and receive pastoral packs. People love to talk and our wonderful volunteer receptionists play a really important role in the welcome that people receive.

Feedback from Stay Strong and Steady (Gentle Exercises) regional organiser:

*"I just wanted to say a massive thank you for all the support you've given over the past year—from helping get the class up and running to developing it into a regular, well-attended activity. I also want to thank you for everything you do to support the participants more broadly, making sure they feel welcomed and looked after. And finally, thank you very much for today: the refreshments, the seating already set up, and the printing of the photo consent forms and blue loan. It all helped make the event the success it was. THANK YOU !"*

Feedback from Goldies singing regional organiser:

*"Happy New year!!! I hope you had a lovely Christmas! I just wanted to thank you and all the staff at St Michael's Centre who helped with our Goldies Christmas Party! Everyone made us feel welcome and nothing was too much trouble meaning our participants had a wonderful time! Thank you all so much!"*



## Osbourne Court *Julie Bradley*



We have been going into Osbourne Court to do a monthly service for over 15 years.

The service follows a simple structure with 4 hymns, a testimony or story, a short talk and some prayers. It is beautiful to witness the way that the residents, almost all of whom have dementia, respond to hearing/singing familiar hymns and the Lord's Prayer. We build the service around a theme and always give a little card with a prayer or bible verse to those who attend, to take away. Numbers fluctuate but we will usually have between 12-20 residents and 2-4 staff/family members plus, of course, the fabulous and dedicated team who help make this service happen. We often have moving conversations and opportunity to pray with residents (and sometimes staff) after the service. And it is always a privilege to be involved with end of life and funeral ministry when asked to do so.

## Over-65s Lunches *Julie Bradley*



These quarterly lunches have been taking place for about 15 years and have grown in number from about 40 guests in the early days to the current capacity of 120 guests. They are hugely popular and greatly valued by all who attend, about two-thirds of whom are not regular church goers. Guests are treated to a roast dinner, cooked by the wonderful Paul Werrett with a team of willing helpers. Now the lunches take place in the auditorium after the Ten-thirty celebration, the logistics of turning the space around and getting it ready again for the Six-thirty have to be planned with military precision, but there is an amazing team, headed up by Mike and Jane Watkivs, who make it happen.



We include a testimony slot after lunch where someone shares something of their Christian journey and, a couple of times a year, guests are given a pastoral pack with a letter and some spiritual resources, which we hope and pray sow and nurture seeds of faith. At Christmas we have carol singing and a wonderful raffle. Some guests have been heard to say that this lunch is the highlight of their Christmas for them. As well as those who find their way into more regular worship at St Michael's, there have been those who have come to faith through Alpha or been confirmed, for whom this ministry has been an important stepping stone in both building relationships and inspiring faith.



## Over-65s Teas *Julie Bradley*

For about the last 12 years, these teas have been held twice a year, usually in the Spring and Autumn, in the Lower Hall where we can cater for 80 guests. They sit down to enjoy a very civilised tea with a selection of sandwiches, cakes and scones with jam and cream, all made and served by a willing team of helpers led by Claire Jessopp. We always plan the teas for the first Sunday of the month and our guests are invited to come across to the monthly traditional Evensong service in church after the tea. Many of them respond positively to this invitation and appreciate the opportunity to reconnect with a service that will have been familiar to them in younger years.

## Holiday at Home *Julie Bradley*

Planning has just started for what has become this annual highlight of the year for the Over-65s ministry. In recent years we have recreated a 'Day at the Seaside' and a 'Day at the Movies'; this year we will be taking to the water for a 'Day on a cruise'. Having a theme to build our day around has seen a brilliant release of creative energy from those involved in planning and hosting these events. There are entertaining talks and quizzes together with a wide range of fun activities for our guests to enjoy. And, of course, there is the food; always good and plentiful food!

Through the course of the day there is opportunity for more overt sharing of the Christian faith than is sometimes possible at the regular lunches and teas. And guests go home with a goodie bag that always includes some spiritual resources that we hope and pray will point people to Jesus. For some in our community this one-day 'holiday' will be all they get to experience. It is our pleasure and privilege to help make it happen.

