

**PASTORAL ASSISTANT FOR FAMILIES /SCHOOL PASTORS COORDINATOR /YOUTH WORKER**

*May the God of all hope, fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,  
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

This year began with the first lockdown starting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, and the most recent lockdown only beginning to allow groups to resume outdoors on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

During this time, Hollie left her role as Pastoral Assistant and School Pastors Coordinator to begin ordination training. Kat Fisher started as the new Pastoral Assistant for Children and Families and School Pastors Coordinator/Youth Worker in February 2021. Kat worked part-time initially for the first few months and has found local accommodation for her family from mid-April 2021. Kat is a qualified youth and community worker with experience working with children and young people in Bristol, the North East, East London and Essex, although her main focus over the last year and a half has been as a stay-at-home mum.

The Early Years Alliance (EYA) and the National Youth Agency have worked with government to establish safe working practice and official guidance within the current regulations, looking forward to returning to face-to-face activities, so we have been following these closely to ensure that we are Covid safe.

I would particularly like to thank you all for our warm welcome to East Sussex. We have been truly blown away by the kindness, warmth and friendship we have already found, not forgetting the tasty and thoughtful gifts that filled our pantry and brightened up our new home as we moved from Thurrock to join you. I thank God for Hollie and all the team for all their hard work and creativity especially where they have had to step out of their comfort zone to adapt over the last year and look forward to meeting you all in person as we step out into a new season for 2021/22!

*Kat Fisher*

**J Club After School** – The team provided weekly Zoom sessions online at the usual J Club time, with PDF activity sheets emailed out to parents. About 8 children joined these sessions with three J Club leaders. The attendees enjoyed a game or quiz, a bible story, discussion and prayer time. There were also resources left outside Carillon Cottage for families to collect and one pack made up for a J Club child that was finding lockdown particularly difficult. There was really positive feedback from young people and their parents about the resources provided by J Club. Several J Club team members also helped out with preparations for Easter activities.

Kat has met with the J Club team and the school, and we are hopeful we will be able to restart J Club face to face within guidelines as restrictions ease in the coming months.

**Jellybeans** – There were weekly online videos for a few months, then as activity picked up in other areas, videos became fortnightly. There was great feedback from parents and carers, and they often got in touch to let us know about birthdays, so we could sing happy birthday as part of our online video.

Parent & Child groups could resume (outdoors only) from the 29<sup>th</sup> March with restricted numbers. We had an Easter special on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 in Carillon Cottage garden with weekly sessions planned for when the schools returned after Easter. The Bible Society gifted us around 100 'All about Easter' books to give to families. We are following EYA guidance to resume activities safely including a pre-booking system and splitting into two activity sessions. We continue to offer Jellybeans free of charge and are thankful to Carillon Cottage for allowing us to use their garden and for the wonderful team of volunteers who got the garden ready to welcome mini explorers and their grown ups!

**Sunday J Club** - We began 2020 meeting as usual in three groups on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month in Carillon Cottage, but from March 2020 face to face meetings had to cease. From September 2020 to the present, Sunday J Club leaders have been recording sessions aligned to the lectionary for children and their families to access via the church website. A special thank you to Simon Spruce for his patient help with the technical aspects. Stonegate CoE Primary has been using Sunday J Club videos and making them accessible to the school community via their website. We have also made limited supplies of worksheets available in church for the few children who have attended since re-opening. We will return to face to face Sunday J Club in 2021 as soon as it is safe and comfortable to do so for both children and leaders.

**Activate & Sundays** – Hollie provided online videos for Activate and for the two other Sundays, following a similar pattern to what we used when meeting face to face, using the SU Roots resources.

**Grid** – Shortly after lockdown began, we established a Zoom group for Grid, exploring themes such as global warming and spoken word poetry in response to the Coronavirus. The most popular activities were active games (eg young people had to go and find household items and be the fastest back to the camera). The group members were encouraged to attend May Camp 2020 online. There was good communication and support established with one Grid family that was referred to the Nourish Food Bank. Uplands CC approached us about this family and were grateful to hear that they were engaging with youth group and receiving some additional support. Interest in online meetings reduced when school reopened and when young people were able to meet with friends. Youth Alpha, started in February 2020, had to be suspended in March but was going well.

Kat is looking forward to meeting the young people and has connected with other youth workers in the Diocese. We are hoping to resume face to face youth activities soon, with plans to connect in with 'May Camp 2021' locally.

**Wadhurst CoE Primary** – All resources for J Club After School were shared and published on the school website. We supported the school in putting together an online Easter service and a few AoW videos. Revd. Paul and Hollie were invited to be part of the outdoor Leavers' Service. During Advent we supplied the school with Christingle resources - resulting in great photos in the school newsletter of the Christingle making sessions. Stargazers and Revd. Paul provided video input for a whole school AoW.

**School Pastors** – Regular team meetings have been held on Zoom. Online videos for the Facebook parent forum are aligned to school themes. A Summer blessings video, with information on School Pastors for new starters and blessings to those moving on from Uplands, students and teachers, was posted and used as part of end of year class assemblies. Prayer Pastors have continued to meet and pray weekly on Zoom.

**Outreach** – £10 Sainsbury vouchers were given to all school children (Wadhurst, Stonegate and Uplands) on free school meals at Christmas and Easter. School Pastors provided 3 x £40 vouchers for Cook Food to families identified by the school as being in particular hardship after the first lockdown.

**Christmas** – There was an Advent Nativity Trail in the village, two Nativity plays in church with Stargazers children from WCoE Primary as the main cast, and an online Nativity service with lots of video input from church families.

**Mothering Sunday 2021** – Hollie set up a village trail based on the fruit of the Spirit. Lots of families of all ages got involved, with free flowers given out outside Wadhurst church. Kat and her family were also able to come along for a great opportunity to start meeting families in the village and get the word out for plans for Jellybeans and Easter 2021. Kat also got involved in the prayers for the online 'All Age' service.

*Hollie Butler (April – August 2020 and Christmas Outreach)*