

### The Future of the SVP in the parish

We have had a St Vincent de Paul Conference in our parish for nearly 100 years offering friendship and practical assistance to those in the parish and local community who are elderly, lonely, housebound, sick or disabled. In addition, in the last few years we have distributed over £4,000 from SVP central funds to those in financial need in the local community. We hold tea parties for senior parishioners.

SVP members meet as a group every two weeks.

We very much want to continue with this work and, if possible, expand it. However, over recent years we have faced a number of challenges due to the age of members and declining health. Our numbers have declined from 13 to 8 as a result of this, and the age range of remaining member stretches from late sixties to mid-eighties with an average age well into the seventies. Some have the health problems that accompany age.

We have made several efforts to recruit new members but without success and recognise that people have busy lives with a wide range of work and family commitments which prohibit committing to an organisation like the SVP.

As a result, we would like to put forward two proposals for those who feel they would like to help with the work of the SVP in the parish but are unable to take on the commitment of attending meetings:

- Firstly, would you be willing to become part of the SVP in a limited way and conduct a visit for one hour a week with someone who lives near you, either in their own home or in a care home? You wouldn't be required to attend our meetings unless you wanted to. Alternatively, could you offer practical help such as with lifts or shopping?
- Secondly we ask that, independently of the SVP, everyone is aware of the needs in their own local community and looks for opportunities to offer friendship and practical support e.g. putting bins out, having a coffee, offering lifts and helping with shopping and, if you think it would be beneficial, referring someone to the SVP for more formal support. We are not all Catholics and the people we help do not have to be Catholic.

If you feel that you could help and would like an initial discussion of how this might work, please contact Ralph Dickins, the conference president, or Frances Green, the conference secretary:

Ralph Dickins – [rdickins123@gmail.com](mailto:rdickins123@gmail.com) 079133979217

Frances Green – [francesmgreen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:francesmgreen@hotmail.co.uk) 07850048271

A leaflet on the work of the SVP can be found at the back of the church.