

FOCUS GROUP REPORT FOR APCM APRIL 2022

The Focus Group met in October for the first time after a break of many months due to the Covid restrictions. We meet monthly to remember and pray both for those we know at home and others in the wider world with its multiple areas of need, poverty and conflict, highlighted vividly by the refugee crisis.

In the past we have been able to concentrate on generous charitable giving, selecting and suggesting a number of different charities to support over the year. However, times are changing and because of falling numbers in the congregation and hence falling income, it has become increasingly difficult to make decisions about priorities, keeping in mind the pressure of the day to day running and upkeep of the church to which we all belong.

It was suggested therefore to focus our giving on fewer charities, continuing to support Christian Aid as our main charity but using Advent as a time for giving to two home projects: **The Bridge Trust and Welcare.**

The Bridge Trust has its base in the Tonbridge area and cares for the homeless by providing some accommodation in safe housing, rehabilitation for residents and help with health and finance, plus advice on legal issues. These services are not only available to residents but to other networks in many parts of West Kent.

Website: thebridgetrust.org.uk

Welcare works in many areas where there is deprivation, providing food, clothing etc. for those struggling on little or no income. They work with children on community projects and clubs, giving advice and support to families in need.

Website: welcare.org

It is hoped that by concentrating only on these two charities we can make a worthwhile contribution to their work. During the year there will probably be other “one off” collections as needs arise, but we will continue to support The Children’s Society during the Christmas period and hope to remember our long standing giving to the Leprosy Mission later in the year. The Group made a “one off” donation to UNICEF’s appeal for Yemen in October.

In a time of world turmoil we all have our own priorities for giving, and with many letters through our mailboxes, comes a new deserving appeal. We can only therefore give thanks for our privileged life in the U.K.

Christian Aid Week 15th – 21 May 2022

St Martin’s will host a cream tea on Sunday 15th May and the Focus Group plan to hold a simple breakfast in the Brass Crosby Room on Sunday 21st May from 9.30 -10.30. All donations to Christian Aid.

Margaret Coppard