

**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
**Our Lady and St Kenelm, Halesowen Conference**  
**Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**



**Statue of St Vincent de Paul**

**displayed at Our Lady and St Kenelm Catholic Primary School**

**inspiring children of the Parish through the Mini Vinnies' Group**

**SVP England & Wales National Office, St Vincent de Paul Society, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, LONDON SE1 7JB (Registered Charity Number 1053992)**

## **The Parish Conference at work**

### ***“Turning Concern into Action despite COVID”***

The SVP is committed to combatting poverty, tackling isolation, providing support and offering sincere friendship to people in our local communities. We support the most vulnerable in society and give them a chance of a happier life. Pandemic precautions meant much of our usual activity had to change.

Home visits by conference members were limited. We tried to keep in touch with parishioners by telephone, texts or email. We also gave regular telephone support to people from outside our parish community who were suffering from feelings of anxiety and isolation as a result of the pandemic.

Over the year we were in contact with around 150 families, 31 individuals in their homes and 10 individuals who were homeless. We worked closely with the Halesowen Welcome Group supporting 50 refugee or asylum-seeking families. We have also helped individuals referred to us by local care agencies or the SVP National Office. We have provided furniture, clothing and home starter kits. To help those in financial difficulty paying their grocery bills we have provided supermarket shopping vouchers. Transport to Mass has also been provided.

Easter and Christmas cards were distributed to the household of the parish.

Through the Prison Chaplaincy at HMP Hewell near Redditch, Easter and Christmas cards and inspirational bookmarks were given to men serving their sentences at the Prison. Spiritual books have been donated to the Library in the Prison Chapel.

We want to thank Mrs Christine Finnegan and her team at Our Lady and St Kenelm Catholic Primary School for leading the SVP Mini Vinnies Group. The children are an inspiration living out their Vincentian vocation in prayerful and practical ways.

We are grateful for the financial support we received over the year. Grants were received from the National Lottery Awards for All Programme (£10,000), the Arnold Clarke Community Foundation (£2,500), Heart of England Birmingham Live (£2,000), the Albert Gubay Foundation £1,500 and the Tesco Community Fund (£500). Other SVP conferences contributed over £3,100 towards solving a difficult hardship case involving possible deportation. Parishioners also made individual generous donations (£733).

We spent over £18,000 mostly by helping those facing financial difficulty (£14,295).

We ended the year with £13,000 in hand. More than £12,000 is ring fenced to help those facing food poverty.

More information about the SVP and our Parish Conference is published on the Parish website. [www.ourladyandstkenelm.org.uk/how-the-svp-can-help.html](http://www.ourladyandstkenelm.org.uk/how-the-svp-can-help.html)

***“We thank you for your prayers, donations and practical support.”***

**Mike Weaver – Conference President, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

## Money Matters

	£	£
<b>Funds in hand 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021</b>		<b>10,809</b>
<b>Add Income</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds raised for the relief of poverty from "Awards for All," Arnold Clarke Foundation, Gubay Foundation, Heart of England Live Grant</li> </ul>	16,500	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other SVP Conferences for an individual in particular hardship facing deportation</li> </ul>	3,109	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donations from OLSK conference members and parishioners</li> </ul>	733	
<b>Subtotal funds raised</b>		<b>20,342</b>
<b>Total Funds available</b>		<b>31,151</b>
<b>Less funds spent</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food poverty relief</li> </ul>	14,295	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other help to individuals in financial hardship</li> </ul>	3,439	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of twinned conference in India</li> </ul>	150	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mass Offerings</li> </ul>	50	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting SVP National Office running costs</li> </ul>	152	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OLSK conference running costs</li> </ul>	47	
<b>Subtotal spent</b>		<b>18,133</b>
<b>Funds carried forward at year end</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically for the relief of poverty</li> </ul>	12,231	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General OLSK Conference funds</li> </ul>	787	
<b>Total at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022</b>		<b>13,018</b>

## The SVP Mini Vinnies Group at Our Lady and St Kenelm Catholic Primary School

Headteacher, Mrs Christine Finnegan writes:

"Mini Vinnies rule the World at OLSK!"

Our Mini Vinnies have been crazy busy this term, using their God given talents to achieve their vision...Turning Concern into Action! Our Presidents have led their team with great passion throughout the year, supporting all the children to carry out our Gospel Virtues. They live and breathe their vocation and in Vocations week they spoke about 'Who is God calling them to be?'

The group has increased throughout the year, with many more children joining our team. The letters they write to the Presidents are full of what they can do to support not only those in our wider community but the wider world. They are true ambassadors for our school and a credit to us.

We have been working very closely with Mike Weaver, from OLSK SVP, who comes into school on a regular basis to meet with them and discuss their ongoing projects to support those who are less fortunate than we are. Mike is a crucial member of our Mini Vinnie Team, and we love him coming into school to meet with us. Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to meet with the members of the SVP, but hopefully moving forward, this can happen again in the Autumn Term.

They have worked so hard, not only in school but with the SVP in our Parish, and the wider community; as a result, we are delighted to report that our wonderful Mini Vinnies have been awarded a certificate of merit for the Lord-Lieutenant's Young Active Citizens Award 2021, which will be presented in a whole school assembly on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 in school. How exciting! We are very proud to receive this award and it is because of all the children's sheer passion to change the world.

As St Catherine of Siena said:

"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the whole world on fire."

***"Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you. Do not be afraid to dream of great things."***

***Pope Francis***



## **Join the Parish SVP Conference!**

There are many ways you can get involved with our work. Please consider joining the Society. New members are very welcome.

### **Conference Details**

The Parish Conference Officers are:

<b>Spiritual Director</b> Father Stefan Laszczyk	<b>Hon Secretary</b> Roy Williams
<b>President</b> Mike Weaver	<b>Hon Treasurer</b> Kevin Sables
<b>Vice President</b> Jane Clarke	<b>School Liaison</b> Martin Redden

### **Contact the Conference**

Telephone or text Mike Weaver 07423 541124