



# WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, Bedford Road, Wootton.

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|                | <p>The Annual Parish Meeting is a statutory meeting of the parish electorate (Local Government Act 1972, Part 1, s9(1)). It is not a parish council meeting. It is held between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June (Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, Part III, p14(1)). There is no prescribed format for this meeting. Parish meetings have a general power to discuss parish affairs and pass resolutions, but any resolutions passed are not binding on the parish council. If the chairman of the parish council is present at this meeting, s/he shall preside and if s/he is absent the vice-chairman if present, shall preside. If neither are in attendance, the meeting may appoint a person to take the chair, and for the purposes of this meeting, that person will have the powers and authority of the chairman (Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, Part III, p17(1) + (3).</p> <p>All local electors are entitled to speak and vote that the Annual Parish Meeting; others may attend but not speak or vote.</p>                              |  |
| <b>Present</b> | <p>Gareth Lloyd, Chairman, Wootton Parish Council, Street Watch;<br/> Bill Brady, Member, Wootton Parish Council, Community First Responder, Community Speed Watch, Street Watch;<br/> Gerald Bygraves, Member, Wootton Parish Council;<br/> Bill Hall, Member, Wootton Parish Council, Community Speed Watch, Street Watch;<br/> Jeff Noakes, Wootton Parish Council, Street Watch;<br/> John Wheeler, Member, Wootton Parish Council, Bedford Borough Councillor, Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity, Chairman of Governors, Wootton Lower School, Wootton Church and Poor's Land charities;<br/> Sue Playford, Clerk, Wootton Parish Council;<br/> Rev Peter Ackroyd, Vicar, St. Mary's Church, Wootton Church and Poor's Land charities;<br/> Val Illingworth, WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group;<br/> Keith Randell, WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group;<br/> David Goodson, Wootton New Life Methodist Church;<br/> Rob Stanton, Wootton Baptist Church.<br/> Gary Williams, Wootton Baptist Church.</p> |  |

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Chairman.....

Date 5th April 2017

|           | Ahead of the meeting opening, all present were asked to look at and complete a first draft Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. All feedback would be taken to the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Agenda no | Agenda item title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| APM16/01  | <b>Apologies for absence.</b><br>Malcolm Chalmers, Member, Wootton Parish Council;<br>Brian Doggrell, Member, Wootton Parish Council;<br>Eileen Matthews, Wootton WI;<br>Bob Wallace, Member, Wootton Parish Council;<br>Marje Williams, Wootton WI.                                                                                  | Apologies for absence were received as detailed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| APM16/02  | <b>Minutes of the previous meeting.</b><br><i>Minutes are published on the Wootton Parish Council website:<br/> <a href="http://woottonpc.bedsparishes.gov.uk/">http://woottonpc.bedsparishes.gov.uk/</a>.</i><br>Members are asked to receive and adopt the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015. | The meeting agreed the minutes of the 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015 were an accurate record.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| APM16/03  | <b>To receive the following reports from Wootton Parish Council.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Chairman's report.</b></li> <li><b>Financial report.</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    | Copies of the Chairman's report were made available for those present – please see Appendix 1. Gareth then detailed elements of his report to those present. He was asked how the parish council might stop future development and responded saying it had requested current developments at Fields Road North and South (FRN and FRS) be given time to integrate with the rest of the village. This would also enable weaknesses in existing infrastructure to be identified. He urged residents to object also at the relevant time.<br>He was asked about a specific development within Cause End Road, the application for which had been withdrawn twice. Gareth replied stating each time it had been re-submitted the number of proposed dwellings had reduced, adding the parish council had objected to the proposal at every opportunity. It was noted Bedford Borough Council could approve a future application if the number of dwellings was considered low enough.<br>Copies of the Financial report were made available for those present – please see Appendix 2. No further comments were received. |
| APM16/04  | <b>To receive reports from outside bodies.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor Wheeler.</b></li> <li><b>Bedfordshire police.</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                    | Copies of Borough Councillor Wheeler's report were made available for those present – please see Appendix 3.<br>John added he was encouraged that more residents were approaching him for advice and assistance and added his full support to the parish council's wish for no further development within the village.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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Chairman.....

Date 5th April 2017

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|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>He was working on a motion recently passed by the Borough Council, calling for a safe route to school - liaising with Bill Brady (Speed Watch) also. He urged people to send him any information as necessary so he could take issues forward.</p> <p>He then stated he had ward monies available to help the community of Wootton – and detailed recent projects including the creation of a new Wootton tots group, Girls and Boys brigade and revamping of the Memorial Hall kitchen.</p> <p>No report was available from Bedfordshire police.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| APM16/05 | <p><b>To receive reports and/or accounts from village/local organisations.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Baptist Church;</b></li> <li>• <b>Community First Responders;</b></li> <li>• <b>Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity;</b></li> <li>• <b>St. Mary's Church;</b></li> <li>• <b>Speed Watch;</b></li> <li>• <b>Street Watch;</b></li> <li>• <b>Wootton Charities – Poor's Land/Church and Poor's Land;</b></li> <li>• <b>Wootton Lower School;</b></li> <li>• <b>Wootton New Life Methodist Church;</b></li> <li>• <b>Wootton PPG.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>No reports were received from</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bizzy Bees;</b></li> <li>• <b>Forest of Marston Vale;</b></li> <li>• <b>St. Mary's Pre-school;</b></li> <li>• <b>Wootton Memorial Hall;</b></li> <li>• <b>Wootton Village Hall.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Football teams and other sporting/non sporting organisations within the village were invited to the meeting but did not attend.</b></p> | <p>Reports around the table were then delivered, beginning with Wootton Lower School (delivered by John as Chair of Governors) – please see Appendix 4.</p> <p>John then provided a verbal report on behalf of the Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity. He stated the charity was £500 short on the cost of hosting the annual Christmas lunch, mostly due to low interest rates. The cost was £1,200 per annum but interest only £800 per annum and the charity was not allowed to spent its capital. Potential solutions included the original Christmas afternoon tea and finding an alternative venue. He thanked Rev Ackroyd and the rest of the committee for their work over the past 12 months. He was asked where most of the cost went, and confirmed it was food and hall hire. In recent years voluntary donations had been sought and it was also suggested a small charge for tickets be levied, although Rev Ackroyd said that would not be in keeping with the spirit of the trust. Gerald suggested John might use his ward monies. John added the date for this years' event was 7<sup>th</sup> December.</p> <p>David Goodson then handed out copies of Wootton New Life Methodist Church's Annual Report (year end 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015) – please see Appendix 5. He began by stating their AGM had taken place in February 2016 and the focus was their Mission 20:20, Vision and Strategy. He wished to focus on the following aspects, one of which had come to fruition following his attendance at this same meeting in 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community café provided an important service to the community, run by church and other volunteers. They were looking to extend their opening hours to encourage more visitors;</li> <li>• January 2016 saw the start of a new Girls and Boys brigade, created as a result of other uniformed organisations stating at last year's meeting they were over-subscribed. 50 children were currently on the register – mostly from Wootton,</li> </ul> |

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|  |  | <p>but with others from the Sheltons, Marston, Cranfield and Houghton Conquest. Parent helpers were enrolled alongside church leaders. They were currently limited to lower and middle school children, but would be opening to upper school children in September 2016;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pat-a-cake was successful with 25 children on the register – due in part to village expansion. The church was also successfully used for private bookings, including Moo Music, Melody Makers and Baby College;</li> <li>• Messy Church had restarted – offering more informal activities for families, including a meal;</li> <li>• Sunday Services saw a regular congregation totalling between 40/50, from 18 months to 93 years of age.</li> </ul> <p>David thanked John Wheeler for his ward monies, used to purchase start-up equipment for the Girls and Boys Brigade.</p> <p>Keith Randell gave a verbal report alongside Val Illingworth, on behalf of the WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group. The group lost two committee members during the last 12 months and was struggling to find new members. Their wish was to attract younger members from the village and they were attending the parish council's FunFest and WI craft fair to promote the medical centre and give information on vaccinations, general health and what the centre provided to the community. A gluten free cake stall held at the library last year proved very popular, sadly their supplier was no longer operating. They were hoping to hold a car boot sale in the coming months – which would raise funds to buy further equipment to enable them to attend future events. They had hoped to attend the lower school fair, but had received no reply to their enquiries. John suggested they speak with Miss Fullicco at the lower school.</p> <p>Talks were still being held with the NHS and Bedford Borough Council regarding the new build.</p> <p>Sue stated if they had a poster of sorts seeking new recruits, she was happy to place it on the parish council's Facebook page.</p> <p>Bill Brady then commented on behalf of Speed Watch, Street Watch and Community First Responders. He began by stating there was a big commitment from the parish council on what happened within the village – demonstrated by the fact 75% of Speed Watch, 100% of Street Watch members and 50% of</p> |
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|  |  | <p>Community First Responders were parish councillors. The hope was to recruit more village residents.</p> <p>Jeff then reported on behalf of Street Watch, as co-ordinator. The scheme was very new and existed to provide a presence and comfort for those in need. Volunteers were not there to ‘step into situations’ but acted as eyes for the police. All volunteers patrolled in hi-viz jackets, in pairs for two hours a month – enough of a commitment to make their presence felt. They would target known areas (mostly where anti-social behaviour was taking place), using information gained from the police and residents. He was asked if it operated along similar lines to the Home Watch scheme but replied no – they did not have the resources at the present time to be able to guarantee to turn out within the hour. It was noted all volunteers for this scheme volunteered for others too, meaning it was not easy to co-ordinate everyone’s commitments.</p> <p>Peter then gave a verbal report on behalf of the Wootton Charities. Joint income was £4,000 per annum, including a small investment portfolio and rent received from the parish council in respect of the allotments/paddock area. Terms of the main trust were such the capital could not be touched – income was divided equally between the upkeep of St. Mary’s church and the relief of poverty. Only occasional requests for assistance were received – including help with travel costs for hospital visits over a great distance, house equipment such as washing machines and specialised medical equipment. He was very grateful to the hard working trustees for their help.</p> <p>Peter then reported on behalf of St. Mary’s Church. Demand for toddler groups and activities for young families was on the increase – due to village expansion. St. Mary’s pre-school was full and church activities including Messy Church and Dads behaving Dadly were well attended, as was last year’s Open Air Service. They now had a third curate and he appreciated the partnership with Stewartby and Wootton Churches.</p> <p>Copies of St. Mary’s Church annual report were then circulated – please see Appendix 6.</p> <p>Peter then reported on St. Mary’s building – the village’s premier historic building. Scaffolding had recently been erected as the south side was being repointed. It</p> |
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|          |                        | <p>was last carried out some 50 years ago with cement and crumbling away as a result. The cost was some £70,000 if all went well, although the contractors had already commented on the tough mortar!</p> <p>The church heartbeat remained their Sunday services, baptisms, funerals, weddings and work with young people to make Jesus known to all and he finished by stating it was a privilege to serve the village and equip others to do the same.</p> <p>Rob gave a verbal report on behalf of the Baptist Church on the evening then emailed a copy to Sue – please see Appendix 7.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| APM16/06 | General Parish Issues. | <p>Questions concerning General Parish issues were then invited from all present.</p> <p>David began by enquiring about the community centre currently being developed at Berryfields and who was expected to run it. It was noted the parish council wrote to Persimmon Homes (developers) in April 2014 to request it be appointed the Management Entity, detailing terms and conditions. Whilst it was hoped the parish council would be appointed as such, those terms and conditions remained unconfirmed and the parish council continued to seek a formal resolution. The community centre was expected to be completed in September 2016.</p> <p>Rob asked if there were plans to put a footpath in place on Fields Road (south side – between the Murco garage and doctor’s surgery). Gareth explained a recent land registry search confirmed the land needed for the footpath was unregistered (from the middle of the ditch to the edge of the road). John, as Borough Councillor, was asked to take the request forward as part of a developer agreement for Fields Road South. It was recognised the existing Fields Road footpath was not safe for pedestrians and John reiterated the recent motion passed by Bedford Borough Council – to look into safety along that road. His hope was an alternative safe route to school could be found. Plans for a pelican crossing by the doctor’s surgery were confirmed by John – Jeff added a second by the garage would be needed to slow traffic leaving the village also. It was noted there had been a poor response on speeding issues within the village and possible installation of average speed cameras – less than 3% of residents completed the surveys which were delivered within the Wootton Newsletter to all houses and available online.</p> |

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|  |  | <p>Rob then asked what the proposed two-tier school system would mean for Wootton and its possible affect. John confirmed it would remain three-tier at present, due to the Central Bedfordshire Council/Holywell Middle School cross-over, but it would happen at a future stage. Preparations for that event were being taken into account with the phase two build of the new lower school – as was the Government’s intention to convert all schools to academies by 2022. He added the lower school’s biggest issue was lack of spaces – they had 90 places with 120 applications, Kempston Rural had 60 places with 165 applications and Great Denham had 60 places with 140 applications. It was unclear however, how many parents may have applied to more than one school. John also sat on the Borough Council’s Children’s Services Committee and confirmed they were looking into that issue.</p> <p>Rob then referenced a 1950’s book on Bedfordshire he was reading – which referred to a Wootton field named ‘Amen Field’. He asked if anyone could shed any light on it. Sue agreed to speak with Paul Quirk who had extensive historical knowledge of the area.</p> <p>Viv raised concerns over congestion along Cause End Road, most notably by the shop and mini roundabout. Parking, buses and delivery lorries frequently caused delays. It was noted a one car length extension to the existing yellow lines away from the mini roundabout along Cause End Road were in hand, but Borough Council delays still continued (these were due to be implemented in September 2015).</p> <p>Gerald suggested a one-way system – which had been informally discussed in the past. It was understood the increase in traffic was due to village expansion and it was hoped the new retail units proposed for Berryfields would help to take traffic pressure away from Cause End Road once more. It was feared if the post office moved to that shop also, numbers would increase further. It was suggested the shop make better use of a parking area behind it, however Gary stated it was now being used by shop staff to park.</p> <p>After further discussion it was agreed that the parish council take the one way system suggestion forward, initially with the Borough Council before seeking residents’ views.</p> |
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|  |  | Gareth then thanked everyone for attending. |
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Meeting closed at 8.47pm.

## **Chairman's Report Annual Parish Meeting**

Looking back over the last twelve months, I believe we have achieved several improvements within the parish. We are replacing some of the parish street lights in Hall End and Potters Cross. Wootton is the first parish in the Borough of Bedford to have a Street watch program (several councillors are members and the parish council has been helping to publicise the scheme). The Borough Council are currently completing the installation of a double mini roundabout at the junction on Fields/Cranfield/Bedford/Church Road, to mixed reviews.

The biggest problem the parish council faces is how to best engage with the people of Wootton. This is currently via noticeboards, Wootton Newsletter, the council surgery in the library, website and Facebook page. Yet still - information doesn't reach all residents. We need to ensure people know about our FunFest, ask for their opinions and issues such as speeding and what they would like in the developing Neighbourhood Plan (the first questionnaire should be sent to all houses Q2 2016).

Development will continue to dominate in future years. Bedford Borough Council made a second call for sites, which could potentially see almost every green space around the village built upon. The parish council has been very clear in its responses to the Borough Council that it doesn't wish to see any further development, but that as a minimum the current developments (Fields Road North and South) should be allowed to integrate before anything else is even considered. Fields Road South, which includes a care facility and industrial area should start later this year.

Several projects remain ongoing this year. The new Wootton village sign for Fields Road will feature in June's edition of the Wootton Newsletter – gathering residents views on a couple of designs submitted to date. The regeneration of Keeley End Pond is ongoing – the area has been cleared and some planting has begun. Designs for a duck house, submitted by lower school children, remain with the Clerk to be taken forward – we experienced delays in clearing the site however, and planting needs to take place before this final addition can go ahead. The parish council is also looking at planters/containers at several sites in the village (a Wootton in Bloom project) and it continues to work with the Borough Council and developers on the provision of new sports and leisure facilities at Fields Road North and South.

**Gareth Lloyd**  
**Chairman, Wootton Parish Council**  
**6<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

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## **Responsible Financial Officer report April 2016**

At the time of compiling this report and ahead of the imminent Annual Parish Meeting, the annual accounts for 2015/16 remain incomplete, however the following information will serve to provide a good indication as to the financial wellbeing of Wootton Parish Council.

### **Income**

Wootton Parish Council (WPC) obtains its income from the precept, charges for burial plots and memorials, hire of the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area), allotments and paddock rent, newsletter advertising and interest on deposits. The precept is the part of the Council Tax collected by Bedford Borough Council (BBC) and paid to WPC. WPC budgets all its needs towards the end of the calendar year and advises BBC of the figures required to meet its obligations. In 2015/16 this was £123,116. WPC has requested the figure of £137,354 for the 2016/17 financial year. This increase can be attributed in part to ongoing housing occupations, although there has also been a slight increase in the average Band D council tax figure (used to calculate the precept) – from £75.43 to £76.94. WPC received its final Council Tax Support Grant of £7,731 from BBC. Interest totalled £575.

WPC also receives a grant (agency services) for cutting some highway verges in the parish on behalf of BBC. In 2015/16 this was £1,682 however WPC received an additional amount of £350 in respect of Lorraine Road green (property of BBC), which will be an ongoing annual sum. This was paid for the first time in 2015/16 – WPC had historically cut the grass without reimbursement prior to that date.

Income from the newsletter is down for the second year running, this time from £2,630 to £2,365. A new graphic design and printing company were recently appointed so watch for subtle changes. It continues to be delivered to all households in Wootton, Wootton Green and parts of Kempston Rural, and an electronic version remains available on WPC's website.

Income from Lorraine Road cemetery totalled £5,000. The MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) saw a further reduction this year in income – from £1,388 to £763 – again due to the mild winter but also because the floor size is proving too small to train on for the older football teams.

Income from the provision of allotments and the leasing of the adjoining paddock increased from £894 to £1,113. This was due to a slight increase in allotment charges (£18 and £10 for a full and half-sized plot, respectively).

WPC continued to receive income from the bottle bank situated on the recreation ground car park (recycling credits). This totalled £1,092 for Q1-3 of 2015/16 (Q4 will be claimed later this month (April) – divided equally between a local charity, Wootton Church & Poor's Land and WPC's budget for its annual Fun Day (now Fun Fest)).

## Appendix 2

### **Expenditure**

WPC employs a full time Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (Sue Playford), a part time Parks & Complex caretaker (Charlotte Mihailiuc), a part time litter picker (Lorna Cochrane) and a part time allotments officer (Alison Reed Thomsett). Our previous litter picker Andy Snelson, who also undertook handyman tasks as necessary, left the parish council in June. WPC also said goodbye to Frank Bavington, who cleaned the bus shelters within the village on a monthly basis.

Spending on grass cutting for 2015/16 was £8,243 – up on the previous year from £5,994 and due to the wet summer and mild winter. Two additional cuts had to be carried out during March 2016, before year end. Cemetery maintenance was £12,911 – up on last year from £11,400 as works to add more wood chip at Lorraine Road cemetery entrance, remove a fallen tree branch at the same location and clear undergrowth at St. Mary's cemetery extension were also undertaken. Newsletter costs were up from £4,000 to £4,760 – as the parish council now employs a delivery company. The village Christmas tree for 2015/16 cost £1,745 and was again supplied, erected and removed by Bedford Borough Council. This figure was less than last year (£2,692) as no new lights were needed. WPC again paid contractors £1,400 in 2015/16 to keep the MUGA flooring in shape for teams and individuals to train and play on and the annual rent paid to Wootton Church & Poor's Land charity in respect of the allotments remained unchanged at £1,200. WPC paid an additional £300 to a contractor to cut back the hedgerow (inside and out) at both the paddock and allotments. The CCTV annual maintenance contract totalled £1,221.

Works at the Memorial Hall during 2015/16 included rodent control, a manhole cover replacement and works to make safe and replace iron railings (damaged by a vehicle impact). WPC received an insurance claim of £1,210 in respect of the railings - the total cost for all works totalled £2,050. A further replacement fence by the Old Pound on Bedford Road cost £720 and a new noticeboard at Hall End was erected at a cost of £175. Works to the village hall car park included a replacement bollard and re-alignment of the gates totalling £410. WPC also spent £955 on Keeley End Pond – fixing damaged fencing and in-filling a gap in the hedgerow to make the area safer, with a further £432 to rotavate the area ahead of planting. These works were delayed due to wet weather and so was the lower school regeneration project – it's hoped this will be completed in Spring/Summer 2016/17. Works to cut vegetation and hedgerows at the recreation ground and Memorial Hall totalled £530 and repairs to play equipment at the Memorial Hall totalled £718.

The streets were illuminated as always during 2015/16 – WPC doesn't own all the street lights (some are owned by BBC) but the cost nonetheless totalled £1,472. Repairs to lighting columns and replacement bulbs totalled £218. A further amount of £1,097 was paid to E-on to power the changing rooms and MUGA lights, with a further £555 for MUGA lighting repairs. WPC suffered four episodes of vandalism during 2015/16 – on top of the Memorial Hall railings. This totalled £579 and included the replacement of a bin by the skatepark and removal of three lots of graffiti, in the same location. The annual Fun Day (now Fun Fest) cost £1,275 in 2015/16 to host.

Projects completed in 2015/16 included works to remove the shingle footpath and replace it with tarmac at Lorraine Road cemetery and the building of additional memorial walls, at a cost of £5,185 and £2,571 respectively. Monies have been earmarked in 2016/17 for a Neighbourhood Plan, which will give residents a say on how they wish the future of the village to be shaped. Further monies have also been set aside to potentially transfer all street lighting responsibilities to BBC and a 'Wootton in Bloom' project.

2015/16 saw extensive works to all trees for which the parish council has responsibility – this totalled £9,236 for the inspection report and works.

Small grants were given to the local Community First Responder Scheme (£420 for new protective clothing) and Wootton Village Hall (£600 for replacement doors and frames).

### **Annual Audit**

## Appendix 2

The appointment of an internal auditor will be confirmed at the Annual Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> May. An internal audit involves an independent examination of accounts for 2015/16 as required for the Annual Return. BDO LLP remain the appointed external audit providers. Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd will appoint a new external auditor for 2017/18, for a five year period. SAAA Ltd was created on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), following the cessation (1<sup>st</sup> April 2015) of the Audit Commission.

### **Purpose and Summary**

The purpose of the above is to continue to improve the financial controls and accounting procedures of WPC, whilst remaining open, transparent and accountable to its parishioners. In summary I am happy to report that WPC is in a good financial position and will continue to work for the good of its parishioners.

**Sue Playford**

**Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Wootton Parish Council**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

## **Borough Councillor's Annual Report 2015 / 2016**

### **Budget and Council Tax**

Bedford Borough councillors agreed the Council's budget for 2016/17 at its meeting on the 3rd February.

The budget was formulated in the midst of reduced resources and rising demand for services, particularly in relation to adult social care. As a result, officers estimated in October that the Council would be facing a £9.4m spending gap. The budget contains measures to meet the Council's spending pressures to ensure it sets a balanced budget in the coming year.

The budget includes an array of savings proposals totalling just under £1.3m which were the subject of 2 public consultations. It also increased the Council's Council Tax precept by 3.99%. with a 1.99% rise as part of the Council's overall Council Tax levy and an extra 2% to cover adult social care costs; a new revenue raising mechanism granted to local authorities by the Government for the first time from April. The Borough will, therefore, effectively increase Council Tax by 3.99%, although this comes down to 3.94% when parish council precepts are factored in.

The Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner has also chosen to increase Bedfordshire Police's precept by 1.99%, as has the Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority. Taking into account each of the precepting authorities, the average Band D property Council Tax will be £1,634.44; an overall increase of £57.33 or 3.64%.

### **School Structural Review**

Plans were approved in January for the Borough to move to a 2 tier education system following a public consultation and negotiations between the Council and schools over admissions arrangements.

Bedford Borough is currently one of a few local authority areas in England and Wales with a three-tier system. Despite strong Ofsted ratings, the Borough has consistently struggled when it comes to GCSE performance. This was evident in 2015 with 52% of pupils at the Borough's state schools achieving the key standard of 5 A\* - C grades including English and maths, against a national average of 53.8% and the Statistical Neighbour average of 57.3% (i.e. a comparison with 10 authorities with similar characteristics to the Borough).

There are varying opinions as to why GCSE results are not commensurate with the Ofsted ratings. Some have pointed the finger of blame at the three-tier system, arguing that the extra transition is unnecessarily disruptive to a child's education and that it is harder to attract and retain teachers as the system is different from most areas.

The Council has, therefore, set aside £25.566m to make the necessary changes to school sites over the period 2016/17 – 2018/19. Of this sum, £17.064m will be spent on lower schools for 87 classrooms on 33 sites, while middle schools will receive £4.482m and upper schools £4.02m.

The scheme is part of a broader school investment programme, including £10.572m to continue the programme of removing temporary classrooms and funds for new school sites to be based at Wixams and Land North of Bromham Road (adjacent to the Western Bypass at Biddenham).

Most schools will be part of a 2 tier system from September 2017.

### **Local Plan 2032**

Work has continued in the last year towards the Council's Local Plan 2032 which will set out how the Borough will accommodate anticipated growth in housing, jobs and infrastructure.

As part of this process, the Council issued a 'call for sites' in October, requesting suggestions from residents on possible land for development. Over 600 sites have been put forward in total although not all of them will

Borough Councillor report APM April 2016

## Appendix 3

be included in the draft plan for development. It is estimated that land will need to be found for between 4370 and 6040 new homes.

See [www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2032](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2032) for more information.

### **Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group**

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body responsible for organising health services in the County, reported in June that it had recorded a staggering £43.2m spending deficit.

An array of reasons for the debacle have been highlighted, including wildly inaccurate financial assumptions, contract disputes with other bodies and the failure to realise efficiencies. As a result, NHS England stepped in and issued formal 'directions', which means in practice that it will oversee the BCCG's budget and governance arrangements. This included an agreed budgetary position for 2015/16 to bring down the spending deficit to £20m which, as of February, is on target to be achieved.

### **NHS Health Review**

A review of NHS services in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes progressed very slowly during the course of the year.

It began in early 2014 at the behest of NHS England and hospital regulators with the intention stated at the outset to amalgamate services between Bedford Hospital and Milton Keynes Hospital whilst better integrating GP and social care services as a means of securing efficiencies and improving service quality.

Two years later, the review has been narrowed down to 2 options which could see the transfer of services from Bedford to Milton Keynes or vice-versa. The BCCG has, however, been working with local service providers to put forward an alternative option for a 'Modern District Hospital' which could see Bedford Hospital strengthen links with community services, including the provision of GPs on site.

A full public consultation is scheduled to begin in summer 2016.

### **Magistrates' Court**

It has been confirmed that Bedford Magistrates' Court will close by March 2017.

In June 2014 the Judicial Business Group, the body responsible for organising the courts system, took the decision to move all cases, other than those relating to family matters, from Bedford Magistrates' Court to Luton Magistrates' Court in an attempt to make savings.

In July 2015 a consultation was held with a view towards making the changes permanent, as well as moving family hearings to the Bedford Employment Tribunal. The changes have been opposed by all political groups on the Council as well as Alistair Burt MP and Richard Fuller MP given the potential effect on access to justice and increased anxiety and inconvenience for those directly affected by a case. The move has also been criticised for being inefficient due to increased travel times for professionals such as the police, local authority officers and lawyers.

### **Infrastructure**

The Council has said works are progressing well on the Bedford Western Bypass, with the official opening scheduled for the spring. The road is set to link the A6 at Clapham with the A428 and A421.

Plans are still being developed for the East West Rail line with a view towards works commencing before March 2019. The line will link Bedford with Milton Keynes and Oxford, with the possibility of it being extended to connect Bedford with Cambridge and therefore the rest of the eastern region.

## Appendix 3

The Government has agreed a new contract with East Midlands Trains to continue to run services between London and the North of England, stopping at Bedford, until 2018. East Midlands Trains has pledged to invest £13m in providing extra services and freezing some ticket prices. Furthermore, the electrification of the Midland Mainline is to continue after the Government decided to freeze the process in the summer in order to develop the plans.

### **Bedfordshire Police**

The municipal year began with a referendum on the Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner's proposed 15.85% Council Tax precept increase for 2015/16. This was rejected by voters.

In December, the Chancellor decided to protect police budgets as part of the Spending Review. This means that forces in England and Wales will receive an extra £900m in funding by 2019/20, thus alleviating fears of a reduction of resources for Bedfordshire Police in the coming years.

### **Broadband**

Last summer, BT announced the areas that will benefit under the second phase of the superfast broadband scheme which is being funded by the Council and the Government.

The first phase is seeking to extend superfast broadband coverage (above 24Megabits per second (Mbps)) to 90% of premises and at least basic provision (2 Mbps) to 100%. This phase is now drawing to a close. The Council provides monthly updates on works undertaken to superfast broadband cabinets at [www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/broadband).

The second phase, as noted above, seeks to increase coverage to around 97% of premises by 2018 and will cover many rural communities that were left out of the initial phase. Details of the areas included can be seen at the above link.

### **Employment**

As of January 2016, the number of Jobseekers Allowance claimants in the Borough was 1824 or 1.8% of the working age population. This is down from 2.2% in January 2015.

**Borough Councillor John Wheeler**  
**6<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

### **Report from Wootton Lower School**

Finished the academic year as a 2 form entry school at Bedford Road with very strong academic results. The school was full at 300 pupils and the school had used some Bellway 106 monies to extend and enhance the play space on the back playground which was very much needed due to pupil numbers.

In September the school opened their second site at Harris Way. The project was delivered on time and within budget. Staff and Governors worked hard throughout the school holidays to ensure the school opened on time (actually a couple of days earlier than other Bedford Borough Schools) and that the school looked and felt like a school. Unlike other new school builds in the LA, we ensured the outside play space was developed, we had a fully functioning library and our IT / phones worked. The school expanded by an extra class in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and also opened a new preschool. These new classes are now nearly full.

The school was officially opened on 5th November by the Mayor and the Parish Council attended a special assembly. Sadly a week later the school was flooded due to poor plumbing and we have worked hard to minimise the impact. Some remedial works will now happen over the Summer Holidays - the biggest of which is to replace the hall floor.

In terms of education the staff have worked hard to ensure a continued success of a new national curriculum and have implemented a new assessment framework. Initial results look promising and the school is well set to continue to deliver high academic results based on a caring, family ethos. A purchase of new mini bus to help transfer children at the end of the school day between the 2 sites has also been used to access some super local free educational opportunities (visits to the Apple Store and to Frankie and Benny's to name just 2).

The current set up is that Bedford Road has Mrs Grove as Head of School and runs classes for years 2, 3 and 4. Harris Way has Mrs Burnett as Head of School and runs classes for preschool, Reception and Year 1. Mr Tavener runs between the 2 sites!

**Chris Tavener**  
**Head of Wootton Lower School**  
**March 2016**

# WOOTTON NEW LIFE METHODIST CHURCH

## ANNUAL REPORT YE 31 AUGUST 2015

**“By truth spoken in love, we are to grow in every way into Him - the Anointed One, the head. He joins and holds together the whole body with its ligaments providing the support needed so each part works to its proper design to form a healthy, growing, and mature body that builds itself up in love”.**

### **Ephesians 4:15-16 The Voice Bible**

Over the past year we have sought to grow in every way as part of the body of Christ within our growing village.

- ❖ Rejoicing with new births and baptisms
- ❖ Celebrating new and deepening relationships through wedding blessings and the renewal of marriage vows
- ❖ Welcoming new friends and old into our fellowship
- ❖ Growing commitment in confirmation and reception into membership
- ❖ Renewing discipleship as we pray and study together
- ❖ Theming our worship and preaching to better understand God's word
- ❖ Strengthening our pastoral care of one another
- ❖ Developing our work and worship with children and young people in different and exciting ways
- ❖ Uniting with other Christians in activities in the churches and the community
- ❖ Planning for future growth with Mission 20:20
- ❖ Learning that even when we disagree we are all part of the one body

Highlights for me have been hearing and sharing faith stories and insights through the Compass Course, providing a prayer tent for the Wootton Fun Day, much fun, fellowship and food at the church weekend, even when filthy and covered in mud after our very wet walk and, most recently, the first enthusiastic meetings of our newly formed 1<sup>st</sup> Wootton Girls and Boys Brigades.

I wonder what your highlights have been.

As we look to the future we seek to know more of the love of God, to continue to build one another up in love and to see God at work in our church and our village.

Every blessing,

Caroline

### **Leadership**

The leadership team is responsible for the leadership of the church working as a team along side the minister and is responsible for developing the vision & strategy that is approved by the church Annual General Meeting (AGM). It is responsible for ensuring effective delivery of the strategy and through the church council ensuring effective day to day management of the church.

At the time of writing this report the members of the leadership team are: Rev Caroline Weaver (Minister); David Goodson (Lay Pastoral Leader & Senior Steward); Suzy Goodson (Lay Pastoral Leader); Kath Pawlett (Pastoral Secretary); Brian Pawlett

(Treasurer); David Shore; Jo Pope and Jeremy Sear (Stewards). The appointment of the stewards and the leadership team is confirmed each year at the AGM. During 2015 Joyce & Brian Freeman and Tess Croash stood down from the leadership team. We are grateful for their faithful service and valuable contributions.

## **Membership**

We now have **54** members a slight increase since this time last year. Although the average number of attendees on a Sunday morning has dropped slightly at around 35 – 40 people each week. We have seen some people leave the church during the year or attend less regularly whilst we have also welcomed several new people who now worship on a regular basis.

## **WORSHIP AND TEACHING**

### **Sunday morning worship**

Worship is at the heart of our response to God for His amazing grace to us and is expressed in how we live our whole lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As the Church we are the Body of Christ and our worship together is essential for our spiritual growth. For us the main focus for this is when we gather each Sunday morning.

We aim to keep God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, at the centre and also create an informal and inclusive style of worship.

We are grateful to our Worship Leaders and Worship Band who lead from the front and work along with the appointed Preacher. We are looking forward to Jo Pope beginning her training as a further Worship Leader.

Through 2014 and 2015 we have shared in a number of Teaching Series related to the Christian year and Biblical material such as Great Prayers in the Bible, Acts 1-9, Philipians, The Beatitudes and so on.

All Age Services have continued to be very interactive and usually enhanced by the fellowship of breakfast beforehand. As well as those who lead worship from the front we are grateful for those who support our Sunday Worship in a variety of ways, with the multi-media, manning the coffee and working with our children & young people. All these areas need additional help so please speak to David and Suzy if you can help on a rota basis.

We continue to be grateful to Sainsbury's for providing flowers each week and to Brian and Joyce Freeman for facilitating this to enhance our worship.

(Kath Pawlett)

### **Sunday morning children and young people's work**

The children's work continues to be done in one group with ages ranging from 7-16 years old.

This it itself can be challenging enough but the busyness of modern life means that I never know who will come until 10.30am. However, my aim is to provide a caring, loving, creative environment where each child and young person feels loved and part of the church family as a whole. We like baking, we like making a mess, we like talking, we like questioning, we like playing games. To me, the most exciting bit is watching

them grow as individuals at the same time as becoming a group who only meet occasionally together but all knowing each other that bit better. It's amazing when they write or say something about God or Jesus, that's so simple, so true and yet we as adults have either forgotten or ignored.

Please pray for the children and young people's work on Sunday mornings and please offer help on an occasional basis. I can honestly say you will receive more than you could possibly give.

### **Small groups**

Small groups take place during the week and are where we study the Bible and also get to know each other more, build relationships and support each other. They meet at various times through the week and have different styles. We would encourage you to join a small group to deepen your faith and your relationship with God. All groups are open to anyone they are currently:

- **Tuesday home group**

This group continue to meet on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm at 46 Cause End Road. It is a time of fellowship and bible study mixed with singing and laughs.

- **Wednesday home group**

This continued to meet at 8 Summerfield Drive although during the year it has "gone on tour". Reading the Bible is very evident that food played an important part in Jesus's ministry and was often the starting point for a good discussion or teaching point. Our evenings therefore always starts at around 7.30pm with food, usually home made soup and salad This gives us a chance to catch up with ourselves and each other and have a chat about what's going on in each other's lives. It also helps to break barriers down before we start our study time.

We have used DVD's, You Tube and printed study materials, We have looked at the Fruits of the Spirit, Psalms, God's Grace as well going deeper in to the previous Sunday morning teachings and sharing our favourite Bible passages. We also pray for each other and our church family as we know and appreciate the challenges life brings to us all.

We'd love to welcome some new people, all are welcome to come and join wherever you are on your faith journey – if you're not sure and just want to try it out have a chat with Suzy or David.

### **EVANGELISM - Alpha**

During 2015 we felt that it was the right time for WNL to run Alpha again and a small Alpha began in October 2015 in one of our homes.

Alpha is a ten week course, plus a Saturday Holy Spirit Day, to help people explore the Christian Faith. This is now delivered through YouTube with a variety of speakers as well as Nicky Gumbel who has been instrumental to the course over many years.

If you would like to know more about Alpha or think of joining a future Course see Kath and Brian or e-mail [alpha@woottonnewlife.org.uk](mailto:alpha@woottonnewlife.org.uk)

(Kath & Brian Pawlett)

## **PASTORAL CARE**

We are grateful to our team of Pastoral Visitors for their care within our Fellowship. In August 2015 we had a review of our Pastoral Groups. Please do see Kath Pawlett if you would like to know more about this. The North Bedfordshire Circuit provides training each year around helpful topics which some of our Visitors hope to attend. This year we will be thinking about connecting Care and Discipleship and also about Bereavement.

Although we have a system of Pastoral Visitors we seek for our Church to be a place where we also care for each other through our groups and friendship.

(Kath Pawlett)

## **PRAYER**

Prayer is a vital part of our discipleship and the church life. We have a prayer book for prayer requests that are read out on Sundays and at our weekly prayer meeting on Tuesday evenings at 6.30pm – 7.15pm.

The worship team always meets and pray with the preacher prior to service.

We have a prayer chain for emergency prayer request that gets passed on by phone and email through the leaders. We offer prayer ministry to all after or before services.

We have held prayer nights on Sunday evenings where we have: prayed for the specific needs of our church life as it continues to seek God's guidance to carry out his mission through our church fellowship; prayed for our village as it expands and therefore creates both opportunities and challenges as we seek to serve in our local community.

Prayer is always available after our Sunday morning worship. Please see any one of the leadership team if you would like us to pray with and for you.

## **MISSION AND OUTREACH**

### **The Hub**

2015 continued to be another busy period for The Hub but without the help and support of all the volunteers who give up their time to serve refreshments etc. to regulars and the wider community we would not be as successful as we are so a big thank you to you all.

The Hub continues to be a hive of activity before and after the morning Sunday services where Gods fellowship is much in abundance.

The new dishwasher was installed in 2014 within The Hub that has made life a lot easier for everyone, is more economical on power consumption and washes a full load of cups in 120 seconds!!

The speciality coffee machine has broken down on a number of occasions so a view to buy a "restaurant style" robust coffee machine is being discussed which will provide a full range of speciality coffees with barista training for all who require it!

As part of the MISSION 20:20 discussion it was agreed to adopt a policy of offering complimentary tea and filter coffee as part of our service to the local community giving

people the opportunity to make a donation. This appears to have had no negative financial impact.

Thanks should also be given to Gary Chester who as our resident photographer constantly changes the pictures within The Hub to give a seasonal and upbeat feel to the walls. (Any one of the pictures can be purchased from Gary).

We are in discussion with another church in Bedford about them potentially franchising The Hub from us, they wish to reach out to the wider community in an around Wootton and many people in Wootton New Life are excited about this possibility. This idea is still in the early stages of dialogue with many questions and answers still to be heard but hopefully we will make a decision early in 2016.

### **Ladies Ministry**

We once again had a successful "Pamper Evening" in November 14 ably organised by Linda Green. This is an ever popular event that attracts a significant number of village ladies to come in, chat with their friends, have a drink and a piece of cake, a manicure and or massage and buy Christmas presents for their loved ones. What else would you want to do on a Friday evening in November?

A few of us went to Westminster Central Hall for New Wine Ladies day where we had the opportunity to worship with women from all over the south East and listen to some truly inspirational women and see how they lived out their faith.

We also met once a month for our usual ladies night where we would eat and chat and be encouraged to invite our friends. Occasionally we have decorated cakes (and ate them) and painted eggs for Easter which is both therapeutic and challenging and proved to be an opportunity to show people's hidden talents.

### **Men's Ministry**

During 2014/15 the men enjoyed several social events including breakfasts, a curry night and a ramble around Shefford. The highlight of the year was again the Christmas Meal when we invited the ladies to join us and around 50 people sat down to a three course meal excellently prepared by Jeremy Sear assisted by Gary Chester and a small team of volunteers.

### **Families, children & young people**

Our vision and strategy clearly states that we are a church family from many different backgrounds and where everyone matters. We demonstrate this through our work with families, children and young people.

We have worked ecumenically with the other churches within Wootton and Stewartby. We held our annual pancake party to show that we as churches are united in revealing the true meaning of Easter. Once again we showed a film on Halloween to provide an alternative to dressing up as witches and wizards.

We have used our building to have family film nights on other occasions too with our Christmas film, which this year was Frozen, being very popular. I'm not sure if it's the film or the chocolate mountains and popcorn.

During the year our church council recognized that as our village grew the existing provision for mid week activities would be lacking. We were delighted that Nicky and Allan Tressider had always had a vision that there should once again be a Brigade in the village and had offered to start both a Boys' and Girls' Brigade in our church. The church council therefore agreed that this would be our strategy, that is to pray that

other leaders and helpers could be found and that part of our tithe for 14/15 would go towards setting them up.

We are pleased to announce that at the time of this report going to print we have found the necessary leaders and helpers (for now) and that both groups started in January 2016 with very encouraging numbers.

It is both exciting and encouraging to see our church building being used throughout the day and week for people of ages to enjoy.

### **Open the Book**

Open the Book started in Bedford in 1999 when a small group of people put together a programme of 30 Bible stories using the Lion Storyteller Bible. The aim was to present the Bible Stories in an interesting way to children in Lower School Assemblies – this included dressing up in Biblical type costume and using good quality visual aids. This grew very rapidly and in 2008 it was decided to go National and in 2015 O.T.B. merged with Bible Society.

There are now 2,200 teams going into schools with 12,500 storytellers reaching hundreds of thousands of children each week. There are 34 teams in the Bedford Area including Wootton Lower School which we joined in 2015. Members of St Mary's, with Margaret Robertson as Leader, have run this group for many years and it is good to be alongside them bringing Bible Stories to children in Wootton. Do speak to us if you would like to know more.

(Kath & Brian Pawlett)

### **Pat-a-cake**

Pat-a-cake had a good year in 2015. Most weeks we've been pretty full. We drew in a number of new families during the year and some of them have become regular attenders. A number of people have also attended Messy Church and it's been lovely seeing them come back to Pat-a-cake being natural evangelists to encourage other parents to try it out. We've been short of regulars helpers all year long and although normally this can be frustrating however one big upside has been that we've had to appeal to the parents to take increased responsibility to help set up and put equipment away and they have responded really well.

More of our regulars take on board the need to reach out to the new attenders and help them feel drawn in. Special thanks have to be given to Nicola Tresidder and Carey Miller for their regular and steadfast support. Their contribution has been invaluable. This year we're looking at introducing a regular singing and big games time.

(Patrick Croash)

### **Mid week children's work**

In September 2014 two mid-week groups were running. These were Rock for school years 1 – 4 (ages 5 – 9) and Rock On for school years 5 – 8 (ages 9 – 13). Both groups ran on a Thursday, one following the other. Each group averaged approximately 10 children attending with games, crafts, stories and prayers happening each evening. Celia, Caroline, Betty and Jo supported the groups on a regular basis. However work and family commitments meant that it was difficult for sufficient adults to commit to regular attendance and the group stopped running in June 2015.

In February 2015 Celia and Jo attended the 'Hand in Hand' conference on behalf of the Church, we found this to be inspirational and enjoyable as well as giving us ideas for ways to move our outreach forward, specifically focussed on families and young people. This led to the launch of Messy Church, monthly, on a Saturday afternoon from September 2015. This appears to be successful with families attending that previously had not been to the church. We would like to thank all those who have helped us with this outreach.

(Jo Pope)

## Youth

2015 has been the year for a few changes in the youth programme here at WNL. Many of the young people who attended the Friday Youth Café were unable to continue, mainly due to school commitments, leaving us very short on numbers to keep it viable. Despite promoting "one-off" evening events, the numbers were not sufficiently boosted, so the team needed to look at other options for the future of the youth.

The youth programme was a central part of the strategy planning during the summer months. It was felt that the Friday Youth Café should take a "sabbatical". Thanks to the commitment of the all involved in youth work and many a prayer from the wider church, the Youth Hub was opened on a Friday evening in September, together with a launch of a Saturday Messy Church.

The Youth Hub aims to continue providing a safe space for young people in Year 7 and above, using the church facilities to play games, music, dance, chill and relax after a week at school. At the initial launch evening we were encouraged to see 12 young people come along. More encouraging is that they all appear to enjoy their evening and have since brought along their friends!

We have been fortunate to have had the experience of the Circuit Youth Workers (Monica & Rebecca) to help us get things off the ground. Together with the regular help of Brian, Suzy & myself we hope that the young people attending not only feel welcome and relaxed, but have the chance to learn more about themselves and continue along their Christian journey.

Some are already used to attending the Circuit youth services, and we will encourage all the young people attending on a Friday evening to indulge themselves in the wider Circuit youth events, to meet up with their peers across North Beds, at events such as sleepovers, egg hunts and trips to Soul Survivor.

There is also the option that come the new school year we might have to think about bringing the Youth Café out of its sabbatical.

(Dave Shore)

## FINANCE & GIVING

### The Cheerful Giver

**“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he/she has decided in their heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7**

There is Biblical teaching to give & the verses above remind us of what God is looking for in our hearts & souls as our attitude to giving to his work. These verses remind us that some of us may be more limited in what we can give than others, whereas some may have the financial ability to give more generously. Whatever we can give, hopefully we should have the desire to contribute not just to the on going maintenance of the Church in all its aspects, but to financially support our true calling in mission and service as Jesus Christ would wish.

It's pleasing to report that our annual giving increased again during 2014/15 as you can see from the financial summary of accounts at the end of this report. I would encourage everyone who is able to Gift Aid their offering, and if possible to use standing orders which enables easier control of the budget. Please speak to me for more details or about our envelope scheme.

So thank you for your giving and please continue to think and pray about your response as a cheerful giver, particularly as our budget for 2015/16 specifically reflects our Church's commitment to its new various initiatives in work with children, families and young people.

(Brian Pawlett)

### Our church giving

We continue as a church to give away (Tithe) 10% of our offertory.

We regularly support Prebend Street (a day center for the homeless) by giving an annual monetary donation, regular food offerings given through our community food box and any surpluses we have after our church meals and warm clothing when requested.

We also give regularly to the Bedford Women's Refuge at Christmas time through our gift service.

Some of our church members give of their time on Sunday evenings to feed the homeless in Bedford and we support them by giving paper cups, tea bags, bread and cake. Please pray for Kath and Brian and Tracey and Grant as they carry out this work and ask how you can support them with their work.

Unless indicated otherwise content is prepared by David & Suzy Goodson

Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road, Wootton. MK43 9DE

[woottonnewlife.org.uk](http://woottonnewlife.org.uk)

# WOOTTON NEW LIFE METHODIST CHURCH

# MISSION 20:20

## OUR VISION & STRATEGY

This strategy aims to capture a sense of who we are and where we feel God is leading us as a church. The ideas contained within it will shape the future of Wootton New Life for many years as they describe our vision, the key areas of our ministry and the people that we want to serve.

This paper has been written so that every member of our church family may understand how they can be part of God's people here in Wootton. This is a rolling 4 – 5 year strategic plan which we hope to see implemented by 2020, with regular reviews by the Church Council along the way.

### **We long to grow . . .**

As a church family we're from many different backgrounds, we're single, married, widowed and divorced, young, old and somewhere in between. But we share a common aim to deepen our love of God and to develop a community that sees His Kingdom thrive here in Wootton and beyond.

We are a church where everyone matters, from the youngest to the oldest member. We believe that everyone has something to bring that will add colour and creativity to the church family. For Wootton New Life maintaining the 'status quo' is not an option, we hunger to respond to God's love, to be transformed, to grow.

We want to inspire everyone in the church to have a passion for Jesus and His Kingdom, beginning in our own community and wherever God sends us. As a church family we are committed to the principles of church life that we see in the New Testament. Here the church is revealed as a community of people who not only love and serve Jesus Christ in obedience to His teachings, but are also committed to love and care for each other and to being a blessing to the area in which they live. We try to be just that. We don't always get it right but we are committed to trying.

### **We believe that we will do this through . . .**

**Worship, prayer, discipleship & teaching** - Providing structured Biblical teaching, a Church grounded in prayer, nurturing spiritual growth and encouraging participative, expressive worship.

**Reaching the community** - Working with and in the local community, serving others to make a radical difference in Wootton and beyond. Encouraging, equipping and supporting each other to exercise our faith where we live, work and relax.

**Children & Young People** - Building on our work with children & young people, helping them to grow into confident and responsible adults and wherever appropriate integrating children & young people into the whole church life.

### **We believe that we will achieve this through a number of key areas:**

#### **The Bible**

We will **seek to obey God's Word**, ensuring dynamic, Biblical preaching and teaching and the application of the word through small groups.

## Prayer

It is our desire to encourage every member of Wootton New Life to **pray more**, especially to listen for God to speak and lead us. We will nurture spiritual gifts including that of prophecy and discernment and encourage those with ministries of intercession.

We will do this through encouraging times of prayer together and in small groups seeking to ensure that daily prayer underpins the life of individuals and the church as a whole. We will encourage people to pray at home, at work, on the streets and together in our building, aiming to show that prayer can be exciting, dynamic and essential for the growth of the church. We want to develop people willing to pray with others – both from inside and outside the church, being sensitive to the Spirit and channels for healing and wholeness.

## Ministry and pastoral care

We want to develop the ministry of every believer, discovering their gifting from God and developing a passion for service and mission. We want to encourage young people into leadership and nurture and develop their gifts, so that they can be a blessing to this and other churches as some of them move away to a life elsewhere.

We seek to **love and care for one another** and those within our communities through good times and bad, offering practical and spiritual support and friendship. Everyone will be assigned to a Pastoral Visitor to ensure regular contact is maintained and support offered where appropriate.

## Worship

We will offer a **welcoming, contemporary and inclusive style of worship**. We will offer a range of services including 'Fresh Expressions' to provide an opportunity to reach the community and those who would not usually come to 'church'.

We will use the best and most appropriate resources to deliver visual and verbal clarity.

## Leadership and membership

The leadership team is responsible for ensuring that the church works effectively in the community, organising worship services and maintaining the different aspects of the church's life.

Leaders will be good role models, effective communicators, hearing from God, discerning the way forward and able to inspire others to follow in that way. Delegated tasks are carried out in trust and encouragement and support will always be in place.

We recognise the need to have **strong communications** both within the church and beyond to the village, the press and the internet, making effective use of social media.

As well as developing people's gifts and giving them confidence to use them, we will encourage people to feel that they are committed to working together in their ministries and actively participating in the life of the church. We will encourage people to recognise their **commitment** to Wootton New Life through formal membership.

## Small groups

Everyone at Wootton New Life will have the opportunity to be part of a small group. Small groups will seek to **build closer relationships** with each other right through the week not simply at the meeting, and offer care and support for each other, looking to develop each others' gifts and ministries.

Small groups will seek to reach out to friends and neighbours in friendship and love, supporting each other prayerfully in their witness together.

## Youth, children & families' work

A great foundation has been laid for seeing young people mature into young adults and make a choice about coming to Christ. We want to see this continue to **grow and expand** through the ministry of a strong youth, children and families team.

We will establish a new Girl's Brigade and Boys' Brigade Company that is fully integrated into the life of the church.

We will continue to offer the best for children and families building on links with Pat - A - Cake and reaching out to new families through Rock 'n' Roll (Messy Church) and other regular family events.

We will build on our work with young people through Youth Hub and special events.

We will encourage involvement in services and national events such as Soul Survivor both as an individual church and as part of the Circuit and/or ecumenical partnerships.

## Environment

We are committed to following an **ethical** buying policy. We are committed to the Methodist Church Environmental Policy and as a church adopt sound recycling and environmental practices.

## Growth

We aim to grow by **leading others to faith** in Christ as well as seeking to **grow in our own faith and trust in Jesus**. Growth involves learning to draw closer to God ourselves as well as growing together with all who lift up the name of Jesus.

Growth in these ways requires a commitment of every participant in the life of the church to seek and take every opportunity God gives to **share the gospel in word and action** and to be open to fresh understanding, experience and service together. We believe then that the numbers of people involved in the life of Wootton New Life will grow continuously over the next five years.

## Mission and outreach

We will make mission and outreach a **priority** as the Lord leads us. This will include opportunities for people to explore the Christian faith e.g. Alpha and Youth Alphas. We will develop the The Hub as a place where people of all ages can find a place to relax and build friendships.

We will seek opportunities to support the wider community e.g. senior citizen's lunches, parenting courses, drug awareness schemes and other opportunities for building bridges with the community. We will seek to serve all of the community through appropriate events e.g. Man Friday, Ladies Breakfasts, Men's Breakfasts, Family events.

We will aim to **help people in times of crisis** or difficulty whether through offering a listening ear or the practical support of food and/or meals, lifts and fellowship. As a church and as individuals we will foster links with charities e.g. Christians Against Poverty, BeChar, Bedford Women's Refuge, Bedford Street Angels and international links through organisations such as World Vision, Samaritans Purse and the Bible Society .

## Ecumenical links

We will take every opportunity to work together wherever possible with the other churches in the village and the wider community.

## Achieving our vision . . .

### People

The whole church needs to **own and be committed** to such a vision for it to be effective. We will need people who are not as yet involved in the life of the church to take up ministry in some of the areas we have out-lined.

### Finance

We will need **regular, generous and sacrificial giving** to fulfil this vision. We believe that God provides and that any vision needs to be totally surrounded by prayer.

### Buildings

We have excellent buildings and facilities that will help us to fulfil this vision. We will ensure that they **maintained to the highest standard** not only for our use at present but also so that they are in good repair for future generations.

[www.woottonnewlife.org.uk](http://www.woottonnewlife.org.uk)

Updated February 2016



Knowing Jesus;  
making Jesus known to all



# Annual Report 2015

presented to the St. Mary's Annual Meeting  
April 18th 2016

St. Mary's Church  
c/o The Vicarage | Church Rd | Wootton | Bedford | MK43 9HF  
01234 765375/768391 | [office@stmaryswootton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmaryswootton.org.uk) | [www.stmaryswootton.org.uk](http://www.stmaryswootton.org.uk)

## Mission Statement (what we aim to do)

Knowing Jesus; making Jesus known to all

## Vision Statement (what we aim to become)

**St Mary's 2016-2020 will be:**

**One body of wholehearted worshipping disciples, ever more deeply rooted in the Bible & prayer, growing together in holiness and every-member ministry to become a family of:**



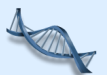
- **loving welcome**, caring for one another with the love of Jesus Christ
- **passionate proclamation**, committed to reaching the people of Wootton, Stewartby and beyond, with the vital good news of Jesus Christ for a lost world
- **glad service**, dedicated to being salt and light for Jesus Christ in the world
- **global heart**, BOTH prayerfully and practically engaged in the worldwide mission of the church, AND training and sending men and women into gospel ministry within and beyond the parish
- **sacrificial change**, giving generously of ourselves, our money, and our talents to realise this vision

## Values Statement (what matters to us)

**We believe that we are reconciled to God the Father through faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore we value:**

|                   |                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The Bible</b>  | as the written word of God and our supreme authority in following Jesus in the whole of life.                                      |
| <b>Prayer</b>     | as the prime expression of faith in Jesus and of our dependence on God's loving grace and sovereign power in all things.           |
| <b>Church</b>     | as a family of wholehearted worshippers and disciples of Jesus Christ committed to mutual encouragement, care, and accountability. |
| <b>Evangelism</b> | as the proclamation of the good news of God's salvation in Christ for all people                                                   |
| <b>Service</b>    | as a family of God's people caring for people in Wootton and Stewartby and beyond with the love of Christ.                         |

## Identity Statement (who we are)



**We are...**

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Christ's church:</b>       | the church is the bride and body of Jesus Christ; it is through him alone, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, that we know God; it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we worship and serve Christ; and it is Christ's future return which is our hope and motivation for life.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>A local church:</b>        | a full and authentic expression of the universal church, called into being and sustained by God's word. We have a specific responsibility to proclaim and demonstrate the love of God in Christ among the people of the parish of Wootton. We are also called to involvement with the world-wide mission of the whole church.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>An Anglican church:</b>    | while we welcome Christians of all backgrounds, our permanent and most visible connection is with the Church of England. We accept and uphold its founding documents (The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal) as authentic expressions of orthodox Christian belief. We are committed to supporting and encouraging biblical faith and practice in the Anglican Communion, both within and beyond the diocese of St Albans.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>An evangelical church:</b> | we recognise the convictions of historic evangelicalism as crystallising and expressing the kernel of orthodox Christianity, including: the supreme authority of Scripture; the universal nature of human sin; the grace of God, seen above all in the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus Christ; and the gift of justification and new life in Christ, received and enjoyed only through repentance and faith. We value the examples, among others, of the sixteenth-century reformers, the eighteenth-century evangelists, and the nineteenth-century social reformers. We are committed to gospel partnership with evangelical mission agencies, as well as with our patron, the Martyrs' Memorial and Church of England Trust, and the Church Pastoral Aid Society. |

# Introduction

*If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 4.11*

Annual Reports are never bestsellers. But they do matter. This document puts in your hands the church council's official record of St Mary's mission and ministry during 2015, including our financial statements. It matters because members of the council are accountable for their stewardship of the church's mission – not least to the church members who elect most of them, as well as to God. So we need to be transparent with one another and to the wider public about our stewardship, grateful as we look back for all the service recorded here, and honest about the challenges we have faced. This report aims to do this.

But it should also to do more. It should help us to look forward. Because when we set out in black and white what we believe God has been graciously providing among us in 2015, we are reminded of our calling as a Christian church. And understand better how to fulfil it in the future.

As you will read in these pages, during 2015 the church council completed a review of our Mission Action Plan (MAP) – the vision which has guided us since 2011 in our mission: Knowing Jesus and Making Jesus Known to All. Becoming more effective as a disciple-making church.

Early this year, the council agreed our MAP for 2016-20. At the Annual Meeting on 18th April we will present it to the church family. Though it calls for evolution not revolution, it will still be challenging to achieve. I hope the pages of this report will enable us to welcome it with confidence that the Lord who has provided for us in the past, will continue to do so in the future. As we commit to deeper discipleship among ourselves, as well as to making new disciples in our growing parish. So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

Yours in his service

Peter Ackroyd  
Vicar



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## PCC Aims and Ministry

Wootton PCC is responsible in partnership with the vicar for promoting the whole mission of the church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical - in the ecclesiastical parish of Wootton (which includes Stewartby).

In planning and overseeing the mission of the church, the incumbent and PCC consider the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and especially the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We aim to enable Christians to live out their faith in Christ through:

- church services and prayer
- bible study groups and training
- young people's activity and educational involvement
- pastoral care for parishioners
- evangelism
- partnership in world mission



Over the past four years, a prominent item on the agenda for every PCC meeting has been the implementation of St Mary's 2011-15 Mission Action Plan. During 2015, we marked the end of the current planning, giving thanks for achievements such as the 2014 Love Wootton Easter parish mission and the installation of projection and improved amplification in the church building, and noting that some targets - notably employing a youth and children's worker - had not been achieved. We also inaugurated a renewal of the plan, through a congregational questionnaire and in consultation with leaders and members across the whole life of the church.

The vicar and PCC are supported in the church's mission by PCC committees, by a part-time employed administrator, and by teams of volunteer helpers, appointed by the PCC and vicar. We continued to have responsibility within the diocese of St Albans as a training parish for a first-post curate, and in July welcomed into ministry here, on completion of his residential studies at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, Revd Lucas Durant and his wife Catherine.

Having been accepted for Reader training in 2014, the past year saw Jim Hignett continue preparation for Reader ministry, involving weekly evening classes in St Albans, as well as practical and written assignments. As part of his training, Jim continued to share in leading and preaching at services in Wootton and Stewartby.

To support the church's ministry the PCC maintains the fabric of St Mary's church, the church hall and grounds, and the curate's house. During 2015 considerable effort was devoted to fund-raising for urgent repairs to the stonework on the south-facing elevation of the church building. By the end of the year, through congregational giving, fundraising events, and grants promised or received, a total of £36,000 towards the estimated total cost of £68,000 had been raised. Fundraising events included a music marathon, quiz night, vintage tractor and vehicle rally, Beds & Herts Bike 'n Hike, with teas and tower tours, and at Harvest displays of flowers, and a supper and barn dance at Wood End Farm, Kempston.

The PCC is a charitable corporate body established in law and operating under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956, as amended, and the Church Representation Rules 2011. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission.

In November, six PCC members attended a training event 'PCC Tonight', run by Church Pastoral Aid Society at Christ Church Ware.

## PCC Members

Peter Ackroyd (chair), Dorothy Teh (secretary), Steve Rowse (treasurer), Andy Snelson (warden), Margaret Greenhalgh (warden), Lucas Durant (curate), Pauline Kendall (Deanery Synod rep), Hazel Sanders (Deanery Synod rep), Tim Dillistone (Deanery Synod rep), Sally Snelson, Kirsten Knight, Emma Hearn, Jenny Roffey, Josh Kendall, Malcolm Chalmers (resigned Oct 2015), Diane Murray (in attendance).

**Voted onto PCC April 2015:** Kirsten Knight, Dorothy Teh. Co-opted to PCC, Sept 2015: Josh Kendall.

**Those whose PCC term ended in April 2015:** Diana Scott, Ivy Peacock, Andy Snelson.

**Structure, governance and management:** The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll.

**This report has been adopted by the PCC at its final meeting before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

## Public Worship and Prayer

A range of Sunday services are offered. The principal service took place at 10.30am, with the goal of being accessible to all ages, including children's groups and a crèche facility. Adult attendance at this service was normally 70-80, with around 15 children. The Lord's Supper was celebrated once per month. At gam a weekly service according to the Book of Common Prayer alternated between The Lord's Supper and Morning Prayer and attracted around 15 people. A Prayer Service, held on the second Sunday monthly, continued to flourish, and as well as affording opportunity for more corporate prayer also enabled church members to engage together in issues facing the church locally, and globally, including the needs of Christians enduring persecution especially in Syria and Iraq.

A monthly mid-week 'messy church' held in the church hall - Encompass - served younger families in Wootton and attracts a regular attendance of 60-80 adults and children. A large team of helpers sustained this 'fresh expression' of church and as well as building links with many families in the local community, a number of the older children have joined the Wednesday Pathfinders group.

Thanksgivings and baptisms were held during the main morning service and often attended by significant numbers from the community. Connections with the wider church in both diocese and worldwide were maintained by regular visiting preachers. In 2015 these included Anthony Hall (Release International), Rt Revd Richard Atkinson (Bishop of Bedford), Revd Alf Cooper (mission partner in Santiago, Chile), Barry Funnell (Word for the World bible translators), Revd Dr Lee Gatiss (Church Society) and Michael Bishop (Reader, Christ Church Bedford). In 2015 there were six wedding services, and the clergy officiated at a number of funerals at St Mary's, at Stewartby United Church, and at Bedford Crematorium.

On Remembrance Sunday, St Mary's hosted as usual the village's annual Service of Remembrance. At Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest and Christmas a range of services enable all ages to celebrate major festivals.

Where there is a fifth Sunday in the month, a team from St Marys led by Clem Lewin leads the weekly Sunday morning service of Christian worship at Bedford Hospital.

A weekly prayer ministry team supports those attending our morning service. Members of the congregation support the vicar and curate in their pastoral ministry in Wootton and Stewartby. A visiting team ensures that church members who are unable to attend services on account of infirmity or illness are regularly visited.

Members of St Mary's also support the ministry of Stewartby United Church, a Local Ecumenical Project. The Church of England is a member of a Sharing Agreement with the Methodist, United Reformed, and Roman Catholic Churches to provide pastoral ministry in the LEP. During the year the monthly Sunday afternoon T@3 event at Stewartby United Church (launched in 2014) with support from St Mary's and Vale Community Church, continued to attract new members, though is proving less successful than hoped in reaching younger families in Stewartby. Family Fun Time, a monthly after-school 'messy church' draws a number of families from the local community.

## Discipleship and Learning

The PCC provides many opportunities for people to grow as Christians. During 2015 six regular Growth Groups met for bible study weekly or fortnightly. Growth Group leaders met termly for review and training, and during the year were: Angela Stephens and Allyson Cable, Clem Lewin and Ivy Peacock, Jim Hignett and Norma Smith, Lucas Durant, Peter Stephens and John Robertson, and Diane Murray and Derrick Lowe. The Vicar also led a 'Life' group in the first half of the year, mainly for those who had attended a Christianity Explored course, considering basics of Christian belief and discipleship, using newly published Live, Grow, Know course presented by Rebecca Manley Pippert.



Church members are encouraged to attend events for training encouragement and fellowship in the Deanery and wider church. In March, a study weekend for women in leadership was held on the Norfolk coast. A small group once more enjoyed the May Bank Holiday 'Bible by the Beach' conference in Eastbourne.

Over the weekend of 9-11 October, around 55 church members, including children, enjoyed a church weekend away at Letton Hall in Norfolk. The speaker, Revd Jem Hovil (BUILD Partners UK) gave four addresses from the letter to the Ephesians. Lucas Durant led a programme for young people.

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As described in more detail later in this report, groups for young people are held on Sunday mornings and evenings, and midweek. Young people attend a range of residential events, including summer camps run by CPAS Ventures (Brambletye Explorer/Pathfinder; Woolhampton I Pathfinder; Foremarke I CYFA ventures), Mid-Wessex Christian Camps, and LymingtonRushmore Holidays, as well as our own Easter holidays Pathfinder residential at the Chellington Centre in Carlton. Church members including the Vicar served as leaders, cooks, and assistant leaders on a range of these residential for young people.

## Deanery, Diocesan and General Synod

The benefice of Wootton is part of Bedford Deanery. St Mary's three lay members of Bedford Deanery Synod are Pauline Kendall (Lay Co-Chair), Hazel Sanders and Tim Dillistone. During 2015 the Synod, which connects St Mary's to the wider church, met five times. Business included presentations on the writings of Bishop Tom Wright, on pioneer ministry in the new housing development of Great Denham, on the national church Reform and Renewal initiative, and on international mission. Deanery Synod heard regular reports of the business of General Synod.

Pauline Kendall and the vicar are among representatives of Bedford Deanery on Diocesan Synod. The vicar chairs the Bedford Deanery Pastoral Committee.

Regular reports of the work of the Deanery and Diocesan Synods are brought to PCC.

On Saturday 7 March a number of church members attended a service of Evening Prayer at St Albans Cathedral during which the Vicar was installed as an Honorary Canon.

## Ecumenical

The PCC aims to strengthen Christian witness and service in the community through membership of Wootton and Stewartby Churches. All congregations meeting in the parish are actively involved: St Marys, New Life Methodist, Wootton Baptist, and Stewartby United Church.

As usual, a United Service was held in January, a Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday, and a Senior Citizens Tea in May. On Maundy Thursday members from WSC churches met together to read an account of the Passion of Christ. Following the Parish Council sponsored annual village Fun Day, at which a WSC marquee offered free activities, an Open Air service was held on 12 July, at which the speaker was Revd Richard Leadbeater (Christianity Explored Ministries and Kings Church, Guildford).

Joint publicity was prepared and distributed to every household at Easter, in advance of the Village Fun Day and Open Air Service, and at Christmas.

Clergy attend monthly prayer meetings for leaders of Bedford churches in sympathy with the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance, of which St Marys is a corporate member.

## Evangelistic:

St Mary's aims to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through its regular public services, through supporting the witness of Christians in their homes, neighbourhoods and workplaces, and through offering regular events and courses to enable people to explore Christian faith and practice.

A Christianity Explored course was held in the autumn in the vicarage, with an attendance of seven.

## Epic Explorers

The Encompass team ran the Epic Explorers Holiday Club in August 2015. We held it each morning, for 4 days, Tuesday to Friday, with games and crafts on Wednesday afternoon. Over the 4 sessions we took the children through Mark's gospel, thinking about Jesus' identity, his mission, the problem of sin, the offer of forgiveness, Jesus' death, resurrection, and what it means to follow him. Over the 4 days a total of 108 children attended, with between 83 and 65 at each session. We also held a BBQ on Friday night. Then we held a service at the Church Hall site on Sunday morning, the weather was not good so we decided to hold the service in the hall. This meant everyone could fully enjoy the hall atmosphere from holiday club. It was a fantastic evangelistic and pastoral week and we thank God for his goodness to us all!



Hazel Sanders

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wootton

## Mission Beyond the Parish

The PCC tithes its regular giving income to support Christian mission beyond the parish.

Longstanding mission partners in Belgium (YP & Jude Gayet) and Chile (Alf & Hilary Cooper) were supported directly and through the Church Mission Society.

St Mary's also supports prayerfully and financially: the ministry of IMPACT, a Scripture Union affiliated charity, which employs Christian schools workers in the Bedford area; and the Church Pastoral Aid Society.

During 2015 the PCC additionally agreed to support the ministry of Karen Jones, local sixth-form & FE college worker with the UK charity Festive (a joint venture of UCCF and Scripture Union). We were pleased to offer this support alongside Grace Community Church, Kempston.

Church members also support the work of the Bedford Foodbank through a collection point in church, while the church is a referral agent for the Foodbank.

## Staff and Church Officers



## Churchwardens' Report on Fabric

Compared to 2014, 2015 has been a comparatively quiet year for the churchwardens. On the building front we have mostly been concerned with routine maintenance. One of the more major tasks that have been undertaken was the stripping of old yacht varnish from the church notice boards. This has been replaced with an oil based varnish which will make keeping them looking smart a less onerous task. Also the refurbishment of the hall kitchen has been completed with the addition of a 'powerpole' and a hot cupboard. Looking to the future, thanks to the unexpected blessing of a legacy we hope to commence the long overdue repairs to the south side stonework in the spring. Margaret and I are very grateful for the help, support and prayers we get from the church family and would like to take this opportunity to thank you.

Andy Snelson and Margaret Greenhalgh

## Electoral Roll Officer's Report

At the last revision of the 2013 Electoral Roll in March 2015, the number of names totalled 125.

Over the last year, 3 names have been removed (deceased/moved away from the parish) and 3 names have been added.

Sara Butler-Jones

## PCC Secretary's Report

The PCC meets once a month on a Monday evening eight times a year. The meetings are usually for 2 hours. At the present time the PCC is made up of fourteen members. The term of office for each member is three years. The PCC has five functions; to enable the church to play its part in God's mission to his world, to co-operate with the minister in sharing leadership, ensure legal compliance with charity and church law, care for church buildings and church yard and as a channel of consultation within the wider Church.

In July, September and October the PCC met jointly for part of the time with the Mission Action Planning Team to review the church's Mission Action Plan. The MAP was finally approved in February 2016. The PCC also received regular reports on the state of the church's finance, reports on deanery and diocesan synods, the condition and maintenance of the church building and 9, Studley Road. The Safeguarding and Fire safety Policies were updated. Other topics for discussion included support for global mission, children's and youth work, leader appointments, stonework restoration fundraising programme and leadership of church flower arranging. In November six members of the PCC attended a training event 'PCC Tonight' run by Church Pastoral Aid Society at Christ Church Ware which was very informative.

Dorothy Teh

## Parish Administrator's Report

Work in the office is busy and varied. We are thinking about our online presence, how to make more effective use of our website and social media. And as we do that, to present ourselves attractively and professionally, which is time consuming - the days of black and white posters and comic sans font are behind us....!

I am thankful for the dedicated help of Sara Butler Jones who folds service sheets, keeps posters current and ensures church is tidy, stocked up and ready for Sundays. And to Georgia Murray for her design expertise. Thanks to Peter Stephens who helps with seasonal publicity. Voluntary help in the office works out at about four hours each week.

I am a member of UK Church Administrators Network (UCAN) which has helpful articles and forums.

A UCAN quote: 'Never forget that 'ministry' and 'administration' are words from the same root. Administrators serve the servants'. Please pray that I will be able to do that.

Diane Murray



## Church Hall Warden's Report

The hall is used daily in term time by St Mary's Playgroup, whereas Pathfinders and Rainbows meet weekly. Explorers and Pathfinders also use the hall on Sunday mornings for teaching. Monday Lunch Club and Encompass meet monthly in the hall. A two day Take-a-Break, is planned for early April and a Holiday Club in August. The Committee Room accommodates the Church Office, Church Council meetings and some storage.

It is expected some repair work to the driveway will take place over Easter. The boiler room doors and frames need attention, as the two doors are sticking. The main entrance gate needs repainting. A new hot cupboard has been installed in the kitchen.

The grass, nettles and brambles receive regular attention round the field. Volunteers are always welcome to assist me keeping the hall and grounds in good repair. The hall is a great asset to all church and community.

Richard Hull

## Treasurer's Report

**2015 summary.** A small overall surplus was seen in 2015. All bills were paid including 100% of the parish share commitment and the stonework restoration funds have increased generously. Additionally, welcome news of a late parishioner's estate is likely to be forthcoming to meet all stonework restoration costs in the future. Whilst the overall bank balance is healthy, the unrestricted proportion of this money that the PCC is free to spend as it wishes (or the 'rainy day' fund) was empty at the end of 2015. Pledge Sunday has however seen a very positive response from parishioners, leading to a more healthy 2016 outlook, and a good start to building the 'rainy day fund, tempered with cautious and careful spending.

**Church finances overview.** The Church finances are made up of income from parishioners, and tax relief reimbursed from the majority of this giving, that is subject to 'gift aid'. Income is also received from Church Hall rent, and a small amount from wedding & funeral fees. This income is used to pay our bills and supports our home and oversees mission giving. The largest of these expenses is parish share contributions, of which all of our 2015 parish share payments were met.

**Income.** Total income was £126,943.65.

**Expenditure.** Total expenditure was £111,364.82. 53% of this total was £58,536 Parish Share payments.

**Difference.** The difference between income and expenditure of £15.6k is accounted for with stonework money received of £13.9k in 2015. Therefore, excluding stonework restoration money, 2015 ended the year with a surplus of £1.7k over the year.



**2015 regular giving.** 50% of all 2015 income (£63,498.21) was from 53 regular giving households through standing orders and blue envelopes, excluding Stonework restoration giving. This equates to an average of £99.84 per month per regular giving household, excluding restoration giving.

**2016 outlook.** Following 2015's Pledge Sunday the number of giving households via standing order or blue envelopes has risen from 53 in 2015 to 59 so far in 2016, excluding Stonework restoration giving. Towards the end of 2015 and following presentation of our 2016 Budget to the congregation, Pledge Sunday resulted in an additional six households committing to regular giving, and a modest but significant increase in our expected regular monthly income from congregational giving.

Steve Rowse

## Support for Services



### Singing Group

We currently have seven musicians, having had one leave during the year, and three regular singers who sing by a rota, two each week. We are fortunate to have a fourth singer to stand in when we are short. We always enjoy our fellowship together week by week at Wednesday practice and on Sundays at the 10:30 service and at the monthly Sunday evening prayer service. We consider it a privilege to be part of the worship at St Mary's.

The new sound system is working well now but to be sure one of our pre-service songs acts as a sound check.

I would like to thank all Singing Group members for their regular commitment and support week by week but if anyone would like to join our happy group in any musical capacity please speak to me you will be very welcome.

Tony Winterson



### Choir

First, I wish to thank the six members of the choir who have loyally sung at the gam service through the year. The choir consists of 3 Soprano, 2 Alto and a Tenor. This means that we are only able to sing relatively simple anthems. We have nevertheless continued to sing the Psalms to Anglican chants most Sundays.

Unfortunately in my view it is only a short time before the long tradition of singing choral music at St Mary's will end. I would like to encourage the members who joined the choir for the Christmas Carol Service, and congregational members to join the choir on a regular basis if choral singing is to continue.

Maintenance on the organ has included re-voicing the 56 Oboe pipes and the Trumpet pipes above treble 'C'. This has improved the tone of the Oboe pipes and made the Trumpet even over the whole range.

John Robertson.

### Church Flowers

Flowers help to make St Marys a welcoming place for our congregation and visitors to worship; they reflect God's wonderful nature.

To encourage more flower arrangers two workshops were held last year to give those interested the chance to learn the basics – the result has been to create an enthusiastic and confident team.

The 'Flower Ladies' have helped decorate the church for Sundays, Christmas, and Easter Services. Harvest was special as we had arrangements from Wootton Lower School , combined with 'Afternoon Tea and Tower Tours' in aid of the Stone Restoration Fund. Good weather made it a lovely well attended community event.

During the year many of the arrangements were provided through donations to remember a loved one or anniversary. Floral displays were provided for four of the five weddings during 2015.

Thank you to all of the 'Flower Ladies' and those who supported our events.



Alison Thompson

### Church Bells

There is currently no bell ringing team. Richard Reeves kindly organizes for a team from other churches to ring bells when required at weddings. If you would like to be part of a bell ringing team - contact the Church Office.

## Young People's Groups

### Wrigglers (weekly toddler group)



Slightly quieter at Wrigglers this year as some of our older children went to school or preschool but we still get very busy especially on the days the Children's Centre come to do baby weighing. We have had some welcome extra help from Angela Stephens, Sally Snelson, Allyson Cable, Margaret Greenhalgh and Jan Butcher. This means that we can offer refreshments to the parents, someone is available to welcome new parents, we can supervise a craft and do some singing at the end. Lots of the parents have also been helping set up on a rota system which has been a great help. We are still getting new people most weeks often people who are new to the village so it is a great way of welcoming people to village life and to the work of St Mary's.

Emma Hearn

### Men Behaving Dadly (monthly for dad's and their 0-12 year olds)

Numbers had been reducing as children were getting older, so we decided it was a good time to effectively reboot MBD and relaunch it afresh to a new audience. We updated the Facebook page to broaden its appeal and advertised MBD again at Wrigglers. We also opened up to older siblings to make it more inclusive - and finally, changed the location of the events to the Maypole Farm family restaurant near the Bedford bypass, where they have indoor play facilities, in an attempt to make men Behaving dadly appeal to a wider audience. Initial signs are that are efforts have been successful as numbers have started to increase again.



Matt Hearn

### Sunday Crèche

The crèche is now held in the old Climbers Room at the front of the Church, which is handy for the amenities such as the kitchen sink with a kettle and the toilet. We have lots of toys and games to play with and it's a nice, relaxed environment. We don't usually have a lot of babies in the crèche, apart from at Baptisms, when we are inundated and it's all hands on deck! Di Murray very efficiently sends out a Crèche rota to our helpers about 3 times a year and we also have some teenagers who can assist. Helping with the Crèche gives you an opportunity to get to know the parents and babies who attend and its lovely to help them in Church, they might not otherwise be able to come along. From Crèche the children can go on to join our other groups and become part of our Church family.

Marje Williams

### Climbers (Sundays for 2-5 year olds)

Climbers has made a change to welcome younger children this year. We wanted to embrace the dynamics of the congregation, where 'Climber-aged' children with younger siblings often attended the crèche. Our Bible story time needed to be adapted; however, we still deliver Jesus's love through prayer, action rhymes and singing, craft and 'show and tell.' The 'oak tree' is still 'climbed', knitted finger puppets help tell Old and New Testament stories, construction toys from the crèche have proved invaluable and we now use a lot more Play-Doh!

Alison Marris continues to lead the group, ably assisted by Sally Snelson. In July, Jenny Hall decided to 'put her glue sticks away'; we thank her for her many years of glad service. Alison Reed-Thomsett kindly provides cover for last-minute re-arrangements. We are also indebted to J@M members' assistance each week.

Please continue to pray for us as we teach and share God's word.

Alison Marris

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## Explorers (Sundays for school years 1-4)

For most of this year Explorers, which Year 1 children were also able to join from September onwards, has been small, often only one or two children, but occasionally as many as six. However, we have rejoiced at the privilege and opportunity of sharing God's Word and at seeing these children grow in their understanding of who Jesus is and what he requires of us.

This year we began using The International Children's Bible which is an excellent addition to our resources and has meant that the children can easily access Scripture for themselves. For most of this year, our focus has been in the New Testament, covering the call of John the Baptist and of the disciples, Peter's ministry and the parables of Jesus. The year ended with Moses and Joshua and a look at heavenly messengers. These stories have all helped us see that Jesus' message is for everyone and that our lives need to reflect our faith in Him.

Judi Fawcett

## Pathfinders (Sunday & midweek for school years 5-8)

Over the past twelve months **Sunday Pathfinders** have done a summer term series about Samuel, aiming to understand what it means to serve a holy God, then learned from Ezra and Nehemiah, seeing how God always fulfils his promises. In the autumn we learned about being a disciple of Jesus, looking at the life and message of John the Baptist, and then the life of Peter and how he learned to trust and depend on Jesus. The numbers of children range from five to eight at any one session. Pray that the Pathfinders and their leaders would live out the memory verse 1 Samuel 12:24, 'Be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you'.

Claire Brice

**Midweek Pathfinders** has been a very exciting ministry so far this year. Due to a profile boost from our summer holiday club (Epic Explorers), when we resumed in the autumn we found that we had approximately 30 children! Throughout the year, our numbers have remained relatively consistent. Many of our regulars are from non-church attending families.

Week-by-week, we have played games, made crafts, eaten snacks and most importantly studied God's Word. In the autumn we looked at the seven 'I Am...' statements of Jesus in John's Gospel, over the winter we have been doing a whistle stop tour through Exodus (roughly following the Sunday sermon series). Over the Easter holidays we will be running our annual residential, for which we have 17 children signed up so far.

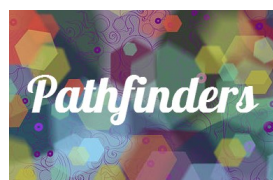
Many thanks to Amanda Newton, who so capably served as the overall leader until December.

Lucas Durant

## J@M (Sunday evening for school years 9-13)

We currently have a small, but focused, group of young individuals! We meet regularly on Sunday evenings at my house, and I shared the leadership duties with Hazel. However, going forward this is changing and I am accompanied in that role by Catherine Durant (thanks for stepping up and giving Holly a leader that is not one of her parents!). Our meetings involve snacks, games (or occasional craft), bible study and prayer. This term we are exploring each of the Ten Commandments in detail (one per week), and understanding how we should be applying them to our lives. Last term we studied "Soul" – the youth version of Christianity Explored. We have also travelled to a number of events; to "Sorted", a youth event at Westminster Chapel, and to "Reason", a series of evening worship and talks at Christ Church, Bedford.

Martin Sanders



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## Outreach and Community

### Lunch Club



Once again we have enjoyed a happy and successful year with Lunch Club. We have welcomed new members, and enjoyed some delicious meals, thanks to the wonderful kitchen team, led by Jenny Roffey. After lunch we have joined in talks, presentations of many interesting topics, including the training of assistant dogs, work in an orphanage in Africa, visits from the Lower School Choir, craft sessions and a visit to Derrick and Marion Lowe's garden. Take-a-Break (our two day event) again proved very popular. All this is due to so many people helping in so many different ways. Our aim is to offer a warm and loving welcome to all in the name of Jesus.

Norma Smith

### Encompass (Messy Church)

We have had a great year at Encompass. We have looked at stories about people Jesus met from Simeon and Anna and Pilate through to Jesus' ascension. We have studied the stories through crafts, games, songs, prayers, and we have also eaten a LOT of cake! Sally Snelson has continued to feed us all with delicious hot food every month. We have had between 45 and 70 people each month. The planning team is myself, Marion Lowe, Andy Snelson, Kirsten Knight and Gill Ireland but we are enormously assisted by many volunteers. We again helped with the Christingle service, with everyone making their own Christingle, eating cake and learning about Jesus the light of the World! In 2016 we are again looking forward to running a holiday club, and continuing to build relationships within the Encompass family, learning more about our great and generous loving God and eating more cake!



Hazel Sanders

## Associate Ministry

### Stewartby United Church

2015 saw a few new faces worshipping with us on a Sunday, mainly through initial contact at t@3. It is very encouraging for us to see new people coming along. Family Fun Time (Messy Church) continues to meet most months, and again we have seen some new families coming, as well as those familiar faces who come most months. We are still running events with very few people to help, and we thank God that we can still reach out into the community of Stewartby with the gospel message. We are so thankful to those people who do support us, through prayer and also through their active involvement.

During the year we have been busy decorating the corridor and toilets, and were very grateful for the help of a homeless person to do this. It made us think how much we have to be thankful for, and how we take so much for granted!

Elaine Sullivan

### Holywell Governors'

There are 5 representatives from St Mary's serving as Foundation Governors at Holywell Middle School – now an Academy but also still a Church of England School- hence the church involvement at governor level. Those of us privileged to serve in this way are JoJo Ackroyd, Pauline Kendall, Martin Sanders, John Spellman and Isabel Turner (Vice Chair). We attend the full governing body meetings but also serve on sub committees including Strategy, Ethics, Finance and Curriculum where Martin serves as the chair. We are there to be representatives of the community and to uphold biblical principles, having an especial care for the school's Christian character. Our aim is to be fully supportive of the school, its teachers and its mission, making our contribution to the school's wellbeing and effectiveness. This is a time of change for schools in both Central Beds (where Cranfield lies) but also in Bedford Borough (which includes much of the catchment area) and we value your prayers for our work.

Pauline Kendall

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# St. Mary's Playgroup

We had an Easter service in the Church. Mary and Tracey celebrated 25 years at Playgroup. We would like to thank everyone for making the last 25 years enjoyable. The weather was kind at our Annual Sports Day. We also prepared our children for School, we visited the school and the Reception teachers visited us. We were also invited to dance at the school Summer Fayre. Our end of term party was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Peter Ackroyd visits regularly to tell the children a Bible story, to sing and to pray. At the end of the autumn term we had a Christmas service in church. Our nativity was popular and the term ended with Christmas parties and a visit from Santa.

We would like to thank Peter for his support.

Mary Bell



*St Mary's Playgroup opened in 1967 and operates from the main room within the Church Hall. Children have access to a fully enclosed, grassed outdoor play area.*

*St Mary's Playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The Playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is registered by Ofsted. St Mary's Playgroup has six members of staff, three of whom have been at the playgroup for over twenty years. All members of staff regularly attend training courses, are police checked and all hold current First Aid certificates.*

*St Mary's Playgroup receives funding for early years education. It is open each weekday during term-time only. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 32 places a session. The setting serves the local and neighbouring community.*



# St. Mary's Playgroup Income and Expenditure January to December 2015

|                                             |                |                  |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>EXPENDITURE January - December 2015</b>  |                |                  |
| Salaries January - December 2015            |                | 60285.88         |
| Pension                                     |                | 2400.00          |
| Employers National Insurance/TAX            |                | 10438.22         |
| Church Hall Rent                            |                | 4534.67          |
| Pre-school Learning Alliance Membership Fee |                | 98.00            |
| Photoscene                                  |                | 674.75           |
| Equipment and supplies                      |                | 4247.06          |
| <b>Miscellaneous</b>                        |                |                  |
| Auditing fees                               | 90.00          |                  |
| Party Food/Christmas dinner/Milkbar         | 176.32         |                  |
| PATS testing                                | 60.00          |                  |
| Children In Need                            | 28.00          |                  |
| Fee refund                                  | 359.90         |                  |
| DBS                                         | 396.20         |                  |
| Christsmas Presents                         | 121.18         |                  |
| Photo Developing                            | 183.87         |                  |
| Donation to PCC                             | 500.00         |                  |
| <b>Miscellaneous Total</b>                  | <b>1915.47</b> | <b>1915.47</b>   |
| Staff Training                              |                | 245.00           |
| Petty Cash                                  |                | 1100.31          |
| Ofsted Annual Registration Fee              |                | 50.00            |
| Cash in Hand - 31 December 2015             |                | 26.63            |
| Balance in Bank - 31 December 2015          |                | 30564.05         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                |                | <b>116580.04</b> |
| <b>INCOME January - December 2015</b>       |                |                  |
| Cash in Hand - 1 January 2015               |                | 26.94            |
| Balance at Bank - 1 January 2015            |                | 18636.93         |
| Received from Fees (Cash & Cheques)         |                | 14481.95         |
| Received from Lunch Club                    |                | 957.50           |
| Received for Photoscene                     |                | 764.75           |
| Donation                                    |                | 50.00            |
| Children In Need                            |                | 28.00            |
| Received from Early Years Funding LEA       |                | 74405.00         |
| SEN Funding                                 |                | 7128.72          |
| Cheque 101442 not cashed                    |                | 28.00            |
| Cheque 101455 not cashed                    |                | 72.25            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                |                | <b>116580.04</b> |

  
 24. 2.16

# St. Mary the Virgin Parochial Church Council Independent Examiner's Report of accounts for January to December 2015

Charity Commission no. 1150817

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended **31 December 2015**, which are set out on pages 1 to 5 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and **s.145 of the Charities Act 2011** ('the Act').

## Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and **s.144(2)** of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

## Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under **s.145(5)(b)** of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

## Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- i. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section **130** of the Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or
- ii. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed Hynden Richardson Independent Examiner

Date 10th March 2016

Signed on behalf of PCC Peter Ashton

Date 18th March 2016

## St Mary's Church, Wootton

## Balance Sheet detailed

To the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

|                         |                                    | As at<br>31/12/2015 | As at<br>31/12/2014 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Endowment assets</b> |                                    |                     |                     |
| 1509                    | Wootton Armstrong Fund             | 996.05              | 982.68              |
| 1510                    | Wootton Church Cottages            | 16,017.64           | 15,802.61           |
|                         | <b>Total Fixed assets</b>          | <b>17,013.69</b>    | <b>16,785.29</b>    |
| <b>Current assets</b>   |                                    |                     |                     |
| 1501                    | Current Account                    | 12,009.34           | 10,910.14           |
| 1503                    | CBF Capital Fund                   | 24,219.05           | 9,730.05            |
| 1504                    | CBF Studley Road                   | 1.71                | 1.71                |
| 1508                    | Cash Book                          | —                   | 9.64                |
|                         | <b>Total Current assets</b>        | <b>36,230.10</b>    | <b>20,651.54</b>    |
| <b>Liabilities</b>      |                                    |                     |                     |
| 6699                    | Agency collections                 | 18.06               | 18.33               |
|                         | <b>Total Liabilities</b>           | <b>18.06</b>        | <b>18.33</b>        |
|                         | <b>Net Asset surplus (deficit)</b> | <b>53,225.73</b>    | <b>37,418.50</b>    |
| <b>Reserves</b>         |                                    |                     |                     |
|                         | Excess / (deficit) to date         | 15,578.83           | (22,371.71)         |
| Z01                     | Starting balances                  | 37,418.50           | 58,941.56           |
| Z02                     | Gains and losses on investments    | 228.40              | 848.65              |
|                         | <b>Total Reserves</b>              | <b>53,225.73</b>    | <b>37,418.50</b>    |

| Represented by Funds |                  |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Unrestricted         | 3,928.09         | 7,178.88         |
| Restricted           | 32,283.95        | 13,454.33        |
| Endowment            | 17,013.69        | 16,785.29        |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>53,225.73</b> | <b>37,418.50</b> |

**St Mary's Church, Wootton**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**For the period from 01 January 2015 to 31 December 2015**

|                                                            | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Endowment funds  | Total funds       | Prior year total funds |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <b><i>Incoming resources</i></b>                           |                    |                  |                  |                   |                        |
| Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources         | 83,906.33          | 23,881.58        | —                | 107,787.91        | 114,384.46             |
| Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects         | 9,209.57           | —                | —                | 9,209.57          | 8,472.04               |
| Activities for generating funds                            | —                  | —                | —                | —                 | —                      |
| Investment income                                          | —                  | 750.27           | —                | 750.27            | 731.72                 |
| Other incoming resources                                   | —                  | 9,195.90         | —                | 9,195.90          | 7,772.10               |
| <b>Total incoming resources</b>                            | <b>93,115.90</b>   | <b>33,827.75</b> | <b>—</b>         | <b>126,943.65</b> | <b>131,360.32</b>      |
| <b><i>Resources used</i></b>                               |                    |                  |                  |                   |                        |
| Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects         | 6,200.00           | 1,081.50         | —                | 7,281.50          | 7,860.00               |
| Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects         | 85,819.87          | 8,028.62         | —                | 93,848.49         | 136,447.08             |
| Support costs                                              | 2,180.21           | 6,045.01         | —                | 8,225.22          | 7,386.00               |
| Expenditure on managing-administering the charity          | 2,009.61           | —                | —                | 2,009.61          | 2,038.95               |
| <b>Total resources used</b>                                | <b>96,209.69</b>   | <b>15,155.13</b> | <b>—</b>         | <b>111,364.82</b> | <b>153,732.03</b>      |
| <b>Net incoming / outgoing resources before transfer</b>   | <b>(3,093.79)</b>  | <b>18,672.62</b> | <b>—</b>         | <b>15,578.83</b>  | <b>(22,371.71)</b>     |
| <b><i>Transfers</i></b>                                    |                    |                  |                  |                   |                        |
| Gross transfers between funds - in                         | 4,116.95           | 4,273.95         | —                | 8,390.90          | 1,507.01               |
| Gross transfers between funds - out                        | (4,273.95)         | (4,116.95)       | —                | (8,390.90)        | (1,507.01)             |
| <b>Net incoming / outgoing before other gains / losses</b> | <b>(3,250.79)</b>  | <b>18,829.62</b> | <b>—</b>         | <b>15,578.83</b>  | <b>(22,371.71)</b>     |
| <b><i>Other recognised gains / losses</i></b>              |                    |                  |                  |                   |                        |
| Gains / losses on investment assets                        | —                  | —                | 228.40           | 228.40            | 848.65                 |
| Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use      | —                  | —                | —                | —                 | —                      |
| <b>Net movement in funds</b>                               | <b>(3,250.79)</b>  | <b>18,829.62</b> | <b>228.40</b>    | <b>15,807.23</b>  | <b>(21,523.06)</b>     |
| <b><i>Reconciliation of funds</i></b>                      |                    |                  |                  |                   |                        |
| <b>Total funds brought forward</b>                         | <b>7,178.88</b>    | <b>13,454.33</b> | <b>16,785.29</b> | <b>37,418.50</b>  | <b>58,941.56</b>       |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>                         | <b>3,928.09</b>    | <b>32,283.95</b> | <b>17,013.69</b> | <b>53,225.73</b>  | <b>37,418.50</b>       |

## St Mary's Church, Wootton

**Analysis of receipts and payments**  
**Selected period: 01 January 2015 to 31 December 2015**

|                                                                         | Unrestricted     | Designated | Restricted       | Endowment | This year         | Total<br>Last year |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Receipts</b>                                                         |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| <b><i>Donations, Legacies and similar receipts</i></b>                  |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| <b>Donations, Legacies and similar receipts</b>                         |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| 101 - Gift Aided                                                        | 56,500.92        | —          | —                | —         | 56,500.92         | 55,742.10          |
| 102 - Tax recovered                                                     | 15,612.39        | —          | 3,703.29         | —         | 19,315.68         | 20,706.05          |
| 103 - Other giving                                                      | 6,997.29         | —          | —                | —         | 6,997.29          | 6,766.00           |
| 104 - Loose Collections                                                 | 2,994.07         | —          | —                | —         | 2,994.07          | 2,868.92           |
| 105 - Gift days- Sundry giving                                          | 1,202.76         | —          | —                | —         | 1,202.76          | 3,714.70           |
| 201 - Given for specific projects                                       | 598.90           | —          | 20,178.29        | —         | 20,777.19         | 24,586.69          |
| <b>Donations, Legacies and similar receipts Sub-totals</b>              | <b>83,906.33</b> | <b>—</b>   | <b>23,881.58</b> | <b>—</b>  | <b>107,787.91</b> | <b>114,384.46</b>  |
| <b><i>Donations, Legacies and similar receipts Totals</i></b>           | <b>83,906.33</b> | <b>—</b>   | <b>23,881.58</b> | <b>—</b>  | <b>107,787.91</b> | <b>114,384.46</b>  |
| <b><i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects</i></b>        |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| <b>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects</b>               |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| 302 - Rent for hall                                                     | 4,946.67         | —          | —                | —         | 4,946.67          | 4,752.15           |
| 401 - Monies for books                                                  | 729.40           | —          | —                | —         | 729.40            | 237.39             |
| 404 - PCC fees Weddings/ Funerals                                       | 3,533.50         | —          | —                | —         | 3,533.50          | 3,482.50           |
| <b>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Sub-totals</b>    | <b>9,209.57</b>  | <b>—</b>   | <b>—</b>         | <b>—</b>  | <b>9,209.57</b>   | <b>8,472.04</b>    |
| <b><i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Totals</i></b> | <b>9,209.57</b>  | <b>—</b>   | <b>—</b>         | <b>—</b>  | <b>9,209.57</b>   | <b>8,472.04</b>    |
| <b><i>Activities for generating funds</i></b>                           |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| <b>Activities for generating funds</b>                                  |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |
| 203 - Fund raising                                                      | —                | —          | —                | —         | —                 | —                  |
| <b>Activities for generating funds Sub-totals</b>                       | <b>—</b>         | <b>—</b>   | <b>—</b>         | <b>—</b>  | <b>—</b>          | <b>—</b>           |
| <b><i>Activities for generating funds Totals</i></b>                    | <b>—</b>         | <b>—</b>   | <b>—</b>         | <b>—</b>  | <b>—</b>          | <b>—</b>           |
| <b><i>Investment income</i></b>                                         |                  |            |                  |           |                   |                    |

|                                     | Unrestricted | Designated | Restricted | Endowment | This year  | Total<br>Last year |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| <b>Investment income</b>            |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| 301 - Interest                      | —            | —          | 750.27     | —         | 750.27     | 731.72             |
| <b>Investment income Sub-totals</b> | —            | —          | 750.27     | —         | 750.27     | 731.72             |
| <b>Investment income Totals</b>     | —            | —          | 750.27     | —         | 750.27     | 731.72             |
| <b>Other receipts</b>               |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| Other receipts                      |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| 106 - Wootton Charities             | —            | —          | 1,350.00   | —         | 1,350.00   | 1,800.00           |
| 405 - Assigned fees                 | —            | —          | 5,168.50   | —         | 5,168.50   | 5,391.50           |
| 600 - Studley Road                  | —            | —          | 2,677.40   | —         | 2,677.40   | 580.60             |
| 601 - Insurance claims              | —            | —          | —          | —         | —          | —                  |
| 602 - Sundry claims                 | —            | —          | —          | —         | —          | —                  |
| <b>Other receipts Sub-totals</b>    | —            | —          | 9,195.90   | —         | 9,195.90   | 7,772.10           |
| <b>Other receipts Totals</b>        | —            | —          | 9,195.90   | —         | 9,195.90   | 7,772.10           |
| <b>Receipts</b>                     | 93,115.90    | —          | 33,827.75  | —         | 126,943.65 | 131,360.32         |
| <b>Grand totals</b>                 |              |            |            |           |            |                    |

## Payments

### Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects

#### Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects

|                          |          |   |        |   |          |          |
|--------------------------|----------|---|--------|---|----------|----------|
| 1001 - Overseas Mission  | 3,600.00 | — | 700.00 | — | 4,300.00 | 3,960.00 |
| 1002 - Christian relief  | —        | — | —      | — | —        | —        |
| 1003 - Home Mission      | 2,600.00 | — | 381.50 | — | 2,981.50 | 3,900.00 |
| 1004 - Secular Societies | —        | — | —      | — | —        | —        |

|                                                                      |          |   |          |   |          |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|---|----------|----------|
| <b>Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects Sub-totals</b> | 6,200.00 | — | 1,081.50 | — | 7,281.50 | 7,860.00 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|---|----------|----------|

|                                                                  |          |   |          |   |          |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|---|----------|----------|
| <b>Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects Totals</b> | 6,200.00 | — | 1,081.50 | — | 7,281.50 | 7,860.00 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|---|----------|----------|

### Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects

#### Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects

|                                       |           |   |       |   |           |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|-------|---|-----------|-----------|
| 2001 - Diocesan Quota                 | 58,536.00 | — | —     | — | 58,536.00 | 49,000.00 |
| 2002 - Working Expenses of Incumbent. | 3,326.07  | — | —     | — | 3,326.07  | 3,431.76  |
| 2003 - Parsonage House                | —         | — | —     | — | —         | —         |
| 2004 - Assistant Staff                | 9,001.13  | — | —     | — | 9,001.13  | 8,684.12  |
| 2005 - Church Running expense         | 5,267.75  | — | —     | — | 5,267.75  | 6,924.41  |
| 2006 - Church Maintenance             | 741.86    | — | 26.00 | — | 767.86    | 1,523.12  |
| 2007 - Upkeep of Services             | 1,410.20  | — | —     | — | 1,410.20  | 1,359.66  |
| 2008 - Upkeep of Churchyard           | —         | — | —     | — | —         | —         |
| 2009 - Costs relating to books        | 1,039.15  | — | —     | — | 1,039.15  | 253.66    |

|                                                                      | Unrestricted | Designated | Restricted | Endowment | This year  | Total<br>Last year |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| 2010 - Church hall                                                   | 4,867.00     | —          | 1,080.80   | —         | 5,947.80   | 6,297.24           |
| 2011 - Office                                                        | —            | —          | —          | —         | —          | —                  |
| 2012 - Major Works                                                   | —            | 185.67     | 828.33     | —         | 1,014.00   | 50,477.99          |
| 2013 - Restoration                                                   | —            | —          | —          | —         | —          | —                  |
| 2016 - Honoraria, Assigned fees                                      | 420.62       | —          | 4,740.50   | —         | 5,161.12   | 5,290.34           |
| 3001 - Mission minded                                                | —            | —          | —          | —         | —          | —                  |
| 6000 - Studley Road                                                  | 1,024.42     | —          | 1,352.99   | —         | 2,377.41   | 3,204.78           |
| <b>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Sub-totals</b> | 85,634.20    | 185.67     | 8,028.62   | —         | 93,848.49  | 136,447.08         |
| <b>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Totals</b>     | 85,634.20    | 185.67     | 8,028.62   | —         | 93,848.49  | 136,447.08         |
| <b>Support costs</b>                                                 |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| <b>Support costs</b>                                                 |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| 2017 - Support Costs                                                 | 2,180.21     | —          | 6,045.01   | —         | 8,225.22   | 7,386.00           |
| <b>Support costs Sub-totals</b>                                      | 2,180.21     | —          | 6,045.01   | —         | 8,225.22   | 7,386.00           |
| <b>Support costs Totals</b>                                          | 2,180.21     | —          | 6,045.01   | —         | 8,225.22   | 7,386.00           |
| <b>Expenditure on managing-administering the Charity</b>             |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| <b>Expenditure on managing-administering the charity</b>             |              |            |            |           |            |                    |
| 3000 - Fund Raising                                                  | —            | —          | —          | —         | —          | —                  |
| 4000 - Administration                                                | 2,009.61     | —          | —          | —         | 2,009.61   | 2,038.95           |
| <b>Expenditure on managing-administering the charity Sub-totals</b>  | 2,009.61     | —          | —          | —         | 2,009.61   | 2,038.95           |
| <b>Expenditure on managing-administering the charity Totals</b>      | 2,009.61     | —          | —          | —         | 2,009.61   | 2,038.95           |
| <b>Payments</b>                                                      | 96,024.02    | 185.67     | 15,155.13  | —         | 111,364.82 | 153,732 .03        |
| <b>Grand totals</b>                                                  |              |            |            |           |            |                    |

# Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Monday 18 April 2016

## Opening Worship, Bible Reading & Address

### Meeting of Parishioners - Agenda

- 1 Minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2015
- 2 Election of churchwardens

### Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2015
- 3 Reports presented by the Parochial Church Council:
  - (a) Electoral Roll
  - (b) Proceedings of the PCC
  - (c) Financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 Dec 2015
  - (d) Fabric, goods and ornaments
  - (e) Proceedings of the Bedford Deanery Synod
- 4 Election of lay representatives to the PCC
- 5 Appointment of Sidespeople
- 6 Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 7 Any Other Business

## Closing Prayers

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners Monday 23 March 2015 7.30pm at St. Mary's Church Hall

### Welcome and prayers

#### Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 31 March 2014

PA asked those present if they agreed the minutes were a correct record of the meeting.

#### Election of Churchwardens

Andy Snelson

**Proposed:** Hazel Sanders

**Seconded:** Norma Smith

**All:** voted in favour

Margaret Greenhalgh

**Proposed:** Hazel Sanders

**Seconded:** Andy Snelson

**All:** voted in favour

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## Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting Monday 23 March 2015 7.30pm at St. Mary's Church Hall

**Present:** Claire Brice, JoJo Ackroyd, Richard Hull, Josh Kendall, David Kendall, Pauline Kendall, Jane Helliwell, Anne Worboys, Pam Richardson, Maria Richardson, John Robertson, David Price, Derrick Lowe, Jenny Waller, Marion Lowe, Alison Thompson, Jenny Roffey, Diana Scott, Elaine Sullivan, Allyson Cable, Sally Snelson, Sue Barnes, Gordon Waller, Eddie Gibson, Clem Lewin, Tony Winterson, Norma Smith, Ivy Peacock, Margaret Greenhalgh, Kirsten Knight, Sarah Beacon, Dorothy Teh, Alison Reed-Thomsett, Gina Chandler, Hazel Sanders, Andy Snelson, Audrey Beardshall, Liz Hignett.

**Clergy:** The Rev Peter Ackroyd (Chair)

**Apologies for absence:** Martin Sanders, Marje Williams, Jim Hignett, Adrian Hull, Felicity Hull, Hilary Hull, Diane Murray, Margaret Robertson, Alec Head, Gill Head, Lesley Waller, John Barnes, Larry Teh.

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## Welcome, prayers and thanks

PA welcomed everyone and opened with prayers and a hymn played by John Robertson.

Peter offered thanks and made presentations to Hazel Sanders who is stepping down as church warden, to Gina Chandler who is stepping down as Treasurer and to Margaret Robertson who is stepping down as Church Flowers co-ordinator (John Robertson collected in her absence).

## 1. Minutes of the previous annual parochial church meeting of 31 April 2014

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed (subject to the following corrections):

Corrections: 3d contactors should read contractors

**Proposed:** Claire Brice **Seconded:** Margaret Greenhalgh **All:** voted in favour

## 2. The Reports Presented by the Parochial Church Council

### (a) Electoral Roll: 125

### (b) Proceedings of the PCC

PA drew people's attention to the annual report and commented on how it was made up of lots of smaller reports that gave a good reflection of the work that was happening at the PCC and throughout St. Mary's in general.

### (c) Financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 Dec 2014

Gina Chandler presented the accounts and drew people's attention to the Treasurer's Report on page 7 of the annual report. The total balance carried forward into 2015 for unrestricted and designated funds is £7,178.88 and for restricted funds is £13,454.33. Gina explained that the budget was extremely tight this year and highlighted that we had paid £49,000 which was 81% of the requested parish share.

She closed by thanking Alison Reed-Thomsett, for all the work she does on the Church finances, John Barnes (in his absence) who organises the claims for gift aid tax and Lynden Richardson for examining our accounts and underlying records and opened the floor to questions.

**Question (Peter Ackroyd)** Asked for clarification over the shortfall of the Parish Share. Gina confirmed that it was £11,000 and that the PCC discusses the shortfall regularly and it would be up to the PCC to decide how best to pay off the debt.

**Question (John Robertson)** What plans have we got to pay off the debt as there is no detail in the budget or report? Gina replied that it was not just down to the treasurer, the PCC must decide.

**Peter Ackroyd** —It is not in the budget only due to the fact that there is simply not enough to fund it, there has been no attempt to hide it.

**John Robertson**— Surely our priority should be to fund the ministry?

**Alison Reed-Thomsett**— Explained that our budget is extremely tight and we can't use restricted funds on anything other than their original purpose.

**Claire Brice**—Will the diocese look to see if the Parish Share is fair?

**Peter Ackroyd**—Explained that it is reviewed every 3 years and tends to go up 2-3%.

**JoJo Ackroyd**—Commented that our parish share was one of the highest in Bedfordshire and we are the biggest village church in Bedfordshire. Although our contribution was short we still give lots to ministry.

**Audrey Beardshall-Will** the rent from gSR help? Gina replied saying that the money will be used to fund refurbishment ready for the new curate.

**Peter Ackroyd**—Commented that a church falls significantly below (20% for 3 years) then next time there is a vacancy the diocese may look to merge instead of filling the vacancy. However this is our first shortfall for 7 years.

**Sally Snelson-Raised** that the shortfall was discussed at every PCC.

**Claire Brice**—Is there an understanding at the Diocese that we are doing our best?

**Peter Ackroyd**—It is recognised that it is associated with costs of updating a medieval building.

**Dave Kendall**—how is it calculated?

**Peter Ackroyd**—it is based on the stipend and pension and the rest is made up for the cost for housing, clergy training etc and there is then a calculation based on church membership and a factor applied reflecting the prosperity of the parish.

### (d) Fabric, goods and ornaments

Hazel Sanders presented her report and commented that it had been a busy year with the building, the AV system was in and working, the hole in the tower roof was fixed, the clock is now working again, the hole in heating located and fixed, the downpipe is fixed, the hall kitchen has been refurbished, 9 Studley Road has been refurbished and rented out and we have started on fundraising for the Stonework project—there has been massive expenditure including some unforeseen expenditure. Hazel thanked everyone for the enormous team effort especially for all the small jobs such as cleaning brasses, winding the clock, washing the linen. She also thanked the assistant wardens for their help during the services.

**Question (JoJo Ackroyd)** Asked about the re-wiring in the kitchen for the hot cupboard.

**Andy Snelson-Replied** saying the quote had been accepted and we were waiting for a start date.

### (e) Proceedings of the Bedford Deanery Synod

Wootton was represented on Bedford Deanery Synod by Rev'd Peter Ackroyd and by 3 lay members including Pauline Kendall who was elected by the Synod's House of Laity as Deanery Lay Co-Chair. PA invited the meeting to read the report on page 5 and opened the floor to questions.

No questions

### 3. Election of three lay representatives to the PCC

PA gave thanks to Ivy Peacock, Diana Scott and David Price who were stepping down at the end of their terms. There were three nominations although one was for an individual who is not currently on the Electoral Roll so could not be accepted at this point in time meaning there is 1 vacancy..

Dorothy Teh **Proposed:** JoJo Ackroyd

**Seconded:** Hazel Sanders

Kirsten Knight **Proposed:** Hazel Sanders

**Seconded:** Amanda Newton

### 4. Appointment of Sidespersons

AS proposed the following list of people who were willing to act as Sidespeople during 2014-15:

Steve Allen, Sara Butler-Jones, Richard Frossell, Bill Hall, Derrick Lowe, Marion Lowe, Ivy Peacock, Steve Rowse, Diana Scott, Norma Smith, Angela Stephens, Peter Stephens, Dianne Sullivan, Derek Williams, Marje Williams, Hazel Sanders and Alison Reed-Thomsett  
All in favour.

### 5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

PA said that Mr Lynden Richardson was willing to stand for a further year as Independent Examiner of the accounts for 2015 and asked the meeting if they agreed with this.

**Proposed:** Gordon Wailer

**Seconded:** Andy Snelson **All:** voted in favour.

### 6. Any Other Business

PA opened the floor to questions:

**Question (John Robertson)**-Raised the changeover between the gam service and the 10:30am service as the 10:30 are coming in to set up before the gam has finished especially this previous week.

**Andy Snelson**-Explained that the reason for the urgency this week was the gam service was running late and it was 10:10 and there were still things to clear up from the Music Marathon.

**John Robertson**-Replied saying that there was feeling amongst some of the gam congregation that they felt like second class citizens.

**Peter Ackroyd**-Resisted this strongly and said it was definitely not the case. He explained that the PCC has recently discussed this issue and it was agreed that the solution was that the gam service must finish promptly as there was a lot that needed to be set up for the 10:30 service and timing was tight.

**Question (John Robertson)**-Should we remove the word radical from disciple in our mission statement? The word is seen to mean extreme views-do we want to be associated with it?

**Andy Snelson** Said he saw it as a means of getting to the root of things. **John Robertson-Stated** that the meanings of words change.

**Pauline Kendall**-Recalled that we wanted to use something that was not benign as discipleship is what shapes our lives.

**Peter Ackroyd**-Replied saying that it was due to be reviewed shortly as part of the MAP process. It is important to keep what we mean without it being misconstrued.

**Liz Hignett**- Suggested whole life disciples as an alternative.

**Question (Audrey Beardshall)**-As a former cleaner of the church wondered who cleans it now.

**Hazel Sanders**-Replied saying there was a rota and people usually did it in pairs usually in pairs. Sara Butler-Jones maintains the rota and there are approximately 10 pairs so usually did it every 2-3 months, as usual we need more people. There is a paid cleaner for the hall.

### 7. Concluding Address

PA briefly summarised the year highlighting amongst others the MAP that was written in 2011 and is due to be reviewed in 2015, LOVE Wootton, Jim Hignett, training to become a reader, Pauline Kendall elected to Lay Chair, Jude and YP continuing with their youth work and church plant in Belgium, Jenni Standish and Abi Holyoak continuing with their apprenticeships, Sue Allen who is involved in a Christian Nursing organization, Tim Beacon and MedAid, Beatrice Langariti and her work and growing family, new members of the PCC and St Mary's, the Stonework Project, Finances-giving decreasing in a climate of increasing costs, thankful for our leaders but we are short of leaders in all areas so much so that our evening services are currently suspended, we need to be aware of the wider environment nationally, locally and within the Church of England.

He summarised by saying we should resolve to pray, to grow in maturity and to serve by encouraging each other, turning up to services, meetings and events, recognizing that we all have different talents and to give in all possible ways.

Peter led closing prayers and thanked people for attending.



'You are living stones'  
1 Peter 2:5

## Administrative Information

St. Mary the Virgin is situated in Wootton, Bedford. It is part of the Diocese of St. Albans within the Church of England. Registered charity number 1150817.

Bank: National Westminster Bank, 231 Bedford Road, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 8DB

Independent Examiner: Mr Lynden Richardson

The correspondence address is: The Vicarage, Church Road, Wootton, Bedford, MK43 9HF

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Appendix 7

Wootton Parish Council Meeting. 6th April 2016.

Rob Stanton and Gary Williams representing Wootton Baptist Church.

The church building is now 180 years old having been built in 1836 by people who were non-conformists. They had previously worshiped in a house in Cause End Road, Wootton.

The church still has the basic foundation of belief, which was set down in the Trust Deed of 1836. We still accept the Bible as the word of God and try to live according to the high standards it sets down, but frequently fail.

We still hold Sunday services morning and evening, with various meetings during the week. We have childrens meeting on Mondays, straight after school, when we have about twenty children at present, followed by an older group which is not so well attended. (May I thank the Headmaster of the school for the co-operation in getting the children to the church Hall.)

Our Coffee morning is on Tuesdays, 10am to 12md when we have about 40 folk attending. There are about 8 - 10 men who get together around one table and talk about all the subjects under the sun. Malcolm comes to see us sometimes and we badger him to see what is going on in the village.

There is a womens meeting on Tuesday afternoons.

There is a 'A Home Fellowship' meeting on Wednesday evenings at a home just across the road from here. That is well attended.

There is a Bible Study and Prayer Meeting on Thursday evening where the principle subjects of the Bible are discussed.

The church Hall is used by our Anglican friends for their Wrigglers Group, for Mums and Toddlers, which is very well attended. Also the 'Men behaving Dadly's' group meets there on one Saturday morning when they want to. (I know they are trying other locations at present.)

Basically, we are a local church and our aim is to worship God and to teach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to spread this gospel in the village to anyone who will listen. We are independent of any other organisation, and just ordinary simple village people who want to tell other folk of what we have found to be true in the word of God.

Thank you to the Editor of the village Parish News, who graciously allow us to include a piece each time, so far.

As we are instructed in the Bible, we do pray for all authorities over us, which includes the Parish Council. Thank you.