



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



3 Longden Close
Haynes
Bedfordshire
MK45 3PJ

Tel: 07531 930788

E-mail: woottonparishclerk@gmail.com

Website: woottonpc.bedsparishes.gov.uk



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 5th April 2017 at 7.40pm in the Memorial Hall, Bedford Road, Wootton.

	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 1st March and 1st 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). All local electors are entitled to speak and vote that the Annual Parish Meeting; others may attend but not speak or vote.
Present	John Wheeler, Vice-Chairman, Wootton Parish Council, Bedford Borough Councillor, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, Forest of Marston Vale Grants Committee; Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity, Chairman of Governors – Wootton Lower School, Vice-Chairman of Governors – Wootton Upper School, Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities – in the chair; Naomi Groves, Member Wootton Parish Council; Bill Hall, Member Wootton Parish Council, Community Speed Watch; Jeff Noakes, Member Wootton Parish Council, Street Watch; Stuart O'Dell, Member Wootton Parish Council; Neera Regmi, Member Wootton Parish Council; Sue Playford, Clerk, Wootton Parish Council; Emma Brett, Bizzy Bees; Jo Roberts, Forest of Marston Vale; Malcolm Chalmers, Speed Watch, Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme; Chris Ashpole, Royal British Legion (Marston branch); Rob Stanton, Wootton Baptist Church;

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Chairman.....

Date.....

	Gary Williams, Wootton Baptist Church; Chris Maher, Wootton Community First Response; Michael (and Shirley) Gleeson, Wootton Upper School; Kath Clark, Wootton WI; Sue Chapillon, WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group; Val Illingworth, WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group; Keith Randell, WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group.	
Agenda no	Agenda item title	Comments
APM17/01	Apologies for absence. Claire Bennett, Member Wootton Parish Council; Gerald Bygraves, Member Wootton Parish Council; Adrian Hudson, Member Wootton Parish Council; Gareth Lloyd, Chairman Wootton Parish Council; Paul Quirk, Member Wootton Parish Council; Bob Wallace, Member Wootton Parish Council; Laura Spavin, Manager Bizzy Bees; Rev Peter Ackroyd, Vicar, St. Mary's Church, Wootton Church and Poor's Land charities; Chris Tavener, Wootton Lower School; David Goodson, Wootton New Life Methodist Church.	Apologies for absence were received as detailed.
APM17/02	Minutes of the previous meeting. <i>Minutes are published on the Wootton Parish Council website:</i> http://woottonpc.bedsparishes.gov.uk/ . Members are asked to receive and adopt the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 6 th April 2016.	The meeting agreed the minutes of the 6 th April 2016 were an accurate record.
APM17/03	To receive the following reports from Wootton Parish Council. Chairman's report. Financial report.	Sue Playford (as Clerk) reported that the parish council would be producing an annual report later in the year which would contain both a Chairman's and Financial Report. She added as year-end had only just passed (31 st March), it had not yet been possible to produce draft figures. The annual report (as part of the parish council's quality status award) would be delivered to all households, plus the library, doctor's surgery and churches.
APM17/04	To receive reports from outside bodies. Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor Wheeler. Bedfordshire police.	Copies of (Borough Councillor) John Wheeler's report were made available for those present – Appendix 1. He stated issues within the report were relevant to Wootton as well as the borough (libraries and education for example).

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Chairman.....

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Date.....

		He added 2017-18 ward monies would soon be available (£11k in total but with a cap of £2k per donation). Donations promised to date included funds for Wootton Community First Response group (purchase of a second medical kit) and Wootton Upper School (purchase of laptops enabling students to provide internet education to senior citizens). Anyone knowing of a worthy cause was urged to contact him. No report was available from Bedfordshire police, however Jeff Noakes was able to brief those present on a recent meeting he had attended with PCSO James Dancer, to determine parish concerns and priorities – Appendix 2. He added he was unable to attend the next meeting in May – that meeting would determine targets. Jeff also stressed that whilst PCSO Dancer was Wootton's only PCSO, he was not the only police response. Vehicles from Greyfriars were still despatched (although reduced in numbers). Wootton's crime figures were favourable compared with other parishes. Bill Hall queried the Police Commissioner's election campaign, during which she pledged to raise police visibility in rural areas – the feeling was politicians speaking on behalf of policing was not the way forward and the two should remain separate. Jeff stressed however, these meetings were part of the answer and a way forward. It was recognised Bedfordshire police was the most under-resourced force in the country but all present praised the good work they did, given the resources available to them – including Chris Maher who attended a first response job a month ago which required ambulance and police back-up. The police were first to arrive.
APM17/05	To receive reports and/or accounts from village/local organisations. • Baptist Church; • Bizzy Bees Pre-School; • Forest of Marston Vale; • Memorial Hall Committee; • Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity; • Speed Watch; • Street Watch; • Wootton Charities – Poor's Land/Church and Poor's Land; • Wootton Community First Response;	Reports around the table were then delivered, beginning with Jo Roberts, Forest of Marston Vale. She introduced herself as the Community Engagement Officer for the organisation. This year some 5.5k trees had been planted at Cranfield and they had received DEFRA funding, enabling them to transport children (lower school ages only) to site, to aid with planting. Children from Wootton had not yet been included but the aim was to do so. Jo added Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme had benefitted from their community funding programme, as had Wootton Upper School. She also planned to recruit volunteers to be "eyes and ears" whilst walking within the Green Gateway buffer woodland, between Kempston Rural and Wootton. Jo was currently doing a similar exercise in Houghton Conquest.

	• Wootton Guiding; • Wootton Lower School (apologies received); • Wootton New Life Methodist Church (apologies received); • Wootton Vale Healthy Living Centre Patient Participation Group (PPG); • Wootton WI. No reports were received from • St. Mary's Church; • St. Mary's Pre-school; • Wootton Village Hall. Football teams and other sporting/non sporting organisations within the village were invited to the meeting but did not attend.	All relevant publicity would be included in the Wootton Newsletter. Whilst the tree planting was aimed at lower school children only, bug hunting packs aimed at pre-school children would be available also. Rob Stanton and Gary Williams, Baptist Church then gave their report – Appendix 3. Naomi Groves then gave a brief report on behalf of the Memorial Hall committee. Ward monies (from John Wheeler) had been used for areas within the kitchen. The committee were still struggling to get three quotations for works to the wooden flooring (stripping back and re-varnishing). Naomi Groves then provided a brief report on Wootton Guiding. They'd had a stable year, the Wednesday Brownie pack had just had a change of leadership. Rainbows now had a 2nd pack in the village and were working with Kempston Rainbows to organise trips out. John Wheeler spoke on behalf of the Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity. A successful Christmas lunch had taken place again in 2016 – aided with his ward monies as low interest rates were not generating enough income. Each event cost £1.5k to host. 2017 was potentially an afternoon tea (to reduce costs) – with entertainment. It was noted however, Wootton Upper School were helping to fundraise for the charity, so a Christmas lunch was still possible. A recent Victorian-themed tea party held for senior citizens at the upper school (with musical entertainment) was well received. John Wheeler also reported on behalf of the Wootton Charities – Poor's Land/Church and Poor's Land. He thanked Wootton Parish Council's decision (effective 1st April 2017) to pay 100% of all recycling credits received from the glass bottle bank situated on at the recreation ground car park. This was much appreciated as low interest rates impacted on the charities' ability to assist those in financial need. The charities were focusing on local schools and were now getting more enquiries from families in need – monies given enabled families to have a Christmas or visit a loved
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		one in hospital. Everyone was urged to use the bottle bank for this very reason. Chris Maher suggested a sign on Church Road advertising that fact and Sue agreed to take that suggestion to a parish council meeting and include a reminder in the next edition of the Wootton newsletter. Emma Brett then gave a report on behalf of Bizzy Bees Pre-School – Appendix 4. Chris Maher followed with a report on behalf of Wootton Community First Response. He became involved upon moving to the village last year and with the sad passing of the late Bill Brady – working alongside Mark Atkins. Whilst they were almost at full strength, work commitments were currently reducing Mark’s availability. Chris averaged 200 hours per month booked on – being called to attend medical emergencies for anyone aged 2 years and older. He explained how the ambulance service contacted him (via text then a phone call) directly on the back of them receiving a 999 call – as he lived in Wootton he would be first to the scene. Each responder texted when on duty and again when coming off duty. They carried a defibrillator, oxygen and other equipment but used their own (unmarked) vehicles. This year they had received 15 calls – most within Wootton (but he had recently attended in Cranfield as it was deemed life threatening) – all-age range. He thanked John Wheeler for his ward money donation which had provided a second medical kit – this enabled them to have some contingency. Neera Regmi had also made a donation and was also thanked and the parish council had given a donation which paid for Chris’s clothing. He added they had four people who were currently interested in joining, adding they would welcome more. No prior training was needed – just a vehicle, current driving license, willingness to help and the ability to lift the heavy medical kit! On a more serious note – that kit (specifically oxygen) had recently helped to save a young boy in the village following a choking incident). This initiative was introduced by the ambulance service and was UK-wide. Chris and Mark were thanked by all present for the work they did. Kath Clark then reported on behalf of Wootton WI – Appendix 5. Keith Randall was next to report on behalf of Wootton Vale Healthy Living
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		Centre PPG – Appendix 6. Chris Ashpole was then thanked for her many years of involvement with the Royal British Legion (lately Marston branch). The latest sum raised totalled £7,065.36 – and she welcomed any new volunteers. Michael Gleeson then gave a report on behalf of Wootton Upper School – Appendix 7. He added he was seeking places within the village to shelter pupils in the event a further bomb scare were to happen (the school was one of a number targeted UK-wide in a hoax last year). Bill Hall asked if it were possible to better advertise their theatrical events – Michael confirmed he would aim to have something included in the Wootton newsletter. Emma Brett further suggested including something in the lower school’s newsletter and Sue confirmed she could make use of the parish council’s website and Facebook page. Malcolm Chalmers reported on Speed Watch and the Wootton Neighbour Scheme – Appendix 8. He added Speed Watch members had never been subject to abuse, unlike other parishes. Chris Maher asked if the Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme had business cards – he and Mark Atkins could carry some in their kits when on a call out – the service could be valuable to someone who had been taken to hospital without time to collect wallet and phone. John Wheeler stated he was visiting the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (who started the scheme) and would ask for cards then. Finally, Jeff Noakes reported on behalf of Street Watch – Appendix 9. Sue Playford had Juliet Wright’s email address in case of need (also contained in Appendix 9, for reference). Representatives on behalf of the following were unable to attend, but provided reports: • Wootton Lower School – Appendix 10; • Wootton New Life Methodist Church – Appendix 11. At the time of preparing the draft minutes, a report from St. Mary’s Church
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		had not been received.
APM17/06	General Parish Issues.	Questions concerning General Parish issues were then invited from all present. It was noted a drainage gully outside 51 Cause End Road was badly blocked – the road was prone to flooding during heavy rainfall. John Wheeler agreed to take the issue forward with Bedford Borough Council at the earliest opportunity. Such incidences should ordinarily be reported to the Borough Council via their “Report It” website page. A poorly cut tree was noted again in Cause End Road and the question was raised how to stop similar happening to other, otherwise healthy, trees. It was thought possibly Trading Standards could be informed (if the tree owner was unhappy with the works), however the tree owner was within their rights to cut it as they saw fit (on the basis no Tree Preservation Order was in place) as it was on private land. Chris Maher urged people to ensure they had a prominent house number at the front of their properties – time spent looking for the correct house on a call out could be crucial when dealing with a potential life threatening situation. John Wheeler then thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Annual Parish Meeting: Cllr John Wheeler's Annual Report 2016/17

Borough Council Budget 2017/18

At a meeting on the 1st February 2017 councillors agreed the Borough Council's budget for 2017/18. A 4.75% increase in Council Tax was approved in response to the Council's challenging financial position, caused to a large extent by significant increases in demand for social care and constrained resources.

The budget agreed around £10m of service efficiencies in the next 3 years, including £3.7m of savings to be delivered in 2017/18. There will, therefore, be an array of service changes, some of which were subject to public consultation. Some higher-profile examples of such changes are set out below:

School Transport

A general School Transport Policy was agreed by the Mayor's Executive in September 2016 to apply from September 2017. As it stands, pupils are able to access free transport to their 'catchment or nearest school', but a key change will see the Policy narrowed to apply to the 'nearest' school only. The Policy will not apply to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupils.

A number of exceptions were agreed to this change, including Wootton pupils travelling to Holywell Middle.

In addition, March 2017 saw the Mayor's Executive agree a change in the eligibility and fee for school transport for Post 16 (Sixth Form) pupils from September 2017.

A public consultation was held between November – January on initial proposals to end the current subsidy for Post 16 pupils or to remove the option of school transport entirely. Either of these approaches were earmarked to achieve a £150k a year saving for the Council.

The final proposals agreed by the Executive will narrow eligibility, meaning that pupils will only be able to access transport if they are attending their nearest school, as opposed to attendance at their catchment school as at present (as per the general school transport Policy outlined above). This change will not apply to current Sixth Formers.

Those Post 16 pupils who are eligible to use school transport will also now have to pay £890 per year to travel to school, as opposed to the current charge of £381. The current subsidy for low-income families will, however, be retained, which will see these pupils charged £190 a year.

Post 16 transport for Bedford College, Bedford 6th Form, Kimberley College and Shuttleworth College will be withdrawn entirely.

Discretionary Concessionary Travel Scheme

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) allows ENCTS pass holders to travel without charge on eligible routes between 9.30am – 11pm from Monday to Friday and anytime at weekends or Bank Holidays. Eligible ENCTS pass holders are those of state pension age or with disabilities specified by criteria set out by government guidance. The Council also operated a discretionary scheme allowing ENCTS pass holders to travel for free at any time within Bedford Borough.

Following a public consultation, the decision was taken by the Mayor's Executive to introduce a £1 charge for ENCTS pass holders if they are using a bus service before 9.30am. It is estimated that this will save the Council £0.100m a year. While disabled ENCTS pass holders will pay £1 during the specified period, a companion will be able to travel with them for free.

Bin Collections

Fortnightly bin collections came into operation on Monday 31st October in a move to save the Council 0.587m a year. This has seen green and recycling waste collected one week and black bin waste the next. In addition, green waste will no longer be collected over the months of December- February. Around 27% of households have seen a change in their collection day.

Council's Overall Financial Position

The Council's latest Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out an estimated savings requirement for the Council of £27m by 2020/21 (on a current budget of around £130m).

In addition to departmental savings, some of which were outlined above, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive review of the Council. This work has been ongoing for a number of months, with the findings being compiled within a report which was agreed by Mayor's Executive at its meeting on the 22nd February 2017. PWC is of the view that its recommendations will save £10.4m a year by the end of the decade through implementing a 'Digital Operating Model'.

The next phase is now being put into action. As far as residents are concerned, we are told that the investment in new technology will make it easier to interact with the Council. For instance, the plans will apparently improve the Council's website and make it easier for residents to use 'self-service' in registering issues and being assessed for eligibility to receive support (for adult social care, housing benefit etc.).

On another note, the Council's Capital Investment Programme sets out its plans for 'one-off' spending, usually on the maintenance of assets to improve their condition in the long term and new building projects. The Council's latest budget confirmed the value of the Capital Investment Programme at £167m to 2020.

Council Tax

After the Council's budget was agreed on the 1st February, a further meeting of all councillors on the 22nd February was required to agree formally the Borough's Council Tax resolution for 2017/18.

This sets out how much each property Band in Bedford, Kempston and each parish will have to pay next year. The overall average Band D Council Tax (including: Council; Police; Fire Service; parish, and; Special Area Charge precepts) will be £1,704.11; a 4.26% rise on the current year. The total Band D Council Tax payment for Wootton will be £1,739.05.

Local Plan 2035

Since 2014 the Council has undertaken work towards its new Local Plan, setting out sites for development for thousands of new homes and employment growth to 2035.

At its meeting on the 22nd February, the Mayor's Executive agreed the latest Local Plan document that will be subject to public consultation between 18th April – 2nd June.

The report provides an updated housing need target of 19,000 to meet estimated population growth. Just over half of this figure is already catered for via existing planning permissions or is included in existing plans. There is a need, therefore, for the Council to find sites for just over 8,000 new dwellings.

The Council is pursuing an option to develop 1 or more new settlement(s) in the north of the Borough to accommodate around a quarter of this target. The document confirms that the sites in Wyboston, Sharnbrook, Twinwoods (between Milton Ernest and Thurleigh) and Thurleigh Airfield are being considered. One or more of these settlements could go forward and are likely to provide around 4,000 –

Appendix 1

6,000 dwellings each (although it is thought that only 2,000 could be developed within the Local Plan period to 2035, thus contributing to reducing the 8,000 target).

Sites earmarked for development in the urban and edge of urban areas are set to accommodate just over 2,000 properties. In addition, a number of villages have been designated as having 'Group 1' status, namely: Wilstead; Bromham; Sharnbrook; Clapham, and; Great Barford and are all set to increase substantially in size with between 500 – 600 new properties in each. An allocation of 1,000 homes has been earmarked for the brownfield site at the former Stewartby brick works. Wootton is a Group 1 village but does not have a housing allocation given previous and ongoing significant development.

Group 2 villages across the Borough will see development of between 25 – 50 new homes. Included in Group 2 are: Carlton; Harrold; Milton Ernest; Oakley; Turvey, and; Roxton. Willington is also a Group 2 village but does not have a housing allocation.

The other villages are included in Groups 3 and 4. They do not have specific allocations but these communities may wish to bring forward sites for development through implementing Neighbourhood Plans.

For more information see www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2035

Infrastructure

Black Cat / A428

Highways England is undertaking a consultation, from the 6th March – 23rd April 2017, on proposals to improve the Black Cat roundabout and provide a new dual carriageway to Caxton Gibbet.

The consultation document puts forward 3 options for consideration for the A428, as outlined below:

Orange route

- The route would run east of Black Cat roundabout across the River Great Ouse.
- It changes to a north direction after crossing the East Coast Mainline, past Cambridge Road where it crosses the existing A428 and runs east towards Caxton Gibbet.
- This route also includes additional improvements at Cambridge Road junction.

Purple route

- The route runs from Black Cat roundabout across the River Great Ouse and the East Coast Mainline towards Abbotsley.
- It bypasses Abbotsley in a north-east direction, continuing north-west of Great Gransden, south of Eltisley, and joins the current A428 at Caxton Gibbet.

Pink route

- The route runs from Black Cat roundabout across the River Great Ouse and the East Coast Mainline towards Little Gransden, moving north-east where it bypasses Abbotsley to the south.
- The route then continues in a north-east direction between Great Gransden and Eltisley where it changes to a north direction towards Caxton Gibbet.

There are also 3 options to upgrade the Black Cat roundabout, set out in the consultation document which can be seen in the consultation document at this link: <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet/>

Bedford Town Centre

Last year the South East Midland Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), which is made up of public and private sector organisations in the region (including the Borough Council), submitted bids to receive Government funding to support a range of schemes designed to drive economic growth. One of the bids included focussed on alleviating congestion in Bedford town centre.

As part of its subsequent Local Growth Plan, the Government announced that the Borough Council would receive £11m for this scheme. Clearly this is a substantial sum and we are still awaiting details of how these monies will be applied in practice.

Appendix 1

In addition, the Council prepared a bid worth £5.1m to SEMLEP to ease the chronic congestion on Ampthill Road and the road network around the Interchange Retail Park. This would be through: changes to signals and junctions to allow a better response to heavy traffic; information systems that report on current traffic conditions; improved capacity for vehicles at key junctions, and; better access and traffic management at the Interchange Retail Park.

The Government announced in March that this scheme will be taken forward, although the exact details of how much funding will be received are still unknown.

The extension of the Bedford Western Bypass, linking the A428 at Biddenham with the A6 at Clapham, opened on the 25th April 2016. It was hoped that the new road, costing £18.6m, will alleviate traffic congestion in Bedford by taking vehicles out of the town centre. Its effect on the wider road network is still being assessed.

East West Rail

It was announced last year that Sandy has been included in a planned rail link between Bedford and Cambridge.

The western section of the East West Rail scheme will connect Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford. In addition to this, a central section is planned which will extend the line to Cambridge.

Overall, 20 options were considered for the extension between Bedford and Cambridge, with the Sandy option being taken forward.

The Government backed the scheme in its 2016 Autumn Statement with £110m investment. A new East West Rail organisation is now taking the plans forward.

Schools

Bedford Borough's schools have been ranked first in the east of England following the verification of 2016's GCSE results and a new measurement of performance.

The Government has decided to abandon the key standard of the percentage of pupils in each school attaining 5 A* - C grades including English and maths. Instead, 'Progress 8' has been introduced which measures each child's progress from their Key Stage 2 results (Year 6 / age 11) to their GCSE performance (Year 11 / age 16). School performance is, therefore, judged on whether pupils are attaining or exceeding their forecasted GCSE results.

Under this new system, the Borough is also ranked 1st out of 11 statistical neighbours (areas deemed to have similar characteristics) and 25th of 152 local authorities nationwide. Wootton Upper School performed in line with the national average for Progress 8.

Health and Social Care

Sustainability & Transformation Plan

Last year 44 separate health reviews, called Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs), began nationwide at the behest of NHS England. The local STP is setting out plans for health and social care services across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) (Luton has its own Clinical Commissioning Group, responsible for organising health services, and is therefore distinct from Bedfordshire in this context).

The review is now in full swing, with the 16 partners (see [here](#)) working on progressing the review's 5 stated priorities, namely (taken from the [STP's website](#)):

Appendix 1

- **Priority 1: Illness prevention and health promotion:** Preventing ill health and promoting good health by giving people the knowledge and ability, individually and through local communities, to manage their own health effectively
- **Priority 2: Primary, community and social care:** Delivering high quality and resilient primary, community and social care services across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes
- **Priority 3: Secondary care:** Delivering high quality and sustainable secondary (hospital) care services across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes
- **Priority 4: Digital programme:** Working together to design and deliver a digital programme, maximising the use of information technology to support the delivery of care and services in the community and in primary and secondary care
- **Priority 5: Demand management and commissioning:** Working together to make sure the right services are available in the right place, at the right time for everyone using health and social care in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes

While all Borough councillors agree with the objectives of the STP, there is a feeling that councillors and indeed the public have yet to be included in determining the shape of the review in any meaningful way. As a result, councillors unanimously agreed a motion at a February meeting of the Council calling on the STP leads to be more open about the plans.

There is particular concern around Priority 3, which is set to amalgamate services between Bedford, Milton Keynes and Luton & Dunstable Hospitals. It is unclear at this stage how this will affect services, or if a proposal from the now defunct Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Healthcare Review to transfer maternity services from Bedford Hospital to Milton Keynes Hospital will be taken forward. All councillors agreed, therefore, to request a commitment from the STP leads that key services, namely A & E, paediatrics and obstetrics (maternity and childbirth) will be retained at Bedford Hospital.

Stroke Services

It was announced in July 2016 that Bedford Hospital would no longer have a Hyper Acute Stroke Unit (HASU) following the resignation of one of its consultants.

HASUs are responsible for treating patients in the crucial 72 hour period after a stroke, particularly by identifying and removing blood clots. Bedford Hospital's HASU operated from Monday – Friday between the hours of 9am – 5pm, with patients in need of the service outside of these hours taken to Luton & Dunstable Hospital, which has a 24/7 HASU.

Following NHS Midlands and East Stroke Reviews of 2012 and 2014, plans were already afoot to stop providing hyper acute stroke services in Bedford, meaning the resignation simply accelerated the process. These reviews proposed that there should be 3 HASUs in the region, instead of 4, with Bedford losing out due to the other sites having a 24/7 service (namely Luton & Dunstable, Watford and Stevenage (Lister Hospital)).

From July 2016, patients who would have previously accessed the HASU at Bedford Hospital were instead taken to Luton & Dunstable or Stevenage. They are then brought back to Bedford Hospital to access rehabilitation and inpatient services after 72 hours if they are in a stable condition but are unable to go home.

Policing

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) issued her first Police and Crime Plan after her election in May 2016. Kathryn Holloway has set out the following priorities for Bedfordshire Police:

Appendix 1

- A return of more visible policing across the county
- To rebuild public confidence in Bedfordshire Police
- To ensure police are there when needed most after 999 calls
- Putting victims at the centre of policing and prosecutions
- A fair deal on policing whether you live in the country or town
- Protecting the police to protect the public
- Genuinely being a Commissioner for all communities
- Working with partners to break the cycle of crime

She has also published a Rural Crime Strategy, which includes actions such as the appointment of a Rural Crime Liaison Officer with responsibility for working with farmers and parish councils, as well as the extension of a scheme to appoint Special Constables with specific responsibility for the rural areas.

Further details of this scheme were announced last week, with the PCC implementing 'Operation Sentinel Rural' which will see a team of an Inspector, Sergeant, 4 Police Constables and 4 Police Community Support Officers focus on rural policing issues. It was also announced that the unit will have use of a drone which will be used to acquire evidence.

For more information see www.bedspsc.org

Ward Fund

Each year Borough councillors are able to allocate monies to support community schemes within their ward. Some examples of the schemes I chose to support in 2016/17 are as follows:

- £1744 for toilets and a radiator at Wootton Baptist Church
- £1495 for stage lighting and equipment at Wootton Upper School
- £700 for sports equipment for Wootton Lower School

We should know shortly about our allocations for 2017/18. If you feel you have a community project which could benefit, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Cllr John Wheeler: john.wheeler@bedford.gov.uk / 07913409433

Sue Playford

Subject: Police Neighbourhood Priority Setting

From: Jeff Noakes

Sent: 31 March 2017 11:54

To:

Subject: Police Neighbourhood Priority Setting

Sue

I attended the above meeting held at Great Denham Community Centre on Thursday 30th March 2017.

The meeting was called to ascertain parish concerns & priorities. I have listed Wootton's concerns as:

Lack of Police visibility

Speeding

Nuisance parking

With Lack of visible policing as our priority.

The meeting was also an introduction to the manner in which Bedfordshire Police will provide Neighbourhood policing. In essence, there are three areas:

Northern Rural

Bedford

Luton

We are part of the Northern Rural group, which in turn is split into a further 6 areas. Our area (area 5) consists of:

Pavenham

Oakley

Clapham

Stevington

Bromham

Biddenham

Great Denham

Turvey

Stagsden

Kempston Rural

Wootton

It was these parishes that attended the meeting. The remaining groups will have separate meetings.

To provide Neighbourhood policing for area 5 we have one PCSO (James Dancer)

Over the top of the neighbourhood Policing we will still have response policing, CID, traffic patrols etc.

Having listed our concerns and priorities, they will all be collated to ascertain which is the greatest concern and priority to all the groups, then days of action will be undertaken. Of course, drug dealing, child exploitation, child sexual abuse will always take priority over the concerns listed above.

There will be another meeting in May which will inform us of the days of action to be taken, and thereafter there will be a meeting every 3 months to keep us informed of progress.

Jeff Noakes

Parish Council Meeting. 6th April 2017

Rob Stanton and Gary Williams.

Gary and I represent the Baptist Church in Wootton.

Apart from the usual worship services we hold each week, we hold:

- A Sunday School is running at present, having restarted recently.
- A Coffee morning each Tuesday morning from 10.30am to 12 noon. We get up to 40 people attend regularly, many of them are not attenders at our own church, or any other. There are facilities for children. The cost of coffee and tea and home made cakes is very low, but still a profit is made each week, which is given to the Africa Inland Mission Famine relief. In total about £900 to £1000 goes to that Mission each year.
- Two children's groups run from the church. Each Tuesday, The Adventurer group is run straight after school at 3.45pm, until 5pm and we get a good group of children each time.
- A second older group runs from 6.45pm to 8pm and is for young people from 10 upwards. They have indoor facilities for sport and games and seem to enjoy themselves. (During the year the village precept provided a new table tennis table for this group.) We get leadership problems with this group as we have few young men to run it.
- One Home Fellowship group is held each week in a Members home.
- In addition to these there are regular Bible Study and Prayer meetings held each week and a regular Women's meeting.

I expect that there are some of you who have never been into the Church building. The church is for everyone and as Easter is coming, you may like to attend one of our Easter meetings.

You would be very welcome.

Bizzy Bees Pre-School Report for Annual Parish Meeting - 5th April 2017

Our academic year for 2015-2016 started with a record high number of children attending our setting and ended with 36 children transitioning on to school with the majority going to Wootton Lower School but we also had children starting School at Kempston Rural, Elstow & Cranfield

In 2016 we were successful in obtaining a grant by the Harpur Trust as part of their 450th year celebrations enabling Bizzy Bees to purchase two large shade sails for the garden area. These provide a safe environment under which the children can play during sunny weather. Bizzy Bees funded a new 6 foot close board fence in the garden to replace the temporary bamboo screening which often blew down in windy weather. And we have supported the parish council gaining approval and installation of CCTV around the outside of the Memorial Hall in October 2016.

September 2016 Laura Spavins joined us as our new manager taking over from Nicky Draper, who has been able to take a step back and reduced her working week. Laura joined us from an Ofsted Outstanding setting, and a great asset to Bizzy Bees having Early Years Teachers Status and achieved a 1st in her Early Years degree from University of Bedfordshire. Our new management team have implemented some positive changes including introducing an electronic learning journey which will be replace the current paper journey's.

We have had two busy terms at BB welcoming lots of new children and families from the local community. Having lots of fun exploring themes including Autumn, Winter animals, Christmas, Chinese New Year and our new pet Giant African Land Snail 'twinkle toes'. The children have loved watching him grow and eat lots of healthy food (which they tried too).

The highlight of our spring term was the 'happy living egg' programme. The children had a lovely experience of watching the chicks hatch (4 boys and 4 girls) and grow over 10 days. A grandparent has kindly adopted all 8 which means we will be able to watch how they grow through photographs and have regular updates.

The Summer term we will explore Spring and focus our activities on 'growing' & learn about different occupations and people who help us in which we plan to invite local services in to the setting (Fire Brigade, police etc.). We are working with Wootton Lower School regarding the transition for this year's school leavers to arrange additional visits for our children to Wootton Lower School. We have also invited the reception teachers into Bizzy Bees to read a story to the children.

Looking to our next academic year, we hope to complete the process of changing the status of our charity from unincorporated to incorporated and we are currently planning for the 30 Hours funding scheme which will start from September 2017 this will be displayed on our website when it has been confirmed what we are going to offer but we anticipate that this will make Bizzy Bees busy than ever.

Wootton Parish Council Annual Meeting

I am just completing my first year as President of Wootton WI, though I have been a member of the committee for about five years.

During the past year we have seen our membership grow, and now many of our members are younger ladies. Several ladies on the last committee stood down last April, so the past year has been rather a steep learning curve for many of us, as we took on new roles and responsibilities. We have survived, and it is very pleasing to welcome the enthusiasm and new ideas from our new committee members.

During the past year, we have been involved in the Wootton Fun Fest, where we ran a tombola stall, and one of our members made a beautiful flower arrangement for St Mary's church celebrations of the Queen's 90th birthday.

Last November was the first year we have not run the Craft Fair. This was due to several reasons, one being that Dorothy Warman wanted to enjoy a well-earned rest! She had been the organiser and main driving force of the Wootton Craft Fair for many years, and we cannot express our gratitude strongly enough for her hard work and dedication. The WI did not feel able to take over the organisation of a whole craft fair, so we decided to have a stall at the WI Fair at Flitwick at the end of last October. This proved to be a great success, with lots of our members producing jams and knitted items, cards and Christmas decorations, and many other things for sale, and it was a good way of raising funds, too!

Our events and talks over the last 12 months have included a Dabble evening, talks on songbirds, interpreting your dreams, and a Victorian superman; demonstrations on beauty treatments and therapies, and we held our own Wootton WI Olympics, complete with our own (chocolate!) medal ceremony!

This year also we have formed a theatre group, and have 16 people going to Milton Keynes Theatre in July to see Jane Eyre.

A very important part of the WI is that we are there to encourage women to get out and try something different, make new friendships and develop new interests, but also to be a part of the local community.

Recently we have had members asking our group if they would like to volunteer as drivers for the Wootton Good Neighbours Scheme, asking for volunteers to help with reading at Wootton Lower school; and we have a member who has been encouraging others in our group to knit "Twiddle Muffs" for dementia sufferers.

Wootton WI is a friendly group, always happy to welcome members and visitors on the third Wednesday of the month at the Memorial Hall.

Where else can you have a night out for £3.50, with a speaker or activity, a raffle, and refreshments included!

Kath Clark

President
Wootton WI

First of all we would like to thank the Fun Day Team for another great day. Our health quiz was as popular as ever and this year we introduced a game for children which was 'pin the parts on Skeleton Bob'.

Over the last 12 months the PPG has helped at the health centre by providing tea and coffee at the Saturday flu clinic and held regular meetings to discuss any matters arising. The centre also had its Care Quality inspection and came out with a top rating of Outstanding for providing services that are responsive to patients' needs. It is very rare for providers to achieve outstanding. In order to gain this, the centre must demonstrate that it has really gone above and beyond the norm. We believe that our health centre is the first gp practice in Bedfordshire to have been awarded this rating. The other four inspection areas were rated as good so the overall rating was good. This was a great achievement to mark the health centre's tenth year since it started in the village.

We are still having problems with the nonattendance at appointments despite reminder texts, pieces in the Wootton newsletter and on the PPG notice board. This wastes a lot of staff time which in turn costs a lot in financial terms. We also have no news on the permanent building and with the problems facing the NHS we may have to wait a bit longer to get it.

We will be at this year's fun day in July and hope you will come and visit us and have a go at another of our quizzes.

Wootton Academy Trust Update for Wootton Annual General Meeting

Wootton Academy Trust is continuing to consult with Sharnbrook Academy Federation about a possible merger between the two Trusts. Nationally, academies are being encouraged to be in larger groupings given the shrinking of Local Authorities. The Trusts meet together regularly at a director and senior leader level.

The merger, if it takes place, is unlikely to occur before the start of the new academic year. Whilst no target date has been set for the merger, we would not anticipate it being before April 2018 at the earliest. However, time scales can change. In anticipation the two trusts are looking at synchronising their assessment, appraisal, financial and communications systems.

The Trust has completed phase three of its re-roofing project at WUS, using CIF money allocated by the DfE. The roofing project cost more than £1m to complete. Additionally, replacement fire doors and a new fire detection alarm system have been installed in a CIF project. A new lighting system has been installed at the school.

At Kimberley, a biomass heating system is currently being installed.

The Trust has learned in the last few days that its bid for a new heating system at WUS has also been approved.

Kimberley College had an Ofsted inspection in January 2017 which judged the college to be good overall. Every category was judged good, except pupil development and well-being which was judged outstanding. We are also pleased that Kimberley College was judged to be one of the top twenty sixth form colleges in England by the Sunday Times, last November.

Wootton Upper School awaits its next Ofsted inspection, probably in the autumn term of 2017. The school is making good progress, but we

are not being complacent. Ensuring the progress of disadvantaged children is as good as “all other pupils nationally” is our greatest challenge. Attendance has improved this year, but there is work to do.

The Trust has just created a local governing body for WUS to replace the advisory body. I am very pleased that a number of Wootton residents are taking key positions on this important body.

Amongst the many changes introduced at Wootton has been the advent of senior student leaders. These students have been engaged in a wide variety of projects ranging from fund raising (children in need, poppy day, Salvation Army and Bedford Food Bank have all benefitted from our efforts), teaching and learning leaders – working with teachers to review teaching, senior leaders representing the school externally... we are very grateful to Cllr. John Wheeler for his support in enabling WUS students to be present at Borough Civic events and also at village events, such as the remembrance day commemoration. Our community leaders organized a tea party for senior citizens of the village in March and a very splendid event it was too.

The arts continue to thrive... recent productions have included Billy Elliot (July 2016), The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (November 2016) and The Nutting Olympics (February 2017). Our array of music concerts continues with the Easter concert taking place last Thursday.

Sporting successes have been manifest in the last twelve months – our U18 and U14 boys’ teams both won county cups in rugby last season and this year the U14 and U15 teams have won their county cups. Our girls’ football teams are doing well in local competitions.

One of our former students – now at Kimberley – had an experiment on the international space station in March.

We are very grateful to St Marys Church for welcoming us at Christmas for six church services. Peter Ackroyd's support has always been magnificent.

Our two new Vice Principals are making a great impact in the school and are enjoying meeting members of the local community and the wider educational community.

We face very significant funding challenges in the coming years; our budgetary preparatory work is underway and it giving me sleepless nights... and many other school leaders up and down the country.

Our students – the children of residents of Wootton, Cranfield and beyond - are fundamentally a great group of young people. There are exceptions to this and it is easy to forget the key message.

Over 100 Year 11 students are currently attending a 4-day revision school over at Kimberley... my thanks go to them, their parents and their teachers for giving up their time. We are excited by what our students will achieve this year.

Michael Gleeson

April 5th 2017

Speedwatch report

Recently two checks were carried out – one between 7.45 and 8.45 a.m. on Fields Road and one between 3p.m. and 4 p.m. on Wootton Road (from Gibraltar Corner down to Iron Bridge Corner).

In one hour 523 vehicles came down Fields Road and only one was speeding.

232 vehicles came down Wootton Road and 6 were speeding. The police sent letters to the owners of all these vehicles the next day.

Anyone wishing to join our team – there are 4 of us at the moment - should contact Juliet Wright - juliet.wright@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

We shall be carrying out another 2 checks after the Easter break.

Good Neighbours

“Wootton Good Neighbours started operations in January 2014 and to date the group have completed in the region of 1000 tasks. These have been mainly medical, dental and vets' appointments but additionally we have also made befriending visits. Appointments have been covered in Luton, Milton Keynes and other destinations away from the parish.

The volunteers who have carried out these requests have done so with goodwill and kindness. Those who we have assisted have been very satisfied with the service provided by the volunteers.

We look forward to continuing the service into the future.”

I did the returns for last quarter at the weekend and amongst other details is that group carried out

113 in that period.

We could still do with more volunteers – particularly drivers and handy people.

Malcolm Chalmers

Wootton Street Watch

Wootton Street Watch started in March 2016, and now comprises of 6 volunteers. In addition we have the occasional services of PCSO James Dancer, Pc Mark Atkins and Special Pc Sophie Evans.

Street Watch is administered and funded by Bedfordshire Police. There are a number of Street Watch schemes within Bedfordshire, but to date all are within Central Beds. The only scheme within Bedford Borough is here at Wootton.

Simply put, Street Watch aims to provide a level of reassurance to the community by patrolling the locality. It should be noted the volunteers have no powers to intervene in any incidents. If they come across an incident they call for Police using their own mobile phones. All patrols are recorded on the Street Watch internet page. Volunteers must patrol in pairs, and cannot exceed 75 years of age. The volunteers are not on call.

The volunteers are expected to provide 2 hours patrol time each month. This can be difficult to achieve at times due to the other activities in which the volunteers are involved, not to mention work and family commitments.

Volunteers attend a short training input at Flitwick with the co-ordinator, PCSO Juliet Wright, and are then issued with their equipment of a high visibility jacket, a notebook, a torch, a pen and a persona attack alarm. Volunteers become members of the Bedfordshire Police volunteers and are issued with an identification card.

Following on from this each volunteer is taken out on patrol by PCSO Dancer or one of the other volunteers. From then on they are free to patrol at any time.

Within Wootton, amongst other things, we have assisted at the Bedford School Lower School in assisting with children crossing the road, have patrolled the recreation ground to prevent dog fouling and anti social behaviour and advise dog owners concerning use of the ground, and have handed out Parish Council cards to those vehicles parked on the footpath.

Volunteers are always welcome. The more volunteers we have, the more patrols we can achieve. Anyone interested should contact PCSO Juliet Wright on 01234 842613 or 07931 293908 or by e-mail at Juliet.wright@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

Jeff Noakes

Wootton Street Watch Co-ordinator

Sue Playford

Subject: Parish Council notes

From: Head Teacher

Sent: 31 March 2017 17:35

To:

Cc:

Subject: Parish Council notes

Wootton Lower School continues to thrive in our expanding village with total pupils now in excess of 400. A proposed development will take this up to 600 in the years to come.

Our results continue to be very strong. Our baseline assessments of the children entering the school in Reception show that collectively they are below national expectations but as they grow through school they make rapid progress, achieving significantly above national score in reading, writing and maths.

On the wider curriculum our football club successfully competes in the higher league of the Mid Beds Mini League and we have choir of over 100 pupils, most of which sang at a Young Voices concert at the O2. A recent 'Wootton's Got Talent' show demonstrated talented musicians, gymnasts and dancers.

The Governors, staff and pupils are proud of our school and what we achieve.

WOOTTON NEW LIFE METHODIST CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT YE 31 AUGUST 2016

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' says the preacher to the congregation in Ecclesiastes 3:1.

'Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction' writes Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2



Over the past year we have entered what we truly believe to be a 'new season' in the life of the church and at the same time sought to encounter God and engage with our community in season and out of season.

Our Annual report contains details of some of wonderfully diverse activities that form part of our mission and ministry:

- ❖ Rejoicing with families bringing their children to be dedicated
- ❖ Celebrating Christian marriage
- ❖ Welcoming new friends and old into our fellowship
- ❖ 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

Highlights for me have been seeing the 1st Wootton Girls' and Boys' Brigades grow in huge numbers and with great enthusiasm; sharing games, craft, stories and a meal with children and their families at Rock and Roll; worshipping in the outdoors with other Christians in the village at the open-air service in June and learning circus skills and eating pizza and chips at the ecumenical event on 31st October 2016 at the Lower School, alongside hordes of children. Food, fun and fellowship feature highly!

As we look ahead we know that, whatever the new season brings, we are called to love and serve both God and our community.

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); Thea Lee and Jeremy Sear (Stewards). Dave Shore is currently taking a sabbatical from his role as Steward.

The appointment of the stewards and the leadership team is confirmed each year at the AGM. During 2016 Jo Pope stood down from her role as Steward and Church Council Secretary. We are grateful for her service in these roles and valuable contributions.

The leadership team is pleased to be able to report on another successful church family weekend away at Somersal cottages, Derbyshire. There were about 40 of us of all ages, and three dogs. We were especially happy to welcome our Circuit youth worker, Monica and her family as we shared fun, games, fellowship, worship and food.

Thanks to all involved in organising the weekend especially Dave & Celia for leading what turned out to be a very wet but pleasant walk ending up (for the lucky few) drinking hot chocolate and playing games in the Izaak Walton Hotel at Dove Dale.

Membership

As a member of the Methodist Church we are called to

Worship within the local church, including sharing in Holy Communion and through personal prayer.

Learning & caring, through Bible study and meeting for fellowship, so that we may grow in faith and support others in their discipleship.

Service, by being a good neighbour in the community, challenging injustice and using my resources to support the Church in its mission in the world.

Evangelism, through working out our faith in daily life and sharing Christ with others.

On 1st November 2016 our membership was **46**. It is encouraging to see new folks joining our fellowship and it was a joy at our 2017 Covenant Service to receive Allan and Nicola Tresidder into membership. During the year, however, the average number of attendees on a Sunday morning has continued to decline to around 30 – 35 each week and we would encourage all members to play an active role in the worshipping life of the church.

WORSHIP AND TEACHING

Sunday morning worship

Sunday mornings at 10.30am are our main focus for gathering as the whole Church for worship, fellowship and teaching. Our informal ethos, sets the tone for our worship, which tends to be interactive. We are grateful to all those involved in enabling our worship to happen, those who we see up the front leading the music, setting the scene, preaching God's Word and those enabling our multi-media to operate, setting out our chairs or making the coffee and most importantly leading with any children who are present. I am sure there is something that most of us can do to help, so please speak to David and Suzy if you can help on a rota basis.

With the formation of the Girls' and Boys' Brigades in January 2016 we have integrated some Parades into All Age Worship. Please pray for the way these can develop in the most effective way to truly be for all ages in the congregation.

During the year September 2015 to August 2016 we have continued our Teaching Series and covered the following topics: Believing, Belonging, Behaving, Advent Candle Topics, New Year, New Covenant, New Life, Lots of Parables of the Kingdom, Paul's second letter to Timothy and through the Summer being open to the New Season that God has highlighted for us and prompting us to through His Holy Spirit.

Our desire is expressed in one of the songs we often sing, Jesus be the Centre: "Be the fire in my heart, Be the wind in these sails, Be the reason that I live, Jesus, Jesus"

(Kath Pawlett)

Sunday morning children and young people's work

I think it is fair and honest to say that the number of children and young people who regularly attend Sunday morning worship varies enormously. Sometimes there have been none, other times there were more, however, never more than ten covering all ages.

I would like to thank Luke Tresidder who continued to help throughout the year, he is a real blessing and will be missed when he leaves to go to University. I would also like to thank Carey Miller who now leads on a regular basis.

We meet in The Hub and usually follow the same theme as the adult worship, learning through the use of modern technology (film clips from YouTube), reading stories, painting, blowing bubbles, playing table top games or playing much more active games in the school room. We sometimes sing songs, its amazing what you can find on YouTube.

Some may see it as challenge to have children from as young as two in the same group as teenagers and too much of a daunting prospect to offer help. I see it as an absolute delight and pleasure. If I'm honest I sometimes find it hard to plan and think I don't have the time but I have always finished the sessions feeling more blessed and encouraged having spent time with God's precious children. It's a real honour to serve God in this way.

Some may only see the disadvantages of having a small number of children with a big age range. There are many advantages. As a leader I can see them all grow in their understanding and faith. As a group

they are able to learn from and encourage each other. Sometimes I have only had to give them a "starter for ten", a prompt and then the conversation has evolved each one contributing in one way or another so that we have all learnt something.

MISSION 20:20 OUR VISION & STRATEGY says

"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."

Please don't accept the status quo regarding our Sunday morning children's work. Please don't accept that at best we will only get a handful of children on a Sunday morning. Sunday morning is an opportunity to celebrate, feel and express God's love through (and despite) our diversity. We, as a church, should want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to hear the gospel and feel it at work during and through our Sunday morning worship.

Be brave, step out in faith and invite children and families to join us on Sunday mornings.

Children and young people are the life-blood of this church and I therefore ask that you earnestly pray for all those families who now attend and to prompt others to join us.

Please also pray:

for all of the helpers and leaders of this crucial activity within the life of the church. Please pray that we would continue to be excited about sharing our understanding of God and Jesus on Sunday mornings;

that others would come forward to help and offer their giftings including time and fresh ideas;

that I can report to you next year about growth in both numbers and spiritual understanding.

A final word of encouragement from Jesus himself.

For when two or three gather together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20 The Voice)

I can testify that every time I have met in The Hub whether there was one child with me or five, Jesus has turned up!

Excited? Join the fun.

Small groups

Small groups take place during the week and are where we get to know each other better, build relationships and support each other and study the Bible. They meet at various times throughout the week and have different styles. They provide an invaluable opportunity for you to explore God's Word, issues raised during Sunday morning worship in more depth and/or every day matters and issues that affect you and your faith journey.

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 small group**

This group continued to meet on Tuesdays but moved both venue and time. It is a time of fellowship and Bible study mixed with singing and laughs.

It now meets every Tuesday at 10.00am in the Church.

Thank you Rose and Ron Clarke for previously hosting this small group in your home over many years.

- **Wednesday small group**

This continued to meet at the home of Suzy & David at 8 Summerfield Drive.

We meet on alternate Wednesdays during term time at 7.30pm by sharing in a light meal, usually home made soup and salad. We like to follow the biblical trend of feeding our stomachs before feeding our minds. It also gives us an opportunity to catch up with what's been going on in our busy lives, which also helps to break barriers down before we start our study time.

We have used DVD's, YouTube clips and printed study materials. We have also studied in greater depth some of the teaching themes used on Sunday mornings. We "invited" Francis Chan's to our group as we watched the YouTube videos to accompany his book *Crazy Love*. It says on the back of the book "Does something deep inside your heart long to break free from the status quo? Are you hungry for an

authentic faith that addresses the problems of our world with tangible, even radical solutions? God is calling you to a passionate love relationship with Himself. Because the answer to religious complacency isn't working harder at a list of do's and don'ts – it's falling in love with God." It was a very challenging series sometimes prompting less than comfortable thoughts and questions.

We also pray for each other and our church family as we know and appreciate the challenges life brings to us all.

We try to be finished by 9.30 pm although sometimes our conversations get the better of us.

Thank you everyone for providing food and to Kath and Brian Pawlett for offering their home as an alternative venue.

The Bible clearly shows us that knowing and loving God and Jesus as our Saviour doesn't prevent us from experiencing hardships and suffering. Knowing and understanding God's words and Jesus's teachings helps us face life's challenges.

Ephesians 6:13 – 18 (The Message) says

Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

If you don't regularly attend a small group please consider joining one. All are welcome to come and join wherever you are on your faith journey – if you're not sure and just want to try one out, or the existing ones don't meet at a convenient time for you, have a chat with Suzy or David.

Being part of a small group, however frequent you are able to attend, will bring you blessings and enable you to cope with life's stresses and commitments. However tired you may feel or however busy you think you are, take time out during the week to explore God's Word.

In 1 Samuel 2:30 God says '*I honour those who honour me*'.

PASTORAL CARE

We are grateful to our team of Pastoral Visitors for their care within our Fellowship. During the year September 2015-16 we consolidated the changes we made when we reviewed the Pastoral Groups earlier in 2015. Each Pastoral Visitor has their own way of supporting those on their list. We have had a focus on our invitational events with an emphasis on those on the fringe of our Church.

Please do see Kath Pawlett if you would like to know more about the Pastoral Groups. 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 friendship and in a variety of ways.

(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 mornings at 9.30am.

We have a prayer chain for emergency prayer request that gets passed on by phone, email and texts. 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.

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

The Hub continues to be a focal point for both the church and the community with complimentary filtered coffee being offered to all. Many people make a small donation, which has resulted in a positive financial balance.

Following requests from The Hub regulars for a more quality coffee, a new coffee machine was purchased which produces 'high street' style coffee via a fresh grinding of the beans in the brewing infusion, even though the brew is noisy at the start grinding the beans I feel this should not be barrier for the machine to be selectively used.

2016 has seen challenges around the drop in numbers on some days which has resulted in the closure of The Hub on Friday and Saturday mornings, even though this is a huge shame the fellowship shared on other days is still strong.

On Sundays there is at times a shortage of help serving drinks but we all tend to "muck in" and get by!

The success of The Hub is via the few volunteers that open, run and serve coffees which we must all be truly thankful for and pray that The Hub continues to provide a place of welcome, fellowship and community spirit going forward.

If you are able to volunteer in The Hub either during the week or on Sunday morning please speak to Betty or Jeremy.

(Jeremy Sear)

Ladies Ministry

We once again had a successful Pamper Evening in November 2015 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.

We also met occasionally for Girls' Night In where we ate and chatted getting to know each other better. We especially enjoyed a memorable evening led by Hannah who showed us how to make greetings cards. All ladies and their female friends are welcome to join us as we continue to meet quarterly during 2017.

Men's Ministry

Men's Ministry took a break during 2015/16, with the exception of a joint meal with the ladies. We aim to re-ignite our Men's Ministry in the coming year so if anyone would like to take a lead on this please talk to David or Brian.

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, our Christmas film this year was *Nativity 3, Dude, where's my donkey!*

During the year we started Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church and Girls' and Boys' Brigades, details of which can be found below.

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

Pat-a-cake

Pat-a-cake is our group for pre-school children with their parents, grandparents, or childminders that meets on Thursdays from 1.30pm - 3.00pm in Term-Time. 2015/16 was a time of change as Patrick Croash and Nicola Tresidder are no longer part of the team and we are very grateful to them for the contributions that they made. Carey Miller and Kath Pawlett are the "face of the Church" in the group and undertake the practical tasks with the help of the adults attending.

There are a number of regular families attending, as well as others who come from time to time. It is always lovely to see new babies and also at the older end those moving on to pre-school and reception.

How can you help:

- Please spread the word to anyone you know with young children
- Please pray for the Group and the needs of young families
- We would be glad to welcome more helpers on Thursdays, setting up and putting away toys, making teas and at present we have no one organising any simple craft work

(Carey Miller and Kath Pawlett)

Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church

In Sept 2015 Jo and Celia launched Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church. We run this on a Saturday afternoon once a month and have on average about 40 people attending. The format includes craft activities then a talk and song linked to a theme this is then followed by a meal.

In December we joined with "Deck the Halls" and Jeremy and Gary cooked a delicious Christmas meal. We also helped do shoe boxes for the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child appeal.

We would like to thank everyone who helps either on the day or providing food.

(Jo Pope and Celia Shore)

Youth Hub

Thanks to the commitment of the all involved in youth work and many a prayer from the wider church, the new Youth Hub was opened in September 2015 and now meets fortnightly in term time on alternate Fridays.

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. Since the start attendances have averaged approximately 10 -11. More encouraging is that they all appear to enjoy their evening and are willing to invite their friends!

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

Some are attending the Circuit youth services, and we 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, Circuit residencials, Easter egg hunts and trips to 3Generate and Soul Survivor. Two of our group went for the first time to 3generate held near Swindon last November. We are also encouraging members of the group to go to Soul Survivor in August 2017 as it is moving from Somerset to near Peterborough so will be significantly more accessible.

We are also keeping our options open about re-opening the Friday afternoon Youth Drop In Café from its sabbatical at some point in the future.

(Dave Shore/Brian Pawlett)

1st Wootton Boys' & Girls' Brigades (BB & GB)

It was a bit touch and go as to whether we would have enough leaders and helpers by the time of the planned launch (Jan-16), but God provided just enough and it was a green light for GO! We opted to start with just the two youngest age groups in each and once numbers and leaders permit – we would then launch the older age groups.

The first nights were amazing, and numbers were much higher than anticipated, especially for the boys who saw 17 turn up! It was quite a challenge to run an evening with so many – not knowing names yet, trying to get to grips with a smaller building and finding out how the staff team would work together. However, it was great and we all went home buzzing about the launch.

A leaders commissioning service was held February 16.

As the months went on, both Brigades held theme nights. The boys did Star Wars, which fitted in with their 'Space & The Universe' theme, whilst the girls had a Princess Party in honour of the Queen's 90th Birthday.

But its not all fun, fun, fun. We also thought about others. We did a community litter pick around the village, and over the summer issued everyone with a challenge to support 'Toilet Twinning' and £40 was duly raised.

We managed to get most of the members into uniform, in time for our first Church service, Ice Cream Sunday (June 16) which was very popular and some the junior boys also enjoyed a sleepover.

The boys entered a couple of Battalion competitions, namely 10 pin bowling, water games, and are placing around 4th and 5th places at present. Hopefully we can win some silverware next session.

In the summer we joined in the Wootton Fun Fest on the recreation ground.

We completed the session with an awards evening, with members collecting their badges and five members collecting Perfect Attendance awards from that first night way back in January.

Teams [January – August 16]:

- BB/GB Chaplain: Rev. Caroline Weaver
- BB Leaders: Allan Tresidder, Ros Ruffhead, Gary Chester,
- BB Helpers: Mu & Ken Chambers, Dawn Pursey, Caroline Hunt, Betty Britain
- GB Leaders: Nicola Tresidder, Suzy Goodson, Rachel Tresidder,
- BB/GB Helpers: Betty Britain, Dianne Sullivan, Katie Witt,
- Treasurer: Brian Pawlett

We were saddened that a popular leader, Gary Chester found his role too tiring after a week at school, and would like to record our sincere thanks to his valued contribution in getting the BB established.

By the end of the session (August 16) numbers had reached 28 boys and 20 girls. This was well up on the plan and gives as a solid platform to start the 2016/17 session.

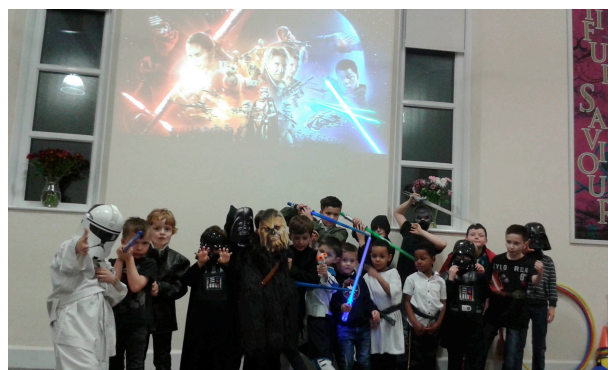
We've come a long way, but really – the adventure is just beginning !

(Allan & Nicola Tresidder, BB & GB Captains)

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.

It is good for us to be a part of the Wootton team, headed up by Margaret Robertson from St Mary's Church. The team presents a Bible story in Wednesday assemblies at Wootton Lower School, Bedford Road site. In the background Maureen Copperwheat has been ironing costumes and a great many props are available.



Our prayer is that the children will hear and see something about God in the Bible Stories and at some point in their lives will want to know more of what they mean.

Do speak to us if you would like to know more.

(Kath & Brian Pawlett)

FINANCE & GIVING

Generosity Encouraged

¹ And now brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian Churches. ² Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege in sharing in this service to the saints.

2 Corinthians 8:1- 4

I make no apology for going back to another passage in 2 Corinthians as I did last year, as there is some powerful teaching in this particular part of the New Testament. In the passage above we're reminded of the special generosity of the Macedonian Church. Churches in Macedonia i.e. Philippi, Thessalonica & Berea had given sacrificially & beyond Paul's expectations, even though they were poor. Paul therefore in writing this letter hoped it would encourage the Corinthian Church in their giving and solving their many problems.

We finished 2015-16 again making a surplus as you can see from the attached summary of accounts. This meant that we were able to support the ongoing maintenance of the Church, but also support the new initiatives in the year with our work with children and young people i.e. Brigades, Messy Church & the Youth Hub.

We may, however, face some longer term challenges particularly with costs for undertaking all aspects of work identified in the recent Quinquennial property inspection, along with some other potential demands on our finances. So hopefully the inspiration of the Macedonian Churches can inspire & encourage us all to consider what level of giving we believe we can offer for the future.

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.

(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.

(Brian Pawlett)



Unless indicated otherwise content is prepared by David & Suzy Goodson
Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road, Wootton. MK43 9DE
woottonnewlife.org.uk