



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd May 2018 at 7.45pm 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 at the Annual Parish Meeting; others may attend but not speak or vote.
Present	Gareth Lloyd, Chairman Wootton Parish Council – in the chair; John Wheeler, Vice-Chairman Wootton Parish Council, Bedford Borough Councillor, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity Grants Committee, Forest of Marston Vale Grants Committee, Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity, Vice-Chairman of Governors – Wootton Upper School, Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities; Stuart O'Dell, Member Wootton Parish Council; Paul Quirk, Member Wootton Parish Council; Sue Playford, Clerk Wootton Parish Council; Emma Brett, Chairperson Bizzy Bees; Nikki Pettit, Manager Bizzy Bees; James Russell, Forest of Marston Vale; Malcolm Chalmers, Speed Watch, Street Watch, Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme; Rob and Peta Stanton, Wootton Baptist Church; Chris Maher, Wootton Community First Response; Michael (and Shirley) Gleeson, Wootton Upper School;

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	Keith Randell, WoottonVale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group.	
Agenda no	Agenda item title	Comments
APM18/001	Apologies for absence. Gerald Bygraves, Member Wootton Parish Council; Chris Gibbons, Member Wootton Parish Council; Hazel Martin, Member Wootton Parish Council; Jeff Noakes, Member Wootton Parish Council; Neera Regmi, Member Wootton Parish Council; Bob Wallace, Member Wootton Parish Council; Rev Peter Ackroyd, Vicar, St. Mary's Church, Wootton Church and Poor's Land charities; Pat Bradley, Wootton Tang Soo Do; David Goodson, Wootton New Life Methodist Church.	Noted for the minutes.
APM18/002	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 5 th April 2017.	The meeting agreed the minutes of the 5 th April 2017 were an accurate record.
APM18/003	To receive the following reports from Wootton Parish Council. Chairman's report. Financial report.	Gareth Lloyd confirmed the first annual report (A4 size) would be completed and delivered to all households, possibly alongside the June edition of the Wootton newsletter. This report would include information on the duties and responsibilities of the parish council, contain information on finances, ongoing and completed projects and offer an insight into the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. He added the parish council's solicitors continued to push for ownership of the community centre. Sue Playford confirmed the year end accounts were being finalised before submission to the internal auditor and the relevant information would be included within the finance section of the annual report.
APM18/004	To receive reports from outside bodies. Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor Wheeler; Bedfordshire police; Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC); Forest of Marston Vale.	Borough Councillor Wheeler's report was submitted just ahead of this meeting so had not been circulated in advance. Refer to Appendix 1. It was noted information on the Local Plan 2035 could be subject to change, given doubts surrounding potential areas of development north of Bedford. Further information would be available after the Borough Council's

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		Executive meeting on 16th May 2018. No report was submitted by Bedfordshire police. Refer to Appendix 2 regarding the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. James Russell introduced himself as a Forest Director, Forest of Marston Vale (FoMV). He was attending in the absence of Jo Roberts, Community Engagement Officer. The origin of Wootton's name (wood town) was noted, alongside FoMV's vision in the mid 1990's to deliver 30% tree coverage over a 40-year period. A recently-completed Impact Study Report noted a 3% tree coverage in the area when the vision was determined. To date, 15.4% had been reached within the Marston Vale – with Wootton having 13.69% tree cover. Benefits to health, wellbeing and the economy were noted – 167 full-time jobs were supported via FoMV each year. On a local level, James confirmed Jo Roberts had recruited several “wood wardens” – local people who kept an eye on woodland sites, reporting issues as they arose. Jo had been working with local schools to plant trees. It was noted the majority of structured log play features installed some 10-12 years ago had been removed, as they had deteriorated to a point where they were no longer safe for use. FoMV were working with schools to source appropriate replacements. James's team was undergoing a restructure with new rangers and an expanded remit – however Jo remained the primary contact. Works on the Route 51 cycleway (which crossed Wootton) were moving forward – the link and underpass north of Fields Road were expected to be completed within the next 18-24 months. James reported FoMV were in talks with Bedford Borough Council's Property Team regarding Berry Wood – to determine a master plan for the area, moving forward. Encroaching development had not been envisaged when the wood was planted, and investment was needed, not least to meet the needs of residents in the immediate area. The site was isolated from the community and had always underperformed, and it was FoMV's wish to be involved in addressing those issues.
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		It was asked whether the Forest Centre was well used for conferences and teaching. James confirmed it was well used and versatile enough to be considered an exemplary social enterprise model. With more than half a million visitors a year, the Forest Centre was self-funded, and the park retained its green flag status.
APM18/005	To receive reports and/or accounts from village/local organisations.	Reports around the table were then delivered, beginning with Borough Councillor John Wheeler (in his other roles): • FoMV Grants Committee. He noted the committee met yearly and utilised revenue from the wind turbine to award grants to the local community and schools. Wootton Upper School (WUS) had received grant funding for the creation of a garden and pond area, Wootton Lower School (WLS) had received grant funding to create a forest centre. John confirmed grants were available for any local community member or school who wished to apply. • Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity. John thanked both the upper and lower schools for their efforts in assisting with the annual Christmas lunch, which would again this year be a formal dinner – on Tuesday 4th December 2018. • Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities. John thanked the parish council for continuing to pay recycling credits to the charity, which had helped over 20 village-based families in the past year, facing financial difficulty. It was hoped once the community centre at Berryfields was available, it could be used as a service centre for bpha and Bedford Borough Council to also provide advice and guidance, further assisting those in need. Chris Maher then delivered his report as a Wootton Community First Responder. Refer to Appendix 3. Chris added they often arrived 2-3 minutes ahead of the ambulance service, which on occasion had to be deployed from Luton or Ampthill. It was understood their prompt arrival had saved at least two people as a result and offered reassurance to many whilst awaiting an ambulance. Sue Playford agreed to ensure a permanent advertisement was included in the Wootton newsletter to advertise the whereabouts of the village defibrillator (on the changing room wall by the entrance to the recreation ground car park), as well as a poster on the

		parish council's Facebook page. Additional defibrillators were also located at the upper school and Kimberley College and Chris agreed to meet with Michael Gleeson to ensure staff and students were familiar with its location and use. Keith passed on his personal thanks to Chris for arriving at his home ahead of the ambulance service – in fact, whilst he was still on a call to the emergency services. James agreed to speak with Chris after this meeting and provide Chris with maps and combination codes for all FoMV sites, to allow quick access should a Community First Responder be deployed to a site. Michael Gleeson delivered his report for Wootton Upper School. Refer to Appendix 4. It was noted Kimberly College was located within Bedford Borough, which would pose no issue with two/three tier education systems. Michael referred to a Central Bedfordshire Council consultation over the Future Shape of Education in Cranfield, Marston Moreteyne and Shelton. Over time it is likely new schools will be required; – it is unclear whether central government will fund new lower and middle schools as opposed to primary schools. A third school - lower or primary - was anticipated as being required for Marston Moreteyne despite an additional ongoing consultation on the future of the lower school in Upper Shelton. Keith Randell then delivered his report on behalf of Wootton PPG. Refer to Appendix 5. The future of a surgery in Wootton remained uncertain, despite patients travelling from Cranfield and Bedford and it was understood surrounding villages were having the same concerns. Borough Councillor John Wheeler referred to plans for a hub at Great Denham (which currently had no surgery provision) – with satellites remaining in other villages, including Wootton. Plans for bpha to build homes on top of a new surgery within the village had been shelved. Malcolm Chalmers then delivered reports as follows: • Speed Watch. He and his colleagues had use of a mobile speed indicator device (also used by Elstow, Stewartby and Houghton Conquest) which was used for a monthly patrol along Fields Road, during the early hours as heavy traffic entered and left the village
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		and children walked to school/bus stops. An average of 500 vehicles left via Fields Road daily and the patrol was successful at slowing traffic down – only 4 speeding vehicles were caught on each patrol. He added Cllr Royden (Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport) was considering speed cameras along that area. The patrol would move elsewhere if that came forward. There was a perception buses and lorries were speeding through the village however the patrol had not found that to be the case. • Street Watch. The team patrolled for an hour a time, three times a month, although it was quiet of late. Although two volunteers had been lost from Berryfields the patrol had assisted with crossings outside Bedford Road lower school (which had now secured a replacement school crossing attendant). Anti-social behaviour and attempted crime had been witnessed within the Berryfields estate and it was hoped additional volunteers could be recruited to increase patrols. • Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme. Malcolm had not been asked to volunteer of late and was concerned residents did not appreciate the scheme was still in existence. Volunteers were available to transport those in need to hospital/doctors' appointments and help in a variety of other ways. He agreed to speak to the village agent to see if an updated poster could be produced to increase publicity. He confirmed cars parked on pavements could be “carded” if appropriate – with a polite message reminding the owner pavements were for pedestrians. Emma Brett and Nikki Pettit then delivered their report on behalf of Bizzy Bees pre-school. Refer to Appendix 6. Nikki added her thanks to Borough Councillor Wheeler for providing ward funds to purchase ICT equipment including iPad Pro's and cameras. Fundraising was proving a popular way to involve parents. Emma detailed plans to level the undercover area at the back of the Memorial Hall to improve drainage and added her thanks to Borough Councillor Wheeler and the parish council for their ongoing
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		support. The final report was delivered by Rob and Peta Stanton, on behalf of Wootton Baptist Church. Refer to Appendix 7. In the absence of other church representatives, Rob noted the joint works undertaken by all. He added the church, being non-conformist, was self-financed. They continued to allow their car park to be used by parents of the adjoining lower school – some of whom were incorrectly under the impression it was a public car park! The following reports could not be delivered in person and are attached as follows: • St. Mary's Church. Refer to Appendix 8. • Wootton New Life Methodist Church. Refer to Appendix 9. • Wootton Tang Soo Do. Refer to Appendix 10.
APM18/006	General Parish Issues.	No questions concerning General Parish issues were put forward.

Meeting closed at 8.53pm.

Borough Councillor Cllr John Wheeler's Annual Report 2017/18Email: john.wheeler@bedford.gov.uk Phone: 07913409433**Bedford Budget Council Budget**

- The Borough Council has agreed its budget for 2018/19. As in previous years, demand for services is increasing whilst the overall resources available to the Council will remain relatively unchanged. This has required a continuation of its programme of service efficiencies.
- Bedford Borough 2020 will see the introduction of a 'Digital Operating Model', which is estimated to achieve annual savings of £10.4m by 2020 through improved technology, including more opportunities for residents to use 'self-service' functions when interacting with the Council.
- Service efficiencies totalling £3.8m will be delivered in 2018/19. A Council Tax increase of 1.75% has been agreed, along with a rise of 2% in the Adult Social Care Precept.
- The Council's Capital Programme determines schemes for 'one-off' investment in schemes totalling £185.8m from 2017/18 to 2020/21. This includes £19m of Government investment in traffic decongestion schemes, £5.5m in Disabled Facilities Grants monies from the Government to support independent living and £59m for school facilities.
- The Council is delivering £7.8m of efficiencies in 2017/18. As we near the end of the financial year, it is estimated that there will be an overall underspend of just under £1.8m. Councillors have allocated £1m of this sum for improvements to roads and pavements and £0.525m for new average speed cameras.

Local Plan 2035

- The Council has set out preferred sites for the development of around 8000 homes to the year 2035 in its draft Local Plan (see the below table and www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2035).

- A key aspect of the draft submission is the selection of a new settlement to deliver around a third of the new homes to 2035. Land owners and planning agents submitted 4 sites for consideration, namely: Wyboston; Colworth (Sharnbrook); Twinwoods (between Milton Ernest and Thurleigh), and; Thurleigh Airfield. The Mayor's draft Local Plan includes the Colworth site as the preferred settlement to deliver 2500 homes in the Local Plan period and up to 4500 thereafter. It has been stated that a key reason for the selection of Colworth is the possibility of a new rail station linking the settlement with Bedford and London.

- The draft Local Plan also includes 2420 homes in the urban area. The adjacent table shows that a number of villages have been allocated sizable housing developments. Given the scale of housebuilding in Wootton in recent years, it will not be required to contribute towards the Local Plan housing target.

- The Council's latest consultation on its draft Local Plan ended on the 29th March. Planning officers have now reviewed the responses. Following this, the Mayor's Executive will decide whether or not to make any amendments to the document. If changes are made, there may be a requirement for a further round of

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Local Plan 2035 Plan for submission	Amount of residential development
Urban area	2,420
Edge of urban area	210
Brownfield site Stewartby Brickworks	1,000
Colworth garden village	2,500
Group 1 villages – Key Service Centres	
- Bromham	500
- Clapham	500
- Gt Barford	500
- Sharnbrook	0
- Shortstown	0
- Wilstead	0
- Wixams	0
- Wootton	0
Total Group 1 villages	1,500
Group 2 Villages – Rural Service Centres	
- Carlton	25-50
- Harrold	25-50
- Milton Ernest	25-50
- Oakley	25-50
- Roxton	25-50
- Stewartby	0
- Turvey	25-50
- Willington	0
Total Group 2 villages (mid point)	225
	7,855

consultation. If not, the Local Plan for submission will go to a vote of all councillors at a meeting on the 16th May.

- If and when the Local Plan is approved by councillors, it will then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The role of the Planning Inspectorate is to make comments and, where appropriate, suggestions for modifications so that the Local Plan complies with national policies and legal requirements. Local authorities are not obliged to take on board the views of the Planning Inspector, but doing so could assist in ensuring the Local Plan is deemed to be 'sound' should it be subject to challenge from developers in the future. Depending on the workload of the Planning Inspectorate at the time of submission, it may take several months for the Council's Local Plan to be reviewed.

Transport Infrastructure

- The Government has committed to an 'expressway' between Oxford and Cambridge which will improve Bedford's eastern and western transport links. Last year Highways England consulted on plans to reconfigure the Black Cat roundabout as well as providing a new dual carriageway from the Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet. We are awaiting news of the preferred options.
- The Council announced its 'Transporting Bedford 2020' project for £22m of decongestion schemes for Bedford town centre. This has been backed with £19m of Government funds while the Council, along with contributions from developers, will add a further £3m. For more information search 'Transporting Bedford'.
- The Chancellor's last Budget announced that the western section of the East West Rail line from Oxford to Bedford will be running by 2024. A new 'East West Rail Company' has been established to accelerate delivery of the next part of the line from Bedford to Cambridge. The preferred route in or around Bedford has yet to be chosen. See <http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/>
- It was announced by East Midlands Trains (EMT) and Govia Thameslink Railway in December that peak East Midlands Trains services will not stop at Bedford or Luton from May 2018 until the completion of the Midland Main Line upgrade in 2020. Off peak services will continue as normal. For information see: <https://www.thameslinkrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/bedford-changes>

Health and Social Care

- In September Bedford Hospital and Luton & Dunstable Hospital announced their intention to merge. A business case was submitted to NHS England but there has been a delay regarding the financial arrangements. In particular, it will not be known until the summer as to the available Government capital funding (the merger includes plans for £150m of upgrades to facilities on both sites). The Chief Executive has confirmed that key services such as A&E, maternity and paediatrics will be retained at Bedford Hospital.
- The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body responsible for organising NHS services locally, announced in January its intention to close the Walk-In Centre (WIC) at Putnoe Surgery in Bedford from October 2018. Thereafter, alternative provision will be implemented through an 'Urgent Treatment Centre' (UTC) based on the Bedford Hospital site, which will operate a 'like for like service from the Putnoe Walk In Centre'. It will also link with the Hospital's A & E function, allowing non-emergency patients access to diagnostics should further tests be required, and will receive ambulances and appointments via the 111 phone service. In addition to the UTC, the BCCG has expressed its intention to extend GP opening hours into evenings and weekends, giving patients more options to book appointments. There is also a possibility that walk in provision will be located at Gilbert Hitchcock House on Kimbolton Road, Bedford, but details of this are still emerging.
- The Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) review is continuing to assess options to amalgamate health and social care in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. See <http://www.blmkstp.co.uk/>

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Appendix 1

- The Council continues to see increased demand for adult social care with the budget for this service being set at £52.1m next year; a 13.7% increase since 2015/16.
- In October, the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) announced a new system for responding to calls. See <https://www.eastamb.nhs.uk/news/new-ambulance-response-standards-go-live/1913> for more information.

Policing

- A scheme tackling rural crime has been deemed a success since its inception earlier in the year. In March, the Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, announced the establishment of Operation Sentinel Rural. This has seen a team of an Inspector, Sergeant, 4 Police Constables and 4 Police Community Support Officers focus on rural policing issues. In September it was reported that the since initiative was launched, the rural crime team has been involved in a range of operations including 900 speed checks, the seizing of 39 vehicles and carrying out 9 arrests. The rural crime team can be contacted via opsentinel.rural@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

Ward Fund

Each year Borough Councillors are allocated a sum of money which they can use to support community schemes in their wards. This year I was very pleased to make contributions from my ward fund to the following schemes in Wootton:

- £2000 to Wootton Upper School, supplying laptops for students to teach elderly Wootton residents IT skills
- £1000 to Wootton Lower School to take special educational needs and disabilities pupils and students from low income families to a careers event in London
- £1712 to provide kit for the Wootton Community First Responder scheme
- £1000 to Wootton Lower School for a summer holiday camp
- £965 to Wootton Baptist Church to purchase 10 special chairs for elderly attendees and a new dish washer
- £100 for the Looked After Children Awards, celebrating the achievements of Bedford Borough's children in care
- £1564 to the Bizzy Bees Pre School to purchase 2 iPads and pencils
- £547 to Wootton Upper School to provide special lighting for the light sensory room for special educational needs and disabilities pupils
- £1300 to Wootton Upper School to provide benches for a quiet area for vulnerable pupils
- £912 to contribute towards Wootton lower school visit by the Theatre Co. performing Jungle Book

Did you know?

As a Borough councillor I can advise families in Wootton with benefit, Council Tax and rent issues and put them in contact with the relevant departments at the Borough Council. Along with working with local charities I can also see if they can help families. Help has been given to quite a few Wootton residents recently.

Wootton Schools

As a Governor at both schools I have been involved with the children/ students working within the community. For example, both schools have sung and helped out at the Robert Lunniss Charity lunch, giving a tea party for senior residents and they will be helping out at this year's Wootton Fun Day in July.

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Phase two of Wootton Lower School will now start later on this year to be ready for September 2019 which will give more places to Wootton children. The new nursery opposite the Lower School on the industrial park is going to planning and work should be commencing soon.

Wootton Update

Work is due to start in September to widen the footpath along Fields Road from Bedford Road to the new roundabout. There will also be a path / cycle track from the new development to the surgery via the front of the new BPHA apartments going to a new pedestrian crossing past the surgery joining the footpath on Fields Road. Fields Road is now due to be resurfaced early next year when all the gas / water pipe works have been completed.

The Parish Council has updated the bus stops around the village using Community Infrastructure Levy monies (payable by developers to local communities) which enables the elderly, disabled passengers and parents with push chairs easier access to get on and off the buses.

The proposed new shops at Berryfields have now gone to final planning and work should commence soon; this has taken longer than expected but will be a good addition to the village.

New L.E.D. lighting has now been installed around the village by the Borough Council. We are trying to keep up with the pothole situation. Please contact the Borough Council to report these on 01234718003 or via <https://highwaysreporting.bedford.gov.uk/>

A lot is now starting to happen in the village and I and Wootton Parish are working with developers to get the best for the village. We will keep you informed of all updates.

John Wheeler



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BRCC

AT A GLANCE

BRCC is Bedfordshire's leading agency working with local communities, with a track record of over 60 years. In this publication you can find out about our main areas of work as well as reading about some of our projects in greater depth.

Supporting Communities

Good Neighbour Schemes - our Network of nearly 50 Good Neighbour and Village Care schemes across Bedfordshire enables towns and villages to provide low level support to residents who need it, such as one neighbour might provide for another. This helps people to continue living independently at home and relieves some pressure on health and care services.

New communities
- *See p.4 for extended feature*

Community assets and planning - BRCC supports local communities to develop, enhance and manage their own assets, in order to support community life. This includes Neighbourhood Planning, rural housing, and Community and Village Halls.

Green Infrastructure - we work with local communities to develop and maintain networks of green spaces, routes and countryside sides, for the benefit of both people and nature. Our Health Walking and conservation volunteering enable people to learn new skills and meet new people at the same time as improving their physical and mental health.

Social Prescribing - BRCC is taking a lead role in the development of Social Prescribing across Bedfordshire. This seeks to address some of the non-medical issues underlying various health conditions by connecting people to local services and activities.

Community Agents and Local Community Coordinators
- *See p.5 for extended feature*

Rural Development

The Barn Cardington - this new community deli and café on the site of the old Summerhill Farm Shop (launched November 2017) has enabled BRCC to fulfil a longstanding ambition to promote local Bedfordshire produce.

Warden Abbey Vineyard - an innovative community project on the site of a medieval vineyard, producing award winning wines thanks to the efforts of local volunteers. The Vineyard was runner-up in the Community Project of the Year category of the national Rural Business Awards 2017. In April 2017 our Bacchus 2015 was served to the Queen.

Greensand Country Landscape Partnership
- *see p.3 for feature*

The Bridge project
- *see p.3 for feature*

LEADER funding programmes
- *see p.7 for extended feature*

Community Transport

Dial-a-ride services - our Door to Door and Wheels in Motion services typically carry out nearly 20,000 journeys a year across Bedford Borough, enabling people who are not able to use conventional public transport to get around the area.

Bedford Mobility Hub - we launched this new initiative in September 2017 at Bedford bus station, enabling shoppers with a disability to hire mobility scooters and thereby increasing the accessibility of the town centre.

Community Rail Partnerships
- *see p.3 for extended feature*

Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre
- *see p.6 for extended feature*

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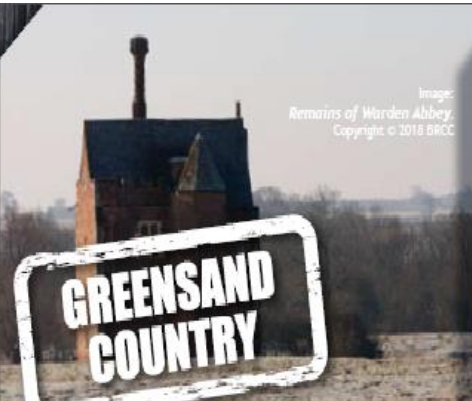


COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

Since BRCC took over the hosting of the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership in September 2016, CRP Officer Edna Waname has organised a number of community engagement activities such as a Fun Day and a 'Love Your Community Rail Competition' for local schools, which have enabled ALCRP to build an e-bulletin distribution list and also gather details of people interested in volunteering and station adoption.

ALCRP was runner-up at the National Community Rail Awards in the 'Involving children and Young People' category, for a project that asked students from Oaklands College to create a presentation on how best to rejuvenate passenger growth on the line - future plans include an Abbey Days Out promotion in conjunction with the college's design students.

ALCRP has also been lobbying hard on behalf of passengers, and a number of its requests were incorporated into the new franchise, including increased CRP funding and a service quality regime to improve the quality of stations, trains and customer service. In January 2017 it supported the launch of the Abbey Shuttle, a new bus service connecting St. Albans Abbey station with the city centre and St Albans City Station.



GREENSAND COUNTRY

In April 2017, a geophysical survey at the site of Warden Abbey commissioned by Old Warden History & Heritage Society revealed a plan of the claustral complex, previously unrecorded structures which are being analysed, as well as evidence of kilns. This enabled a reconstruction painting to be produced, providing a bird's eye view of what the Abbey would have looked like.

This was the first project to be funded by the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership (GCLP), led by BRCC with the Greensand Trust, which has secured £1.66m from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is supporting an array of exciting projects over 4 years, helping us to raise awareness of the hidden heritage of the Greensand Country and to reverse the gradual decline in the distinct character of this beautiful and loved landscape. The programme was formally launched in June 2017 by the Duke of Bedford at the Woburn Safari Lodge.



THE BRIDGE PROJECT

Stephen came to the Bridge project in Luton with a history of almost 20 years of drug and alcohol use. Having started volunteering at the project's café enterprise for just a few hours a week, he progressed from assisting with washing up to making breakfasts and lunches, and was trained as a barista. The skills and experience he has gained should help him to find paid employment within the catering industry.

Stephen is just one example of how The Bridge has helped people to recover from drug and alcohol use, by providing them with meaningful volunteering, training and employment opportunities within a number of linked social enterprises.

He says, "I can't believe what I am now capable of in such a short time. The café has given me confidence and the chance to make new friends. But more than that it gives structure to my day, a reason to get up and keeps me on track with my recovery."





How BRCC is helping to establish new settlements...

A hundred of the first new residents of the major King's Reach development may have been puzzled a few years ago to receive a cardboard treasure box with a lump of wax, with a request to return the box with hand-modelled 'wax treasures'. The response, the level of which surpassed expectations, formed the basis of a public art trail by artist Martin Heron - part of the Art in King's Reach programme managed by BRCC.

Bedfordshire continues to experience significant levels of housing growth, much of which has been delivered to date by the creation of entirely new communities such as King's Reach (an estate to the east of Biggleswade that will house 2,100 people when complete). The Local Plans currently being produced envisage several more such settlements being built over the next 20 years. BRCC has been working over a number of years to help these new communities to develop the essential elements that existing ones already possess, such as sense of place, identity, community participation, and the public realm.

BRCC was contracted by the King's Reach developers to manage three ambitious public art commissions to help make the development a place in which residents could take pride. Three artists (recruited through a national call) worked with the local community to gain ideas and inspirations for their work, as well as drawing from local heritage. They have also collaborated with the architects for the development to integrate their work into the street scene.

The resulting art works included street furniture designed by David Appleyard, and sculptures and artistic additions to community buildings created by Wendy Briggs on the theme of 'Growing Communities' - as well as Martin Heron's Treasure Chests. Central Bedfordshire Council recently applauded the programme as "real place making" that "will make a massive difference to the quality of the King's Reach development".

Green Spaces

Another vital component of sustainable communities, particularly in areas facing considerable housing pressures such as the Ivel Valley, is the provision of green networks and spaces for people and wildlife. BRCC helped to provide Green Infrastructure for King's Reach in the form of the Biggleswade Green Wheel and a community woodland at Jubilee Wood. We have also been working in Fairfield to produce a Green Infrastructure Plan as well as the Etonbury Green Wheel Masterplan, which will provide enhanced countryside access for the community and its neighbours in Arlesey and Stotfold.

Fairfield, a new community built around a historic hospital that was formerly within the parish of Stotfold, became a separate parish in 2013, and BRCC has further supported the new Parish Council in determining its future direction. We assisted in the production of a Parish Plan, and then a Neighbourhood Plan - which has now passed independent Examination and is on course to be the first approved Plan in Bedfordshire.

The Wixams

A bit further to the west, BRCC has had a long history of involvement in the Wixams development, which is already partly established but will continue to grow and evolve over the next 20 years. To -date we have had a role in community liaison; advising on Village Hall provision; and researching Community Transport needs. More recently we have been helping the local community to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme and to draw up its first ever parish plan; and we were commissioned by the developer to carry out a study into community infrastructure needs for the rest of the settlement.

i Cliff Andrews on (01234) 832617 or at cliffa@bedsrcc.org.uk

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Helping people to live independently within their communities...

An elderly couple with mobility issues in Eversholt met with a BRCC Community Agent, who helped them to apply successfully for a Blue Badge and Attendance Allowance (worth £55.65 per week) - they are also now able to access a range of carers' services and qualify for certain grants. As a result, they have greater economic well-being and independence, and can bring in more help around the house.

BRCC's Community Agents, which have operated across rural Bedford Borough for over 6 years, are increasingly starting to pop up in Central Bedfordshire - including Eversholt, where a 6-month pilot has been extended for further 12 months.

As well as providing 24 clients with one-to-one support, the Agent has established a monthly lunch group, enabling isolated residents to meet, engage with the wider community, hear talks and participate in activities. According to Eversholt Parochial Charity, which is funding the initiative, "Our Community Agent is doing a great job here and making a significant impact, particularly helping people access support and services which are improving their quality of life."

In Biggleswade a 12 month pilot funded by the Town Council was considered a great success with over 50 clients having more than 400 issues resolved, and the service has been extended. An older couple said that "Gill's help was very much appreciated and took a lot of our worries away - we will be forever grateful".

The Potton Community Agent (funded by the Potton Consolidated Charity) has established a programme of older people's outings and activities, including training in using tablet computers: people who initially shunned 'modern technology' are now banking and shopping online as well as Skyping and researching hobbies and leisure activities.

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We have now developed a similar model in urban areas, having won a Bedford Borough Council contract to develop Local Community Coordination. The aim of this approach is to prevent or delay entry to the care system by enabling people to be supported in the local community and maintain their independence for as long as possible. As well as providing advice and support on a range of issues, our four Local Community Coordinators (two full time and two part-time) can identify and meet gaps in local services and activities.

Soon after joining as part-time Local Community Coordinator for Queen's Park, Fsella Afzal-Pagliari identified there was a lack of gentle exercise classes available for women (existing provision generally consisted of high impact classes that were inappropriate for senior ladies and beginners). As a result of Fsella's intervention, the Council's Sports Development Team rolled out new gentle exercise classes, ideal for the large numbers of women in the area who had not undertaken formal exercise before. An official ladies' walking group has also started in Queen's Park. These physical activities will complement with other initiatives such as healthy eating to help people to maintain good health.

Fsella says "I have always enjoyed partnership work and wanting to make a difference in people's lives. I'm looking forward to developing this role and supporting people in the community, especially addressing the cultural needs of the diverse community of Queen's Park."

Meanwhile, Simon Gooch (full-time Coordinator for Kingsbrook and Cauldwell) has been working with the local health centre to identify and support patients who would like to get involved in their local community through volunteering or joining a local group. Those who have been supported have seen the benefit of being able to see the Local Community Coordinator at a familiar and trusted venue such as a health centre.



A really charming and intriguing historic survival, well interpreted by enthusiastic, welcoming & knowledgeable volunteers” - a typical visitor comment about Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre (managed by BRCC). The former Station House reopened in September 2013 as a Heritage Centre incorporating a Gift Shop, Meeting Room, Tea Room and three enterprise offices following a six-year restoration.

In addition to its regular displays, the Heritage Centre has recently hosted the Marston Vale Line 170th anniversary exhibition, entitled ‘Steam & Diesel Through Time’, containing a selection of models of steam & diesel locomotive/multiple units that have worked on the Line from the 20th century to the present; and two Brickworks Exhibitions based on an extensive collection of archives, photographs and ephemera connected with the brickworks that used to dominate the

Marston Vale landscape.

The Heritage Centre is run by a team of 29 volunteers from the Friends of Ridgmont Station, who are essential to its success and contributed 1,892 volunteer hours last year. According to one of the Mystery Shoppers from other museums in the East of England who made visits over the summer, “having a ‘personal tour’ led by a knowledgeable volunteer is about as good as it gets.” Many of the volunteers did not know each other before they started, but new friendships have since been formed.

According to volunteer and local resident David Brown, “it gives me great pleasure to see what was a sadly neglected semi-derelict building not only tastefully restored, but also evolved into a venue that attracts a variety of visitors to our village. I particularly enjoy meeting people from all walks of life, whether they be railway enthusiasts, local historians

or ladies meeting for afternoon tea in the splendid Tea Rooms. We’ve even had people pulling off the clogged up M1 looking for a ‘comfort stop’, staying for an hour or so to the traffic clears.”

The Heritage Centre is the flagship project of the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership (MVCRP), and has brought it a higher profile in the national Community Rail sector. Ridgmont station was recently featured as a case study in an Association of Community Rail Partnerships report on ‘Innovative community uses for railway stations’, as well as providing the base for a Department for Transport film on Community Rail. What is more, the Heritage Centre gives MVCRP a ‘shop window’ and a focal point for interaction with the public, including opportunities to engage with schools on educational visits by train.

Passenger journeys to Ridgmont have increased sharply since the Heritage Centre

opened: 27,748 were recorded in 2016/17, the second highest total during London Midland’s tenure of the franchise. The Centre has also received tremendous feedback from the general public, being awarded a Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence for the fourth consecutive year in 2017. The vast majority of respondents to a recent visitor survey were ‘very satisfied’ with their visit.

The long-term future looks positive, with exciting opportunities to increase the number of visitors once East West Rail services from Bedford to Oxford start operating in 2022. The whole area will be further developed as a transport interchange and logistics hub, providing opportunities to further increase passenger journeys to Ridgmont and improve facilities at the Centre.

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LEADER PROGRAMMES

Using European investment to enhance rural enterprise...

Clophill Eco Lodges, built by the Clophill Heritage Trust on the site of the Grade II* listed St Mary's Old Church, provide unique accommodation for up to 16 people together with a community space used for classes, meetings and corporate events.

The Trust offers regular 'Tower Tours' offering fantastic views from the church over the Greensand Ridge countryside, and a programme of events throughout the year including open air performances, open days, guided tours and walks, bushcraft sessions and monthly Sunday teas.

The Eco Lodges were made possible by a LEADER grant of £165,226 in 2012 from the Greensand Ridge Local Action Group (LAG), managed by BRCC. LEADER is a bottom-up approach to awarding European rural development funding, that aims to build sustainable local rural economies based on the cooperation of economic, social and environmental interests. Five years on, it is clear that the Eco Lodges have made a significant contribution to the local community and visitor economy, as well as helping to safeguard the heritage of the Old Church.

Other LEADER-funded projects in the area are also thriving. The Old Piggery Bed & Breakfast in Haynes is enjoying high occupancy rates for its 8 rooms, with visitors from as far afield as Hong Kong and America - in order to meet demand, two luxury yurts were opened in 2015. Love My Chillies Limited is now able to supply millions of chillies per year to major supermarkets, making Blunham the chilli capital of the UK. The RIBA-award-winning Gamlingay EcoHub, "the greenest community building in the country", now employs 5 people and houses the Parish Council office, library, and a commercial nursery. Phase 2 has recently been completed, including a Youth Wing, recreation area (includes performance space and skate street), garages, landscaping and car park.



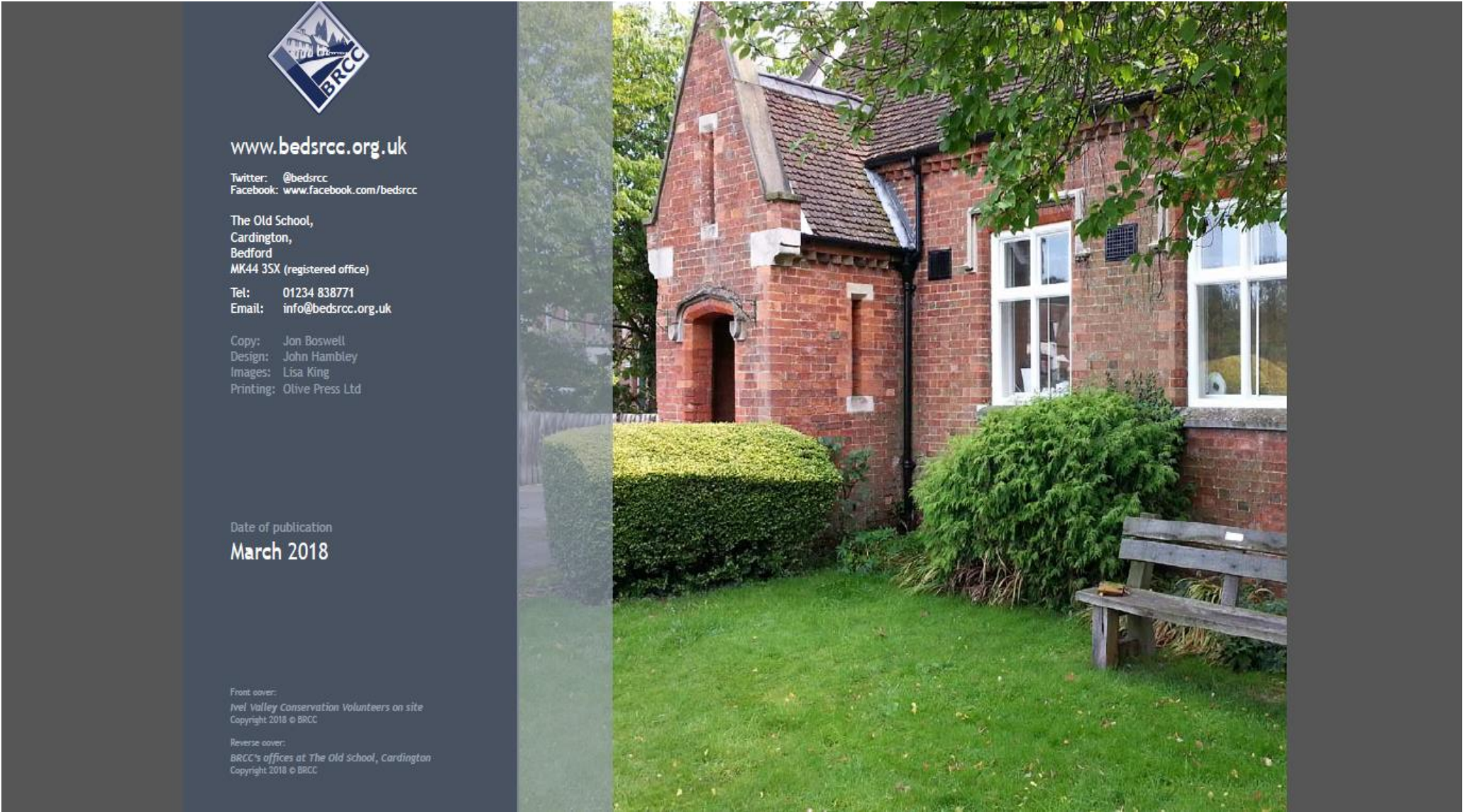
A new LEADER funding round started in 2015, and the Greensand Ridge LAG has a total of up to £1.2m to invest in projects in the area until end 2020 - we also have a new LAG, Beds & Hunts Claylands, with £1.3m. The priorities are supporting micro and small businesses; increasing farm and forestry productivity; farm diversification; rural tourism and services; and cultural and heritage activity. Applicants can typically apply for up to 40% of projects costing between £25,000 and £200,000.

A range of projects have already had funding approved, for example state-of-the-art 'minimum till drill' which will enable a farm holding to develop a highly conservation-focused approach to farming. The drill will utilise a zero tillage system incorporating different cover crops and low disturbance drilling to increase the productivity and health of the soils, whilst also providing ecological benefits for farmland and ground nesting birds. Other projects include 'glamping' accommodation; a café kitchen extension; and firewood processing equipment.

Previous applicants have returned for more funding: Gamlingay is creating a virtual Business Hub that will provide a fully featured app for use on mobile devices, which will deliver a service directory, discussion forum, news feed and job search pages, together with information about premises to let and potential business development sites within the area.

With the future of rural development funding uncertain post-Brexit, now is the time for rural businesses and communities to take advantage.

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Wootton Community First Responders

Wootton Community First Responders are a team of four volunteers who respond to certain 999 calls on behalf of the East of England Ambulance Service. Equipped with a defibrillator and oxygen, the CFRs who live in Wootton can be on scene very quickly to provide lifesaving skills prior to the ambulance arriving. CFR's respond in their own vehicles and must drive in accordance with the highway code but may claim exemption from some parking regulations.

The team primarily cover Wootton, but can also be called to surrounding villages, such as Marston, Stewartby, Shelton, Cranfield and just in to Kempston. The team now have two kits and two phones, which helps us to provide more cover and makes life a little easier when swapping kits over.

During 2017 the team were on duty for 2673 hours, attended 82 calls and provided clinical assistance at 64 of these calls (first on scene). Up until the end of March this year the team were on duty for 856 hours, attended 39 calls and provided clinical assistance at 36 of these calls. At present the majority of our team work office hours or similar, as such we typically have someone on duty almost every evening and overnight, then normally the majority of the weekends are covered around the clock.

Wootton Defibrillator

In addition to being the CFR team coordinator, I also carry out monthly checks on the defibrillator located at the village hall on Church Rd. In the last year the pads and battery have both been replaced, so the unit is healthy and ready to go. The defibrillator hasn't been deployed since I've been looking at it. However, whilst recently attending a CFR call a local resident who made the 999 call told me the 999 operator had asked him if he could get the local defibrillator as a precaution, but he was unaware that there was one in the village, fortunately I arrived on scene as the operator was explaining the location to him.

The defibrillator is located within a secure box and the code to the box will be given by the 999 operator.

Report on Wootton Upper School for Wootton Parish General Meeting
Wednesday 2nd May 2018

The last twelve months have been very positive for the upper school; the school achieved amongst the very best GCSE results in Bedfordshire. GCSE English and GCSE Science results were the best in Bedfordshire. Schools and academies are now partly judged on a measure called Progress 8. The school achieved a score of 0.13; this was the second highest in Bedford Borough - behind Sharnbrook and higher than all Central Bedfordshire Schools. In November the school was inspected by Ofsted and was judged good, having previously been judged as requires improvement in 2015. We are now determined to continue to build on this grading in our “*pursuit of excellence*”.

Most Sixth Form teaching is based at Kimberley College. The college also had a very good year; once again it was listed as one of the top 20 sixth form colleges in the UK in the Sunday Times List of Colleges with the highest proportion of students gaining at least 2 A and 1 B grades at A level in facilitating subjects.

In sport, the current Year 11 rugby team won their county tournament for the third year running. In the arts, the production of the “In the Heights” played to packed houses in Wootton before it went on tour to Bremen last November.

The school continues to seek to improve and develop further its links with the local community; we look forward to another Senior Citizens Tea Party in the summer term and enjoyed the opportunity to provide entertainment at the Bob Lunnis afternoon tea in the autumn.

Links with other schools in the area are strong; we have worked hard to create strong working relationships with the new Headteachers at Holywell and Marston Vale and were delighted by the Ofsted Report that Holywell received. We were also delighted to congratulate Wootton Lower on its excellent Ofsted outcome. As a family of schools this year we have been working as a group to produce common approaches to how we maximise pupil attendance in our schools. We have also started working together to support pupils who are designated as disadvantaged. These are really positive developments and the collective expertise the schools bring together is helping all of us individually.

Almost £1m was spent during the year refurbishing the school’s science laboratories which were desperate need of improvement. Much of this money came from Section 106 [S106] funding from Central Bedfordshire Council, but a small proportion was funded by S106 Bedford Borough Council funding. The Academy Trust has also spent

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its own money in improving security of the site; the new exterior fence and gates have massively improved safety on the site.

The new footpath at the front of the school and the puffin crossing are great improvements in terms of securing pupil and adult safety. Thank you to all those in the village who have supported this development.

The school has developed links with the housing developments providing information on Wootton Upper School and copies of our brochures and newsletters at each sales office. We greatly value the opportunities the village offers us to communicate with villagers including Wootton News and also to attend the annual general meeting of the Parish Council.

In terms of wider strategic change, the Trust consulted on whether it should have two-points of entry from 2019. A report has been written following the consultation. The Trust has delayed a decision as it is clear that it makes more sense to ensure any change, if made, takes place - where possible - in co-ordination with other schools in the Wootton, Marston and Cranfield area. Regular meetings with these schools Head teachers and Governing Bodies are taking place.

After detailed consideration the Trust has determined NOT to merge with Sharnbrook Academy Federation but remain an independent Multi Academy Trust. In April, the chair of the Trust, Simon O'Toole, stood down, as did Professor Tom Stephenson, Pro Vice Chancellor at Cranfield University. Iain Sibbald, Cranfield University's Director of Finance, is the new Cranfield Trustee. The new chair of the board is Peter Haddon, until recently Head of Holywell Middle School.

Our Local Governing Body [LGB] has gone from strength to strength and we are very fortunate to have a number of Wootton residents on that body to both support and challenge the school. Cllr John Wheeler is the vice chair of the LGB; Tracy Corby is our Special Educational Needs Link Governor; Lesley Noble, who is a secondary trained English teacher is one of our parent governors.

Applications for places at the school are buoyant; 304 offers of places have been made for Year 9 in September. 276 children are in the current Year 9 and 293 in the current Year 10. Applications for Year 12 at Kimberley College are in excess of 450; this is likely to lead to 325 pupils starting Year 12 [quite a lot of pupils apply to several colleges]. There are 232 pupils in the current Year 12; therefore, if normal retention rates are followed there will be approximately 215 pupils in Year 13 from September 2018.

In terms of next steps, we are keen to discuss with other groups in the village how we can work even more closely together for the benefit of all Wootton children and village residents. We are also keen to strengthen further our links with other schools. More immediately, we are working hard to recruit staff for September. There is a

very real recruitment crisis which is not being written about in the press at the moment.

In conclusion, Wootton Academy Trust would like to express its thanks to the Parish Council and many other individuals in the village for all their support and interest both in Wootton Upper School and also Kimberley College.

M. Gleeson
2nd May 2018

PPG Annual Report for Parish Council 2018

The PPG has had a difficult year. Following the very sudden and unexpected death of our chairperson, Val Illingworth, we decided we had to try and keep going in her memory. With that in mind we still attended the Fun Fest, holding a bric-a-brac stall along with our usual quiz which always seems to be popular. Thank you to the Funfest committee as it is always a great day when all the village can get out and meet one another.

During the year we have had some people join and then leave the committee for personal reasons so have struggled to maintain our monthly meetings. We agreed to meet bi-monthly but with so many changes happening in the NHS we have now resumed our monthly meetings plus recruited three new members.

Our patient numbers have now reached over 6500 and climbing because of the new builds happening around the surgery. The prefab is showing its age but any chance of getting a permanent build keeps getting pushed back because of funding and NHS changes. As soon as we think we are getting answers the goalposts get moved again so we have no idea at present what the future of the surgery will be. We would welcome any support from the parish council in helping to keep a surgery in Wootton.

Since the last annual WPC meeting we have been very busy here at Bizzy Bees Pre-School we have a new management team consisting of Nikki an experienced Manger who relocated from Brighton, Jo Hazel has progressed to deputy Manger after being with Bizzy Bees for over 9 years and Tracy Jones is now our Admin Manager keeping everything running smoothly in the office.

Bizzy Bees is a charity managed by our management team and a committee of trustees (mostly made up of parents), we would also welcome trustees from within our community to join.

Last summer we fixed the guttering in our undercover area and WPC fixed the broken tiles on the roof so we now it is watertight again, we plan to continue to improve our outside area by re-skimming the concrete floor to alleviate the water pooling that occurs, repainting the metal posts and look to see what changes can be made to our enclosed outside garden area.

Our Scarecrow festival last October was really successful, raising over £600 profit for the pre-school. We loved the support we got from all the whole community with entries from Wootton Lower School, Forest School, Sheldon Lower School, WI, Boys Brigade, Girl's Brigade, Pathfinders to name a few, attendance from the whole village was amazing, we hope our next one planned for 13th October this year is just as successful, we would like to continue to expand this by asking for entries from the upper school and middles schools and reaching out further in the community and doing individual winner again. (it is not to earlier to start planning your entry!)

In January we closed Bizzy Bees as a charity and transferred to Bizzy Bees CIO affording all the committee members better financial protection, as a CIO the charity itself can enter into contracts rather than the committee members directly taking that financial responsibility. This took a lot of hard work and involved re-registering with Ofsted and many other things.

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Our Easter Eggstravagansa in March raised just under £500 profit we had guest appearances from Wycombe petting farm and our Easter egg hunt.

Look out for us at the May fayre and Wootton Funfest. Our new mascot Phoebe Bee should be making an appearance!

Thank you to both the MHC & WPC supporting us in our many requests for post boxes, approval of signage and working hard to get the floor done it looks amazing. We are looking forward to coming back after the summer holidays when the inside of the hall will be repainted.

Appendix 7

Report for Wootton Parish Council meeting - Wednesday 2nd May 2018.

Last year was the 182nd year of the church being built, and the 192nd year of the Baptist Church in Wootton.

We still believe and preach the same principals of the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ as are set out in the original Trust Deed of the Church set out in 1836.

Our congregations have increased during the year and we again have a small Sunday School each week at the same time as the morning service. Unusually for this day and age we still have a well-attended Evening Service.

The young people's work is still thriving but not large. In it we have fun and games and craft work, some refreshments as the children come straight from school. It always includes a Bible story with the use of a computer.

We have recently done two courses called 'Christianity Explored' and Life Explored' which have resulted in several new people coming to the Church. It has been a good year for the Church, and we feel greatly blessed and encouraged and hope that this new year will see further growth in the Church.

The Coffee Morning still continues weekly on Tuesday mornings and about 30-40 people come each week. Many of them have no church connections and like to come and have refreshments and more importantly to meet with other people to chat and get up to date with what is happening in the village. It is a good place for new people to meet the village people.

We have a few empty seats still on Sundays, and as it is a place for Public Worship, you are all invited to come and join us any time you wish.

I would just like to acknowledge the help that John Wheeler has given us in supplying us with some new arm chairs for the church. (They are not for sleeping in) We have some older people who find it easier to get up from an arm chair than an ordinary chair. Thank you.

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At St. Mary's we have had a busy and exciting year!

In June we ran a weekend of events for the whole village called STORY. We had chat show style evenings, we gave away a lot of pastries and smoothies to the students of Wootton Upper on their way to school, we had an afternoon tea party, a BBQ and lots more.

We have various regular events running which we hope provide something for everyone. Our Lunch Club for the 50's and over meets monthly on a Monday lunchtime, with around 60-70 people attending for a hot meal and friendship. Just after Easter we held a two day event for the same age group again with 70 people spending the day together eating, making crafts, researching family trees and lots more!

We also run lots of events for young people and this year are once again looking forward to our Summer Holiday Club on 21-24 August called 'The Heroes Academy' – think all things superhero! We usually have around 100 children attending and have a great week of all sort of games, silliness and Bible teaching.

Our Wrigglers group runs each Monday morning for parents and toddlers. We also have a monthly group for dad's and their 0-12 year olds.

A month ago our Middle School aged children's group, called Pathfinders, went away for three nights, this is always the highlight of the Pathfinders year. This year the theme was the Wild West. We have just celebrated Easter with great thankfulness for our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. If you can think of any ways in which we can support the villagers of Wootton, we'd love to know.

Diane Murray
(on behalf of St. Mary's Wootton PCC)

WOOTTON NEW LIFE METHODIST CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT YE 31 AUGUST 2017

The passage of scripture that came to mind for us as I write my final introduction to an annual report as minister of Wootton New Life Methodist Church is this:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

¹² Brothers and sisters, we ask you to show appreciation to those who are working hard among you and those who are your leaders as they guide and instruct you in the Lord - *they are priceless*. ¹³ When you think about them, let it be with great love in your heart because of all the work they have done. Let peace live *and reign* among you.

¹⁴ Brothers and sisters, we strongly advise you to scold the rebels *who devote their lives to wreaking havoc*, to encourage the downcast, to help the *sick and weak*, and to be patient with all of them. ¹⁵ Make sure no one returns evil for evil, but always pursue what is good as it affects one another *in the church* but also all people. ¹⁶ Celebrate always, ¹⁷ pray constantly, and ¹⁸ give thanks to God no matter what circumstances you find yourself in. (This is God's will for all of you in Jesus the Anointed.) ¹⁹ Don't suppress the Spirit. ²⁰ Don't downplay prophecies. ²¹ Take a close look at everything, *test it*, then cling to what is good. ²² Put away every form of evil.

²³ So now, may the God of peace *make you His own completely and set you apart from the rest*. May your spirit, soul, and body be preserved, kept intact and wholly free from any sort of blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus the Anointed. ²⁴ For the God who calls you is faithful, and He can be trusted to make it so.

The Voice

It sums up for me what I believe to be at the heart of all we are called to do as individuals and as a church. I am hugely grateful to God for the faith, commitment, effort and sheer hard work that is represented within these pages and carried out by you as we seek to minister to those who live in our growing community.

Personal highlights for me have been

- experiencing the joy of Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church with many children and their parents and occasionally grandparents and a committed team of leaders/helpers,
- seeing new people coming along to worship, growing in faith and taking part in the life of the church,
- working ecumenically with the other churches in Wootton and Stewartby with prayers during Lent, a stall at the Fun Day, the open-air service held at the Lower School on Harris Way
- receiving Mitch and Chris Randall into membership
- and, more recently the baptism of Luna Mamanemuno with so many of her family present and enriching our worship

I pray that the ministry and mission of this church goes from strength to strength. Know that my love and prayers are with you.

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).

The appointment of the stewards and the leadership team is confirmed each year at the AGM. During 2017 Dave Shore stood down from his role as Steward and also Youth Hub leader. We are grateful to Dave for his service in these roles.

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.

The Methodist Church is Britain's fourth largest Christian denomination and part of the worldwide Methodist family of over 60 million committed members and a further 20 million adherents. As per the latest count in 2015, there are 188,000 people who have made and sustained a commitment to Christian discipleship within the Methodist Church of Great Britain and are active members of a local Methodist church.

On 1st November 2017 our membership total was 43 and an estimate of the many other people who are part of our church or with whom we have contact came to 248. I believe there may be many more but it's hard to keep track!

Some of those people may say: I go to church so surely I already belong as a member of the congregation?

Yes, you do belong. But the Methodist Church also offers you the chance to show another step of commitment by being 'confirmed' and 'received into membership'. This means that you make promises - these are the same promises that are made when someone is baptised. A prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit in that person's life is also said in both services. Becoming a 'member' is a way of saying that you belong to and support your local Methodist Church and that you want to do this.

The promise of mutual support is one of Methodism's strengths. When you become a member a pastoral visitor or a class leader is responsible for visiting you and offering spiritual support, encouragement and challenge.

I encourage those who are not yet members to think and pray about whether God is calling you to make that commitment and those of you who are members to think and pray about how you might encourage others to take that step.

(Caroline Weaver)

WORSHIP AND TEACHING

Sunday morning worship

For many years Wootton New Life Church has attended the New Wine Summer Gatherings for Worship and Teaching. It is always the aim to bring back to the Church Family anything that God is saying to us. Although there is a difference between worshipping with thousands of others at a Summer Festival and in our village Church setting each week, we still worship the same God and seek to hear Him speak to us.

In July 2017 the main speaker at New Wine was the veteran RT Kendall and the focus of his teaching was 'Word and Spirit – the Church God wants', balancing openness to the leading of God's Spirit with faithfulness to His Word. We headed up our Autumn Teaching Series as Word and Spirit to reinforce this truth.

Our Teaching Series in the Connexional Year 2016-17 included our Seasonal Teaching in Advent (Characteristics to seek as we prepared for Christmas) and Lent (The "I am" sayings of Jesus). At other points we studied the Book of Jonah and our Mission Statement. In June we joined the national Bible Month to study the Letter of James and in our Summer Café Services we looked at the Life of Peter using the holiday club material 'Seaside Rock'.

Our style of worship is informal and interactive and we hope that people of all ages feel welcome. Our Group for Children is now called S-Club and our All Age Gatherings are now termed Café Services.

Our weekly Worship would not be possible without the dedicated commitments of a team of people and we are grateful to those who set out the Church, provide flowers, welcome others, serve coffee, operate the AV system, play in the band, lead worship and preach. Speak to David and Suzy if you feel prompted to help in any of these areas.

(Kath Pawlett)

Sunday morning children and young people's work

In my report last year I reminded you of our vision & strategy where we say as a church that everyone matters from the youngest to the oldest. I asked you to not accept the status quo of only a few children coming to church on an irregular basis. I asked us all invite families to join us in our morning worship and to pray and in particular that I could report that there had been growth. Alleluia, God is good.

During the year to 31 August 17 we have had the privilege of having more children join us in our Sunday morning worship and they have come on a more regular basis.

We have now rebranded our Sunday school and call the group S Club. We meet whenever there isn't all age worship.

I would like to thank Luke Tresidder who continued to help throughout the year, he was a real blessing and will be missing him as he went to university in Southampton in September 18. Carey Miller continues to lead on a regular basis. I would also like to thank Hannah Short who also helps us.

S Club continues to meet in The Hub and always follows the same theme as the adult worship. We learn about God, Jesus and what it means to be a follower through the use of modern technology (film clips from YouTube), reading stories, painting and other crafts. We sometimes play games such as giant snakes and ladders (showing that there are consequences of taking the wrong path!) or use the parachute which certainly demonstrates that working together helps!

The age range is wide from a baby to a teenager. I personally see this as real blessing as they are able to learn from each other rather than just the leaders. Yes this gives us challenges as topics and activities need to be accessible to everyone but then our overriding aim is to let the children know they are loved not only by the church family but by God and Jesus. We provide a safe place where they can be and express themselves at the same time as understanding that we are one big group where everyone matters. Being ourselves and remaining true to our values means this is very rewarding and more importantly fun.

We have also seen more families and children come to our all age services as members or both the Girls and Boys Brigade have come with their parents to both parade services and our normal all age worship.

Children have so much to teach us about faith. They hear, they believe, they react. As they get older they challenge, they consider, they decide for themselves. I am always amazed at some of the things they say and how they have a sense of belonging to our church family.

Please continue to pray for this exciting and rewarding work.

(Suzy Goodson)

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 in The Hub. It is a time of fellowship and Bible study mixed with singing and laughs. Everyone is welcome to come and join.

- **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 and now meet at 7.15pm by sharing in a light meal, usually home made soup and salad. The Bible is full of stories of Jesus eating with his followers as he teaches them about what it means to be a follower of him. We believe this is an excellent model. Feed the stomach, feed the mind, feed the soul.

We share what's been going on in our lives during the past few weeks over our meal before moving to our study/ more formal discussion time at about 8.15 pm. We close with a time of prayer before finishing somewhere between 9.30pm and 9.45pm.

Whilst we have looked at particular books of the bible we now mostly follow on from our Sunday Morning themes because this allows us to go deeper or pick up on things that we thought of as a result of what we heard or what happened. We do this in such a way that it doesn't matter if people aren't always able to come to church on Sunday morning.

We had the great privilege of having Dan and then his wife Dawn join our group as he came from America to work at Cranfield University as he researched his book on asparagus. We were blessed as we were able to share and grow together as we explored what is meant to live our lives as Christians and in particular as we looked at the book of James.

There is an open invitation to anyone who wants to come along on a Wednesday evening to explore God's word in more depth. Please free to invite your friends and neighbours. It is not just a group for those who regularly come on Sunday mornings.

Please see David or myself for details.

(Suzy Goodson)

PASTORAL CARE

As a relatively small Church family we seek to know and care for one another in a natural family way. During the year September 2016 - 17 there have been a great range of needs, joys and sorrows. Some have moved on and others have moved in. A recent Teaching Series about the Culture of the Church began with the Culture of Welcome, and while constantly challenged by this, it is always our aim.

In addition to our informal caring we are grateful to our team of Pastoral Visitors for their care within our Fellowship. Each Pastoral Visitor has their own way of supporting those on their Pastoral List. In September 2017 most of our Pastoral Visitors were able to share in the Safeguarding Training Day at Wootton.

Please do see Kath Pawlett if you would like to know more about the Pastoral Groups.

(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.

(David Goodson)

MISSION AND OUTREACH

The Hub

2017 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 God's fellowship is much in abundance.

An additional coffee machine was donated to the church for use on those Sundays breakfast is served; the coffee machine sits on the breakfast tables with the thought process being to take the pressure of those serving coffee behind the counter.

Sunday breakfast continues to be hugely popular with a slight change in the food offering to make it more 'Continental'. Thanks go to David, Gary and Jeremy for their support in producing, setting up and serving of this.

The Hub 2017 daily numbers were slightly down on 2016 but the average spend remains the same.

Thanks should also be given to Gary Chester who as our resident photographer regularly 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).

Gods Spirit is felt by the many groups / parents who use the church with drinks always available for them.

(Jeremy Sear)

Ladies Ministry

We have continued to meet on a quarterly basis for Girls' Night Out on Friday evenings where the aim is to share, talk and eat. Thank you to Callum Pope as he cooked us all an amazing barbeque at our summer gathering. All ladies and their female friends are welcome to join us.

Some of us went to a New Wine Women's Day at All Saints Church, Milton, Cambridge in April 17 when amongst other inspirational ladies we heard Becky Harcourt, the wife of Paul who is the leader of New Wine, give her testimony. The whole day was incredibly powerful. We listened to women sharing how they had overcome personal tragedy including bereavement and abuse whilst finding God and experiencing healing which didn't always happen at once and actually was a continual process. Forgiveness of themselves and others featured in their testimonies.

Listening to others' stories sometimes proved painful and brought up issues within our own lives where we needed spiritual healing. Some of us were able to receive this from both our own group and those on the event's prayer support team.

It was an amazing day and I for one will never forget that day and will always be grateful to those who shared it with me. It was very special.

Please look at for details of other ladies events. If you see any advertised and think we should go as church please let me know.

(Suzy Goodson)

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.

On 31 October 16 we held an ecumenical Halloween Alternative at the new lower school in Harris Way. The school hall was packed. This year we went big and bold and hired Steve the Juggler to lead the event where children got the chance to learn circus skills. Steve gave a talk whilst juggling (sometimes with knives!!) as he spoke about how Jesus came to save us, he was and is the light of the world and that we didn't have to fear the dark. The children enjoyed pizza and chips before going home with a party bag generously supplied by the Rainbows. This was a fantastic village event organised by the churches within Wootton and Stewartby.

We continued with 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 1.30-3.00pm in Term-Time. Carey Miller and Kath Pawlett remain the 'face of the Churc' on alternate weeks in the group and we are grateful for Nicola Tresidder's help setting up on some Thursdays.

The Christmas Party is always a popular event with a welcome visit from Father Christmas bringing Christmas books to share with the children. We are always a fluid group and at the end of the summer term 2017 we said Goodbye to a number of children moving on to school. Since then there has been a growth in the number of babies in the Baby Corner. With new families moving into Wootton we are glad to be a place where people can meet others in similar family situations and we have been pleased to see some of our families at Rock & Roll, Messy Church.

Do keep spreading the word about our group to any families you meet with little ones and pray for our families. If you would like to help on Thursdays please speak to Carey or Kath, as a second person would mean we could spend more time in conversation as well as sharing the practical tasks.

(Carey Miller and Kath Pawlett)

Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church

Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church continued to meet most months during 2016 – 17. 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 had breakfast. Thank you to everyone who helps either on the day or providing food.

Rock 'n' Roll also met to have picnics in the park during the summer holidays.

Thanks must go to Jo Pope and Celia Shore for starting Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church, both Jo & Celia have decided that they are no longer able to lead this group. A number of others have got together to make sure we are able to continue to meet but we really need one or two people to take the lead and co-ordinate this valuable group. If you are able to help in anyway please speak to David.

(David Goodson)

Youth Hub

The Youth Hub which started in September 2015 continued to meet on alternate Friday evenings during term time throughout 2016 - 17 with assistance from the Circuit Youth Workers (Monica & Rebecca). Attendances averaged between 10 to 12 each night with those attending willing to invite along friends.

Some of the group also attended the monthly evening Circuit Youth Services & a Circuit residential time away at Feldon Lodge.

For the first time, some of the group attended the national youth event, Soul Survivor which in August 2017 was held at the East of England Showground near Peterborough & so was much easier to access than when the event was previously held in Somerset.

Sadly the group has now finished at the end of 2017 due to lack of Leaders to run the Youth Hub. However there are some of the group who still attend the Circuit Youth Services, attend residential & are hoping to go again to Soul Survivor in August 2018.

We are still keeping in contact with some of the Youth Hub group & will continue to do as part of our strategy as set out in the updated Church Mission 20:20 Statement which states:

"We need to prayerfully consider how we can strengthen our non-uniform work with young people and continue to 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".

(Brian Pawlett)

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

Following on from our encouraging 1st session, numbers in the BB were bolstered with 14 members transferring from 2nd Bedford (which closed August 2016). Unfortunately most of the youngest did not stay as the year went on, with the journey being too difficult/too late for them to stay up. This was a little disheartening, however, the older boys did & that allowed us to start our older age groups for school yrs 7-13.

As a result of that, we entered Luke and Michael into the National 10 Pin Bowling Championships, although we only had a team of 2 (rather than 3 bowlers), so were always at a disadvantage. They made it through the group stages and then through the knockouts to reach the Grand Final, where they won our first National Trophy. A 4th Place.

We were also delighted to welcome Daniel Young (from 2nd) who also transferred also to us, and immediately headed up our Junior Section.

We further welcomed 4 parent helpers to the staff team, Rebecca Lant & Lucy Reader (Anchor Boys), Helena Cooper (Juniors) and Liz Healy (Company/Seniors).

Likewise the GB, welcomed Cat Godfrey to help Suzy in the Juniors, along with parent helper, Amelia Brown and youth helper Ellie Nicholson also joining the staff team. Numbers have remained steady in the GB. The Explorer section is still a little light, although the Juniors have been thriving. The target next session is to bolster the staff team further and then add the top age group in GB also.

Both BB & GB enjoyed sleepovers leading up to parade services, this saw good numbers at the respective parades. A number of children from Brigades have also started attending WNL Rock 'n' Roll Messy Church.

2 Boys (Luke & Michael) and Allan & Nicola attended the MK Summer Camp at York. Further camps are being planned for 2018.

We raised £150 for the RNLI (from our Pirates Night), £100 for BDCPS, carried out Litter Picking around the village, joined in events such as Operation Christmas Child & Macmillan Cancer care.

We acquired a lot of resources from 2nd Bedford BB, which has given us a strong platform to run our programs. That was further complimented by the acquisition of Marching Band equipment (hoping to start Summer 2018) and we received a grant of £1000 from the Gale Trust, from which we purchased Puppets and Staging, to allow us to start a Puppet Ministry (also 2018)

We have now surpassed 50 members. This is very encouraging, and with the village growing demonstrates that a bright future awaits.

(Allan & Nicola Tresidder, BB & GB Captains)



Open the Book

The Open the Book Team continue to lead Assemblies at Wootton Lower School (Bedford Road Site) on Wednesday Mornings. The Team is led by Margaret & John Robertson from St Mary's and we are glad to work together as local Christians. Although established in Bedford in 1999, Open the Book merged with the Bible Society in 2015. The aim is simply to present Bible Stories from the Old and New Testament on a three year cycle, using the scripts from Bob Hartman's Lion Storyteller Bible, using good props and costumes and letting the stories speak for themselves. These presentations are Ofsted Approved and we are grateful for the welcome we receive at Wootton Lower School. We are often encouraged when we meet children out of school who are able to tell back to us the stories they have seen.

Please pray that the children will see and hear something about God's love in these stories and will at some point in their lives want to know more of what they mean. At present there is a need to increase our team and also find a new home for the costumes that have been well housed and cared for by Maureen Copperwheat for both the Wootton and the Lower Shelton Teams.

Do speak to us if you would like to know more or can help in any way.

(Kath & Brian Pawlett)

FINANCE & GIVING

1 Chronicles 29:6 - 9

Then the leaders of the fathers' houses, leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly. They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord, into the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the Lord; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

The Leaders in this passage displayed a right attitude towards their money by giving willingly to God's work. This same attitude is described by Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 9 verse 7 which describes how God loves a cheerful giver. When we are generous because we are thankful, this can inspire others.

This hopefully can inspire us in our future giving. As you will see from the attached 2016 - 17 accounts we made a surplus which will we need to draw on in the future due to various pieces of work arising from the quinquennial inspection over the coming 3 - 4 years, the potential loss of letting income if the Parish Council moves its office to the new Community Centre & upgrading work which is needed to our acoustics in the Church.

In respect of the latter the Church Council has decided to have a Gift Day to help fund the cost of acoustic panels for the Church. Our current estimate is that this will cost approximately £11,500. When that work is completed then a further assessment will be made as to whether to upgrade our multimedia sound system.

Please consider prayerfully the response to the Gift Day & in respect of any giving, where able please also consider Gift Aid to enhance our income. Also if possible I would encourage using Standing Orders for giving as this enables easier control of the budget.

Thank You

(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)

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

woottonnewlife.org.uk

Wootton Tang Soo Do (Karate)

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my thanks to the Village Hall Committee for the use of such a great facility. I have been in charge of running the club since September 2017, but have experience of visiting the facility over the past 10 years or so and on each occasion I have found it to be very clean and well maintained. You may be shocked to know that some facilities I have trained in are visibly clean, however, on using, prove to be grubby and dirty.

My booking provides people with an opportunity to get physically fit, meet new people, have fun, but most importantly learn new skills that could protect them. A large proportion of class attendees are Wootton locals and I am very proud to serve the community in a small way, despite living in Bromham 😊. The class runs well and I have a number of senior belt helpers who live in Wootton, the proximity of a spacious car parking facility is a real bonus as my students often have large bags to carry with all of the associated protective gear required to undertake martial arts training.

As most of you will hopefully know, most martial arts train barefoot, this is where the cleanliness of the facility is paramount. On many occasions, in different halls, I have left with a filthy uniform from exercising on the floor and extremely dirty feet. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the caretaking and cleaning staff for taking excellent care of the facility and providing us with a clean and well maintained training facility. We were lucky enough to take part in the Wootton Fun Day last year and some of our members laid a wreath at the Remembrance Parade. I hope to maintain a productive relationship with the committee for many years to come.

Very best wishes
Pat Bradley
Wootton Tang Soo Do