



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



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WoottonParishCouncilBedfordshire

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 7pm at Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way, 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. The Annual Parish Meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June (Local Government Act 1972, Sch12, Part III, p14(1)). The parish council chairman calls the meeting and if present, chairs the meeting (Local Government Act 1972, Sch12, Part III, p15(1) + p17(1). If the parish council chairman 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, Sch12, Part III, p17(1) + (3). Parish meetings have a general power to discuss parish affairs and pass resolutions, however there is no prescribed format for this meeting and its recommendations are not binding on the parish council. Any such recommendations can, if appropriate to do so, be taken forward for consideration by the parish council or any of its committees. 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; Bob Hensher, Member Wootton Parish Council; Keith Randell, Member Wootton Parish Council, Speed Watch, Wootton Vale Healthy Living Centre, Patient Participation Group; Bob Wallace, Member Wootton Parish Council, Wootton Village Hall; John Wheeler, Member Wootton Parish Council and Bedford Borough Councillor (including Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Fostering Panel, Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for Primary and Secondary Education and Schools Forum), Alderman Newton's Educational Foundation, Bedford Sports Foundation, East Anglian Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, Local Authority Governor – Wootton Lower School, Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity, St. John's Hospital Trust, Vice-Chairman of Governors – Wootton Upper School, Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities; Malcolm Chalmers, Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme and Wootton Speed Watch; Rob Stanton, Wootton Baptist Church; Tristan Tyerman, Prospective Member Wootton Parish Council and candidate for Bedford Borough Councillor in the upcoming elections; Gary Williams, Wootton Baptist Church.

Agenda no	Agenda item title	Comments
APM23/001	Apologies for absence. Gerald Bygraves, Vice-Chairman Wootton Parish Council; Stuart O'Dell, Member Wootton Parish Council; Diane Murray, St. Mary's Church; Sue Randell, Wootton WI.	Noted for the minutes.
APM23/002	Minutes of the previous meeting. <i>Minutes are published on the Wootton Parish Council website:</i> <i>http://woottonpc.bedsparishes.gov.uk/.</i> Members are asked to receive and adopt the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 20 th April 2022.	The meeting agreed the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 20 th April 2022.
APM23/003	To receive the following reports from Wootton Parish Council. - Chairman's report. - Financial report.	It was noted both the Chairman's report and Responsible Financial Officer's financial report would be detailed in the 2023 Annual Report.
APM23/004	To receive reports from outside bodies. - Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor Wheeler; - Bedfordshire Police; - Forest of Marston Vale.	Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor John Wheeler It was noted the Borough Councillor's report would be detailed in the 2023 Annual Report, however BBCllr Wheeler confirmed Wootton would move to a two-tier educational system in 2025.
APM23/005	To receive reports and/or accounts from village/local organisations.	<u>St. Mary's Church</u> Refer to Appendix One. <u>Wootton Baptist Church</u> Refer to Appendix Two. <u>Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme</u> Refer to Appendix Three. <u>Wootton Speed Watch</u> Refer to Appendix Four. <u>Wootton Village Hall</u> Refer to Appendix Five. <u>Wootton WI</u>

		Refer to Appendix Six.
APM23/006	General Parish Issues.	None.

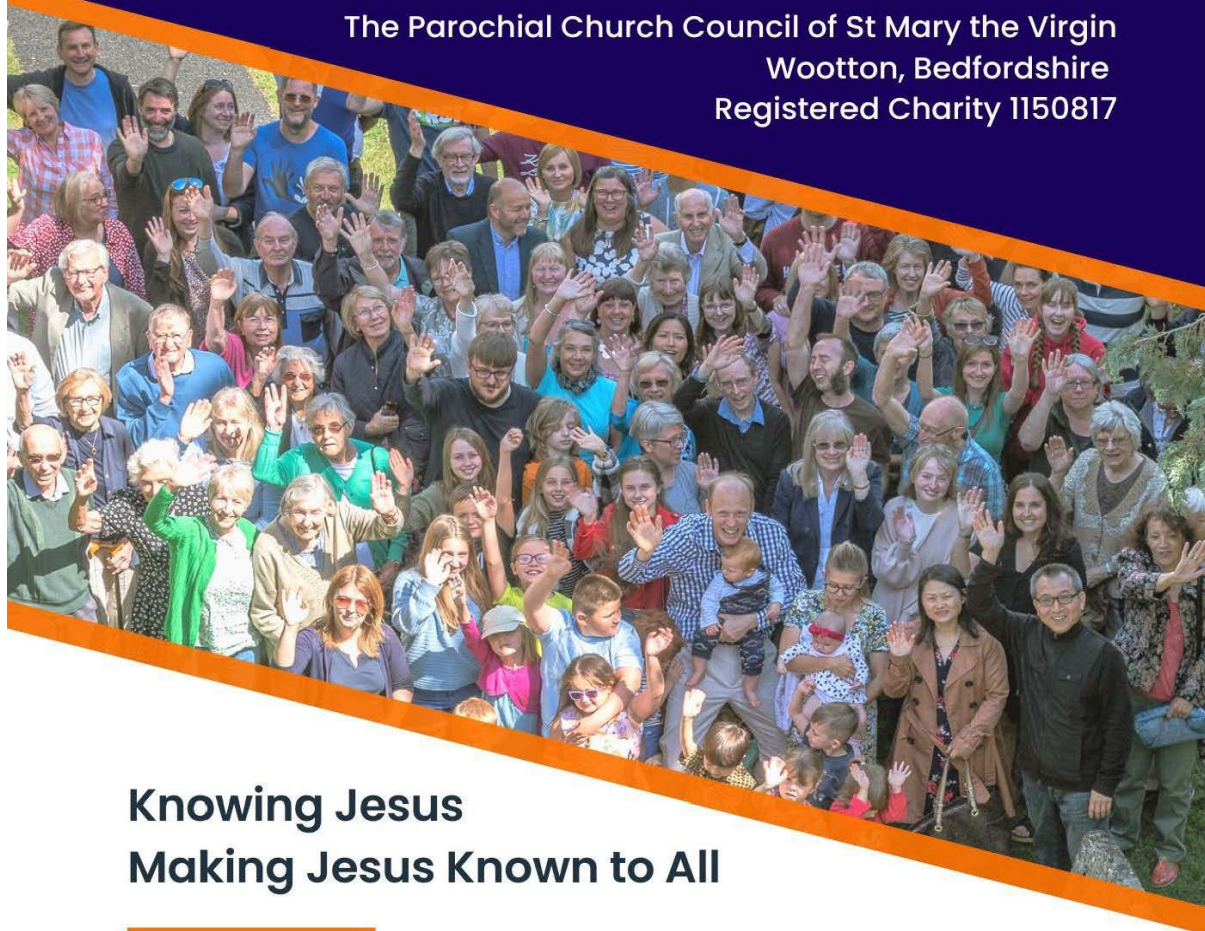
Meeting closed at 7.16pm.

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Annual Report & Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 Dec 2022

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary the Virgin
Wootton, Bedfordshire
Registered Charity 1150817



**Knowing Jesus
Making Jesus Known to All**



www.stmaryswootton.org.uk



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The Vicarage, Church Rd, Wootton, Bedford, MK43 9HF

Towards 2024 *(adopted March 2020)*

St Mary's 2020-2024:

Our vision is unchanged: to be a church family of disciples of Jesus Christ, rooted in the Bible and prayer, committed to making disciples, to holiness of life and to every-member service; a family of loving welcome, passionate proclamation, glad service, global heart and sacrificial change.*



Our five year goal is simple: to double in size

Our priority is clear: to develop our life as a church towards this goal.

Our strategy is threefold:

- to develop our facilities for growth
- to establish PCC-led teams to support ministries for growth
- to launch at least one new congregation all in dependence on the Lord in prayer

Values Statement (what matters to us)

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

The Bible as the written word of God and our supreme authority in following Jesus in the whole of life.

Prayer as the prime expression of faith in Jesus and of our dependence on God's loving grace and sovereign power in all things.

Church as a family of wholehearted worshippers and disciples of Jesus Christ committed to mutual encouragement, care, and accountability.

Evangelism as the proclamation of the good news of God's salvation in Christ for all people

Service as a family of God's people caring for people in Wootton and Stewartby and beyond with the love of Christ.

Identity Statement



We are...

Christ's church: the church is the bride and body of Jesus Christ; it is through him alone, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, that we know God; it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we worship and serve Christ; and it is Christ's future return which is our hope and motivation for life.

A local church: a full and authentic expression of the universal church, called into being and sustained by God's word. We have a specific responsibility to proclaim and demonstrate the love of God in Christ among the people of the parish of Wootton. We are also called to involvement with the world-wide mission of the whole church.

An Anglican church: while we welcome Christians of all backgrounds, our permanent and most visible connection is with the Church of England. We accept and uphold its founding documents (The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal) as authentic expressions of orthodox Christian belief. We are committed to supporting and encouraging biblical faith and practice in the Anglican Communion, both within and beyond the diocese of St Albans.

An evangelical church: we recognise the convictions of historic evangelicalism as crystallising and expressing the kernel of orthodox Christianity, including: the supreme authority of Scripture; the universal nature of human sin; the grace of God, seen above all in the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus Christ; and the gift of justification and new life in Christ, received and enjoyed only through repentance and faith. We value the examples, among others, of the sixteenth-century reformers, the eighteenth-century evangelists, and the nineteenth-century social reformers. We are committed to gospel partnership with evangelical mission agencies, as well as with our patron, the Martyrs' Memorial and Church of England Trust, and the Church Pastoral Aid Society.

* Vision Statement (what we aim to become)



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

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



Aims and Purposes

St Marys Church Wootton exists to glorify Almighty God through the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to all people, and through the pastoral care of all who call on his name. This is our mission, which we summarise as 'Knowing Jesus and making Jesus known to all', and which is our privilege and joy.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, Canon Peter Ackroyd, in promoting this mission - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical - in the ecclesiastical parish of Wootton, which comprises the two civil parishes of Wootton and Stewartby.

Objectives and Activities

The primary objective of the Parochial Church Council is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrine of the Church of England. To this end the PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in the parish church, to providing opportunities for adults and young people to hear the gospel and grow in discipleship, to caring pastorally and practically for people in need, and to supporting Christian mission within and beyond the parish, indeed globally. The PCC regularly reviews the effectiveness of the church's ministry in the light of its own Mission Action Plan, and the three themes of the Living God's Love vision of the Diocese of St Albans: Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities, and Making New Disciples. In planning and overseeing the mission of the church, the incumbent and PCC consider the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

The PCC Vision Statement continues to be:

St Mary's will be one body of wholehearted worshipping disciples, ever more deeply rooted in the Bible and prayer, growing together in holiness and every-member ministry to become a family of:

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

During 2022 the PCC recognised that the church's ministry was still recovering from the impact of the COVID pandemic, and that detailed long term planning would depend on the strength and pace of recovery. The PCC endorsed two strategic priorities for the recovery process: Deeper Discipleship, and Generous Space. Deeper Discipleship relates to the need to foster confidence in the gospel and in gospel-driven living and service. Generous Space recognises that the facilities in the church building are ill-suited in many ways to the achievement of the church's mission and vision, and in the autumn involved a comprehensive consultation process to clarify future needs and inform future work on how they might be met.

For many years Wootton has enjoyed being a training parish for newly-ordained curates. In September we said farewell to the latest of these, Revd Phillip Young, as after three years as Assistant Curate he moved with his family to take up an appointment as Rural Missioner in the deanery of Harwich (Diocese of Chelmsford), based in the village of Dedham. September also marked the end of Revd Shaun Atkins' much-appreciated ministry since 2019 in Wootton and Stewartby as self-supporting Associate Minister. The year accordingly ended with a smaller staff team of the vicar (Peter Ackroyd), part-time administrator (Di Murray), and part-time youth and children's worker (Emma Hearn), while Jim Hignett continued to serve as licensed Reader, leading services and preaching at Wootton and Stewartby United Church.

To facilitate the ministry of the church the PCC makes a priority of maintaining the fabric of both the church building and the church hall, which is on a separate site. Maintenance of the churchyards, which are closed, is the responsibility of Wootton Parish Council.

Achievements and performance

Worship and Prayer

Public worship was offered at 10am in the church building every Sunday morning, and at the monthly Sunday evening prayer meeting (which occasionally met online). During the year, numbers attending church in person stabilised following the pandemic disruption, settling at a level comparable to or slightly less than pre-pandemic total Sunday attendance.

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The Sunday morning service continued to be livestreamed on the church's YouTube channel, while a dial-up phone service enabled those without internet to access the weekly sermon.

Ministry at St Mary's is founded on expository preaching of the Bible. Sermons preached during the year included series covering the Ten Commandments ('You are not your own'), the passion in Mark, resurrection in the sermons of Acts, the ministry of Elijah in 1&2 Kings, and an Advent series in Isaiah. Thematic series covered the Bible's teaching on the ascended Jesus and on 'a changing church', including Safeguarding Sunday. During the course of the year we welcomed as visiting preachers Mike Kendall (St Neots Evangelical Church) and Nathan Taylor (Mission Aviation Fellowship). Other visitors during the year included mission partners YP & Jude Gayet (Belgium), former curate Lucas Durant and family (Resurrection Church, San Tung, Hong Kong), and a long-serving Baptist pastor from Ukraine.

The Lord's Supper was celebrated monthly, with bread and wine being distributed to communicants in the pews rather than at the communion table in the chancel. Eight children were baptised during the year, plus Thanksgivings for two children. Five weddings were celebrated in church and St Mary's clergy officiated at nine funeral services for present or former parish residents at St Marys, Stewartby United Church, or Bedford Crematorium.

The lifting of COVID restrictions enabled festivals and other events to be celebrated and observed more freely than since 2019. Services at Easter and Christmas were well-attended. The churchyard was illuminated with lights and a life-size Nativity scene for the fortnight leading up to Christmas Day, inaugurated by a Sunday afternoon Carols in the Churchyard event which attracted many families. The parish council Act of Remembrance on Sunday 13 November took place at the War Memorial in Church Road, and was preceded by a service in church.

School events included regular Preschool services, and a Wootton Lower School Christmas assembly. The vicar participated in Wootton Academy Trust's online Christmas service.

On Sunday 5 June a Service of Thanksgiving was held for the reign HM Queen Elizabeth II, on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee. Following her death on Thursday 8 September, a Book of Condolence was opened and the church was open daily for private prayer. A Service of Commemoration of the Queen's faith, life and service, attended by representatives of the Borough and Parish Councils, local schools and uniformed organisations, was held on the evening of Sunday 18th September.

Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, church members participated in supporting the relief of refugees. Regular prayer for the end of hostilities and the relief of suffering was offered. St Mary's hosted an evening meeting addressed by a Baptist minister from Ukraine. In October a well-attended concert was held, with contributions from many members of church and community, to highlight the continued impact of the conflict and raise relief funds.

Families, children and young people

After 2 years of various restrictions and new ways of working due to the Covid-19 pandemic this year a sense of normality returned as we were able to resume many of our regular activities.

We were able to continue to meet inside church on a Sunday with 2 children's groups (Aged 2-Reception and Year 1-Year 8). We held monthly evening Pathfinder meetings for children in Years 5-8 with a much reduced team and unfortunately in September we took the decision to cease Pathfinders until more leaders could be recruited. J@M sessions continued with a small but faithful group.

As part of the Life22 mission we held a Family Fun afternoon with inflatables and various activities for families to take part in including a circus workshop and a final gospel juggling presentation. This event attracted approximately 150 people from the community and people were very appreciative of the opportunity to gather together.

We were able to return to Chellington for a residential trip after missing 2020 and 2021 due to the Pandemic with 20 children and 7 leaders from St Mary's and Ss Peter & Paul's church in Cranfield. We welcomed a guest speaker from The Brave Trust and had lots of activities including a trip to a local country park and a circus workshop and gospel show which was a real highlight for all.

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We held a Holiday Club with approximately 100 children and a team of 50 volunteers. We based the club on Backpackers material from Scripture Union which focused on Holy Week using passages from Matthew. We were able to return to one hall session for all ages and we were able to host a family BBQ. A particular highlight this year was the provision before and during the week for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, our approach was much appreciated by families and it meant that we were able to create an environment that was inclusive and children could engage in their own way with most aspects of Holiday Club.

A group led by Maria Richardson visit Wootton Lower School weekly during term time, as the 'Open the Book' team, to share Bible stories with the pupils. Open the Book is a national initiative, which began in Bedford, and their aim is to enable children to hear Bible stories as local churches, like St. Mary's serve the community.

Some highlights during 2022 include:

- Sunday Children's groups inside church
- Weekly J@M sessions
- Monthly Pathfinder sessions (Jan-July)
- Equip Training Day attended by 3 YCM leaders
- Life22 Family Fun Afternoon
- Chellington residential trip
- Holiday Club
- J@M trip to Sorted (6 young people & 2 YCM leaders)
- Christingle Service
- Lower School Visit to Church & Zoom Assembly
- Lights in the Churchyard-lanterns and trail
- Nativity service with congregational involvement
- Family Carol Service



Discipleship, Pastoral Care and Training

Midweek growth groups afforded members the opportunity to reflect further on Sunday sermons and apply lessons to daily discipleship. Six Growth Groups met during the year, weekly in the evening or daytime, to study the Bible, pray, and support one another. Leaders met termly to receive training and support, and to pray together. A group for some Lunch Club members met fortnightly.

A further weekly Growth Group was formed in the autumn, led by Peter and JoJo Ackroyd, following Foundation Studies materials in Christian Discipleship and Christian Doctrine produced by Crosslands Training.

In January eighteen church members participated in a Living in Love and Faith study day run jointly with Cranfield Parish Church, using the LLF video and discussion materials.

The monthly Men's Breakfast met in person, and attracted up to twenty men for mutual support and encouragement.

A number of church members attended the Bible by the Beach conference in Eastbourne during the first weekend in May.

A Pastoral Coordination Team consisting of four members has continued to meet monthly. The aim of the team is to support the clergy in caring for church members and their families at times of sickness, hospitalisation, infirmity, isolation and the general struggles of life.

Social events were held during the year enabling church members and their guests to build relationships and mutual support. In 2022 these included a summer barbecue held in the vicarage garden, a Harvest Supper and Celebration generously hosted by a church family, and a Bonfire Night party.

An occasional bookstall was maintained in church. At Lent and Advent, a large number of church members and families purchased and studied daily devotional readings.

Mission and outreach

St Mary's mission is summarised on its publicity, website and noticeboards as 'Knowing Jesus; making Jesus known to all'. PCC continued to pursue this mission through a range of activities.

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A group led by Phillip Young worked through 2021 and early 2022 to prepare Life 22 - a series of outreach events in March, each with a speaker. Growth Groups prepared for Life 22 by using some national A Passion for Life training videos. Events included a Curry and Comedy evening in Cranfield, a Cake and Prosecco evening, and a Family Fun afternoon held on Wootton Recreation Ground. The latter attracted around 150 people of all ages. The programme concluded with an invitation service on Mothering Sunday.

Enquiry courses for people exploring the Christian faith were offered throughout the year, normally using the Hope Explored materials.

The monthly Lunch Club for the over 50's resumed during the year. Leaders have continued to offer pastoral support to members.

Mission & Mission Partnerships

The PCC tithes its income from regular giving to support Christian mission beyond the parish, according to its Global Mission Policy.

In 2022 the following partnerships received support from mission funds:

- Faith in Kids – resources and training for church youth and children's work
- Festive - working with sixth forms and further education colleges to equip Christian young people to reach friends.
- IMPACT – Christian workers supporting local schools.
- Jude and YP Gayet - in church planting and youth ministry in Belgium.
- Bishop Alf and Hilary Cooper - supporting church planting and evangelical unity with CMS in Chile.
- Speak Life – UK evangelistic ministry (Director: Glen Scrivener)
- The Church Pastoral Aid Society
- Tearfund

PCC also supported Tom Ackroyd as a 2022-23 Relay Worker with UCCF, supporting student Christian Unions in Newcastle and Sunderland.

Throughout the year church members supported the work of Bedford Foodbank through a collection point in the church, and contributed to periodic 'red bucket' appeals for the relief of countries hit by natural disasters, notably Pakistan following devastating floods. Church members participated in the annual Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan's Purse) appeal, and at Christmas supported the SMART Prebend Centre CRIB appeal for the homeless in Bedford.

Church buildings

One of the objectives of the PCC is to maintain the church, church hall and grounds as well as a house which has in past years accommodated the curate. Following several years of covid related disruption 2022 was a year for assessing needed repairs and restaffing of rotas. The repairs to the North Porch roof are planned for 2023. The leak in the flat roof over the creche needs repair, quotes were obtained and the work was completed early in 2023. The 5 yearly architects' inspection and report on the church building, the Quinquennial Report, was carried out and did not raise any substantial unknown issues. Following this a working party was held in the church to deal with several small maintenance issues. Also a new maintenance team was established for the Church Hall to deal with a number of ongoing larger maintenance needs. Once our curate left us in August we gave up the tenancy on the property we had been renting in Cranfield. We started a consultation process and needs assessment for the Generous Space project, which will help us prioritise future maintenance and building works at the church and hall.

Ecumenical Relationships

The PCC aims to strengthen Christian witness and service in the community through membership of Wootton and Stewartby Churches, though during 2022 there was little joint activity.

The vicar attended regular prayer meetings for leaders of Bedford Churches in sympathy with the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance, of which St Mary's is a corporate member.

PCC agreed to support the formation of a Four Counties Gospel Partnership, in collaboration with a number of local evangelical churches including Grace Community Church (Kempston), Cranfield Parish Church, All Saints Riseley and Kings Church, Flitwick.

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St Mary's Preschool

Oversight of the Preschool is undertaken on behalf of a PCC by management group comprising the Preschool Manager Tracey Kerins and her deputy Lina Rosato, and three members of PCC: Peter Ackroyd, Pauline Kendall and Charles Ashbrook.

Holywell Church of England School, Cranfield

The PCC nominates a number of governors at Holywell School. Continuing Wootton PCC Foundation Governors were: Pauline Kendall (Chair of Governors), Martin Sanders, Fiona Frossell and Isabel Turner.

The Vicar regularly met with the Head, Mike Simpson, and in partnership with Cranfield Parish Church provided support for Key Stage and whole school assemblies.

Deanery Synod

St Marys was represented in Deanery Synod by its licensed clergy and three representatives of the laity. Pauline Kendall continued to serve as Lay Co-Chair of the Synod. During the year the Synod met four times.

Structure, governance and management

The PCC met nine times in the year. Some of the work of the PCC is carried out through the following sub-committees: Standing, Finance, Youth Council, Preschool Management. The Standing Committee met between PCC meetings, and is made up of the vicar, wardens, treasurer and secretary. The role of the Standing Committee is to prioritise items for the PCC meeting, discuss and make decisions on items of a confidential nature or look in more detail on matters that have been brought to the PCC. The Youth Council met four times.

Issues discussed during the year included: recovery & rebuild of church life; the pattern of Sunday services; mission support; the Generous Space project; Deeper Discipleship, including proposals for a 2023 Away Day; evangelism and outreach (including A Passion for Life); ministry among young people; Living in Love and Faith; Christmas ministry & outreach; church finances and property maintenance; appointment of PCC officers & working groups following the APCM; 2023 PCC & Preschool budgets; Backpackers summer holiday club; ministry with children and young people; mission partnerships; health and safety and other policies; Stewartby United Church; relationships with other churches including the formation of the Four Counties Gospel Partnership.

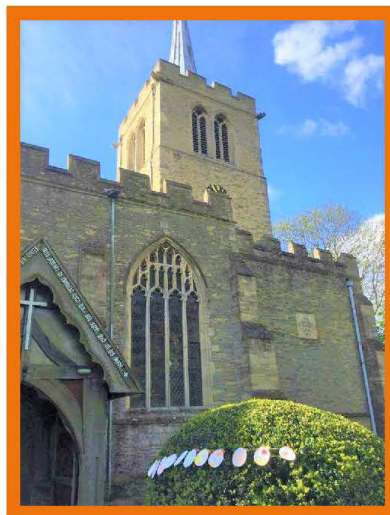
The safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults was a standing item on the agenda of every meeting.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer, Kate Wilson, is a member of PCC. She was supported by Emma Hearn and Pauline Kendall as deputy safeguarding officers. Training on safeguarding arranged by the Diocese has been attended by members of the PCC, as well as by leaders of young people's groups and others as required under the church's safeguarding policy and by the Church of England.

The PCC employs a part-time administrator, part-time Youth and Families Worker, the staff of the Preschool, and a church hall cleaner. Jim Hignett serves as a licensed Reader and attends regular diocesan events.

The PCC and staff work in partnership with teams of volunteer helpers, appointed by the PCC and the vicar.

The PCC and Administrator comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regarding the privacy of church member's information.



Financial Review

Total receipts of unrestricted giving and income amounted to £133,834 whilst restricted giving totalled £25,916, giving our church a total income of £159,750, which included £21,291 from Gift Aid eligible donations. As a result, our total income grew by £10,963 versus the previous year, although this was largely due to a one-off donation of £12,000 received into the Youth & Children's Ministry at the start of the year. Our total expenditure for the year was £147,060, this included our Parish Share contribution of £65,863 which was met in full, leaving our expenditure reduced by £329 on the previous year.

Overall, the level of income remains extremely encouraging considering the continued pressures put upon the congregation following the COVID pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis that arose in the second half of 2022.

For 2022 our church set a budget of £146,734 for income and expenditure and by the end of the year we had generated a surplus of £9,226 versus that budget, however excluding the one-off donation into the Youth & Children's Ministry, this then dropped to a modest budget deficit of (£2,774) for the year.

Our overall unrestricted funds, the funds we're able to utilise in our day-to-day operation and mission activities, fell on the year from £26,389 to £20,216, a reduction of £6,173 mainly due to our expenditure of unrestricted funds exceeding income. Whilst this is not an immediate cause of concern, it is noted that following on from a reduction in 2021 our continued ability to meet our obligations in full in future years is potentially put at risk.

Reserves Policy

Throughout the year we maintained our reserve fund at £10,000, this allows us to meet our obligation in terms of staff salaries and church running costs for a period of two months. Our cash reserves, excluding endowments, remain strong with a total of £267,997 on deposit at the end of the year, with £247,780 of this being funds restricted to specific expenditure. During the year we continued to operate two current accounts with our Metro Bank account as the main account while we maintain the NatWest Bank account to ensure no account has funds exceeding £85,000, the limit set under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. In terms of a deposit account, we continue to invest in the CBF Church of England Funds.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with its duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

Relevant safeguarding policies are reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and agreed by the PCC. In July 2022, the PCC adopted a Social Media policy and agreed their statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders. In January 2023, a revised Responding to Domestic Abuse policy was agreed by the PCC.

Safeguarding is a standing item on all PCC agendas and the Parish Safeguarding Officer reports any matters arising. The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, a framework that aims to support Parishes to have due regard to the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy, is being used with good effect and this is regularly reviewed by the PCC and Safeguarding Team.

Ultimately, the PCC has overall responsibility to ensure all safeguarding requirements are fulfilled. The PCC have appointed a Safeguarding Team, Kate Wilson (Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead recruiter), Emma Hearn, Pauline Kendall and Martin Sanders to ensure a good safeguarding culture is maintained at St Marys. The lead recruiter for the parish ensures all volunteers are safely recruited to their roles and they complete the relevant safeguarding training for their role. Relevant contact details for the Safeguarding Team are displayed in church and on the parish website.

St Marys was pleased to take part in the annual Safeguarding Sunday event for the first time this year. This enabled us to raise awareness of our commitment to creating a healthy safeguarding culture where everyone feels safe and looked after. Although this was an annual event, St Marys staff team, PCC and safeguarding team work hard to ensure this culture is maintained on a daily basis.

Support of Stewartby United Church

Ministry at Stewartby United Church, a local ecumenical project, is provided under the terms of a Sharing Agreement in which the Church of England and the Methodist Church are the remaining active partners. Licensed ministers and congregation members from St Mary's continued to support Stewartby, leading the monthly Sunday morning service, speaking at the monthly T@3 service, serving on the church council and participating in other events. Towards the end of the year it was agreed that the monthly Sunday service should take place on the afternoon of the first Sunday of the month, with T@3 continuing on the third Sunday.

St. Mary the Virgin Parochial Church Council Independent Examiner's Report of accounts for January to December 2022

Independent Examiner's report to the Parochial Church Council
of St Mary the Virgin, Wootton, Bedford
Charity Commission no. 1150817

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended **31 December 2022**, which are set out on pages 1 to 4 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and **s.145 of the Charities Act 2011** ('the Act').

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

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

Basis of this report

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

Signed Lynden Richardson Independent Examiner – L. Richardson

Date 20 March 2023

Signed on behalf of PCC P.M. Ackroyd Incumbent – P.M. Ackroyd

Date 20 March 2023

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St Mary's Church, Wootton

Balance Sheet detailed

To 31st December 2022

		As at 31/12/2022	As at 31/12/2021
Endowment assets			
	1509: Wootton Armstrong	1,527.80	1,730.62
	Fund 1510: Wootton Church	24,568.62	27,830.17
	Cottages		
	Total Fixed assets	26,096.42	29,560.79
Current assets			
	1501: NatWest Current	82,356.69	85,410.85
	1503: CBF Capital Fund	116,417.29	120,501.34
	1504: CBF Studley Road	1.73	1.71
	1508: Cash Book	—	—
	1511: Metro Current	69,759.14	49,780.26
	Total Current assets	268,534.85	255,694.16
Liabilities			
	1650: Loans for Stonework	—	—
	6699: Agency collections	538.17	388.18
	Total Liabilities	538.17	388.18
	Net Asset surplus (deficit)	294,093.10	284,866.77
Reserves			
	Excess / (deficit) to date	12,690.70	1,398.05
	Z01: Starting balances	284,866.77	279,752.56
	Z02: Other gains/(losses)	(3,464.37)	3,716.16
	Total Reserves	294,093.10	284,866.77

Represented by Funds		
Unrestricted	20,215.95	26,388.57
Restricted	247,780.73	228,917.41
Endowment	26,096.42	29,560.79
Total	294,093.10	284,866.77

St Mary's Church, Wootton
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Incoming resources					
Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources	111,514.18	17,522.00	—	129,036.18	119,278.20
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects	22,319.58	—	—	22,319.58	21,510.85
Investment income	—	2,294.60	—	2,294.60	811.05
Other incoming resources	—	6,100.00	—	6,100.00	7,187.00
Total income	133,833.76	25,916.60	—	159,750.36	148,787.10
Resources used					
Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects	8,550.93	—	—	8,550.93	10,115.00
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects	122,368.25	6,797.02	—	129,165.27	131,255.07
Support costs	6,030.24	666.00	—	6,696.24	3,261.71
Expenditure on managing-administering the charity	2,647.22	—	—	2,647.22	2,757.27
Total expenditure	139,596.64	7,463.02	—	147,059.66	147,389.05
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	(3,464.37)	(3,464.37)	3,716.16
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(5,762.88)	18,453.58	(3,464.37)	9,226.33	5,114.21
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	1,883.75	855.74	—	2,739.49	3,967.56
Gross transfers between funds - out	(2,293.49)	(446.00)	—	(2,739.49)	(3,967.56)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Net movement in funds	(6,172.62)	18,863.32	(3,464.37)	9,226.33	5,114.21
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	26,388.57	228,917.41	29,560.79	284,866.77	279,752.56
Total funds carried forward	20,215.95	247,780.73	26,096.42	294,093.10	284,866.77

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St Mary's Church, Wootton
Analysis of income and expenditure
Selected period: 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
Incoming resources						
<i>Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources</i>						
101 - Gift Aided	69,428.00	—	—	—	69,428.00	71,556.00
102 - Tax recovered	17,991.06	—	3,300.00	—	21,291.06	20,345.79
103 - Other giving	10,003.44	—	—	—	10,003.44	8,593.96
104 - Loose Collections	2,265.16	—	—	—	2,265.16	1,542.04
105 - Gift days- Sundry giving	6,943.26	—	—	—	6,943.26	13,786.20
201 - Given for specific projects	1,345.96	3,537.30	14,222.00	—	19,105.26	3,454.21
<i>Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources Totals</i>	107,976.88	3,537.30	17,522.00	—	129,036.18	119,278.20
<i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects</i>						
302 - Rent for church buildings	18,546.01	—	—	—	18,546.01	17,938.32
401 - Monies for books	790.57	—	—	—	790.57	163.53
404 - PCC fees Weddings/ Funerals	2,983.00	—	—	—	2,983.00	3,409.00
<i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Totals</i>	22,319.58	—	—	—	22,319.58	21,510.85
<i>Investment income</i>						
301 - Interest	—	—	2,294.60	—	2,294.60	811.05
<i>Investment income Totals</i>	—	—	2,294.60	—	2,294.60	811.05
<i>Other incoming resources</i>						
106 - Wootton Charities	—	—	2,000.00	—	2,000.00	2,000.00
405 - Assigned fees	—	—	4,100.00	—	4,100.00	5,187.00
<i>Other incoming resources Totals</i>	—	—	6,100.00	—	6,100.00	7,187.00
Incoming resources Grand totals	130,296.46	3,537.30	25,916.60	—	159,750.36	148,787.10

Resources used

<i>Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects</i>						
1001 - Overseas Mission	4,200.00	270.00	—	—	4,470.00	6,815.00
1003 - Home Mission	2,800.00	1,280.93	—	—	4,080.93	3,300.00
<i>Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects Totals</i>	7,000.00	1,550.93	—	—	8,550.93	10,115.00
<i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects</i>						
2001 - Diocesan Quota	65,863.00	—	—	—	65,863.00	62,335.00
2002 - Working Expenses of Incumbent	3,353.88	—	—	—	3,353.88	2,571.24
2004 - Assistant Staff	22,617.39	—	1,780.48	—	24,397.87	23,864.03
2005 - Church Running expense	6,791.79	—	—	—	6,791.79	4,891.78
2006 - Church Maintenance	819.47	—	1,221.49	—	2,040.96	1,393.08
2007 - Upkeep of Services	1,920.22	—	—	—	1,920.22	3,127.54
2008 - Upkeep of Churchyard	—	—	141.05	—	141.05	54.21
2009 - Costs relating to books	732.59	—	—	—	732.59	377.12

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	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
2010 - Church hall	8,749.94	—	—	—	8,749.94	8,670.64
2016 - Honoraria, Assigned fees	—	—	3,654.00	—	3,654.00	4,397.00
6000 - Studley Road	440.41	—	—	—	440.41	395.14
6001 - Curate Housing	11,079.56	—	—	—	11,079.56	19,178.29
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Totals	122,368.25	—	6,797.02	—	129,165.27	131,255.07
Support costs						
2017 - Support Costs	4,020.28	2,009.96	666.00	—	6,696.24	3,261.71
Support costs Totals	4,020.28	2,009.96	666.00	—	6,696.24	3,261.71
Expenditure on managing-administering the charity						
4000 - Administration	2,647.22	—	—	—	2,647.22	2,757.27
Expenditure on managing-administering the charity Totals	2,647.22	—	—	—	2,647.22	2,757.27
Resources used Grand totals	136,035.75	3,560.89	7,463.02	—	147,059.66	147,389.05

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St. Mary's Pre-School
January to December 2022

EXPENDITURE January - December 2022	
Salaries January - December 2022	89257.29 ✓
Pension	4100.71 ✓
Employers National Insurance/TAX	13098.32 ✓
Church Hall Rent + Floor Donation	6846.01 ✓
PLA Membership Fee + Ofsted	182.11 ✓
Equipment and supplies	4021.95 ✓
Uniform	675.01 ✓
Milkbar	1271.80 ✓
Photo developing	178.81 ✓
Staff Training	482.00 ✓
Petty Cash	90.00 ✓
DBS	52.60 ✓
Trip	663.00 ✓
Fee refund	126.00 ✓
Cash in Hand - 31 December 2022	14.05 ✓
Balance in Bank - 31 December 2022	16689.61 ✓
TOTAL	137749.27
INCOME January - December 2022	
Cash in Hand - 1 January 2022	4.05 ✓
Balance at Bank - 1 January 2022	26335.05 ✓
Received from Fees	14174.75 ✓
Received from Early Years Funding LEA + SEN	94725.11 ✓
Donations	2140.31 ✓
Trip	370.00 ✓
TOTAL	137749.27

Manager/Treasurer: Tracey A. ✓ Date: 19.10.1.2023
TRACEY KERINS

Deputy Manager: L. Rosato Date: 19.10.1.2023
LINA ROSATO

Auditor: L. Rees Date: 16.02.2023
LESLEY REES



Administrative Information

St Mary's church is situated in Wootton village, Bedfordshire.
It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England.
The correspondence address is :
The Vicarage, Church Road, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9HF.

The Registered charity number 1150817

office@stmaryswootton.org.uk

PCC members who served during the year were:

Revd Peter Ackroyd (chair), Hazel Sanders (churchwarden), Revd Shaun Atkins, Revd Phillip Young, David Baylis (Treasurer), Jim Hignett (Reader; Deanery Synod), Pauline Kendall (Diocesan Synod), Tim Dillistone (Deanery Synod), Charles Ashbrook (Deanery Synod), Ant Hall, Amanda Newton, Jenny Roffey, Annette Hart, Matt Hearn, Abi Holyoak, Nicola Johnson, Jon Joy, Kate Wilson.

Independent Examiner: Lynden Richardson

Wootton Baptist Church

My name is Rob Stanton and this is my colleague Gary Williams. I am a native of Wootton but Gary is an incomer, but we accept him, although he comes from Cornwall. We represent the Baptist Church.

The Baptist Church in Bedford Road, is one of the two Non Conformist churches in the village and has been there since 1836. It's constitution states that the principals of the Bible will be taught there and the building used for Public Worship. We always make sure that the Good news of Jesus Christ is always preached there too.

I think that the problems of the Covid Pandemic are mainly over, although we had two of our people go down with it last weekend. I suppose that, like most organisations, it had an effect on us, especially when the meetings had to be closed for a while. Some people never came back to church.

We are now back to pre pandemic times with the services running morning and evening in the church. For a while we used the back rooms for the evening service to try to reduce the cost of energy. We are about to return to the main building.

Our Youth Group, which is named 'Adventurers' is thriving with children from 6 to 9 years, coming, mainly from the school next door. We have a very good relationship with the School and they use our car park for the convenience of parents dropping off and collecting children. We have a young Youth Worker, Paul Angell, running the Youth Group and his enthusiasm, makes me feel old. We have an arrangement whereby he works for three churches, a day at each, which seems to be working very well.

The Coffee morning on Tuesdays, from 10am to Midday, is well supported with up to about 30 there each week. Its good to meet new people from the village and enjoy general chit chat. Other meetings include two Home Groups each week, Wednesdays and Thursdays. There is usually a course of study going on. Gary runs one at is home and John Lambert the other.

We try to run all of our meetings on the principals of the Bible. Its sad to see the ignorance of God's word today amongst young people. The Ten Commandments are just as relevant today as they ever were. And the Gospel or good news of Jesus Christ is just the same too. And a word of thanks to the Parish Council for allowing us to put an article in the Parish Magazine and an advert for our Coffee Morning it is much appreciated.

There is a welcome to everyone at any of the meetings at the Baptist Church.

Thank you.

Rob Stanton

Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme

Wootton Good Neighbours are a dedicated group of volunteers whose aim is to help elderly or disabled residents of Wootton. Details of the things we do are listed on the advert in this magazine. We are supported by the BRCC – Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and also by Andrea Macadam, the village agent. We have a committee comprising a chairperson, secretary and treasurer and other volunteers – all of us are DBS checked in order to provide our services and we are fully insured.

Last year up until December 549 tasks were carried out by members of the group. We must thank Tesco's for donating food items which were delivered at Christmas to all our clients. We do get financial support from Wootton Parish Council in order to cover the costs of insurance, mobile phone contract, Excel and Word package for correspondence and the printing of leaflets. We are very grateful for their support.

We feel as a group that perhaps not enough people in the village know about what we do and we are anxious to help out people in need in any way we can. We charge a nominal fee for each task carried out, but this is far less than would be spent on taxi or bus fares.

Please get in touch with Wootton Good Neighbours if you feel that you would like to join our friendly team in order to be able to help out.

If you have transport or mobility difficulties or if you are lonely and need someone to keep you company, please get in touch with us. The dedicated phone number is: 07717770247.

Malcolm Chalmers – Chairperson

Community Speedwatch

Since my last report your dedicated Speedwatch Team - Keith Randell, Les Dick, Graham Ward and myself have been joined by Ellen Barnes and Anil Mistry and we have continued to carry out patrols down Bedford Road as Cranfield Road now has average speed cameras installed. I must thank my team for braving the elements in the last patrols in November, January, February and March. During these patrols we didn't record many motorists speeding which is most encouraging! During March 353 letters were sent out in Bedfordshire to offending motorists. Those offending more than once receive a visit from the police to talk to them about speeding. A further offence then means a fine and 3 points on the driving licence. As I have said frequently, we are still a very small team (although Wootton is an increasingly large village) and could do with some more volunteers so if you feel that you could help us out please get in touch with Juliet Wright - Juliet.Wright@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk . We should love to have your help.

Please keep the village safe by observing the speed limits, particularly during cold months when the road conditions could be more hazardous.

Keep safe and drive carefully.

Malcolm Chalmers
Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator

Wootton Village Hall

Wootton Village Hall (founded in July 1983) continues to serve the Wootton Community well. There have been significant changes in the past year –

In June 2022 Marie Kramer retired as caretaker. Marie was a member of the Committee from its opening and became caretaker in 1991. Also, in 1991 Jenny Lambert became Bookings Clerk. Jenny retired in January 2023. For over 30 years the Hall has been used by many village residents and organisations over the years. They and many others, owe Marie and Jenny a debt of gratitude for the contribution they have made to the Wootton Community.

In the last year there have been major upgrades to the infrastructure of the Hall. A disabled toilet has been installed, new Ladies and Gents toilets have been installed and the flooring in the entrance replaced. More recently, more Insulation has been put in the Loft to reduced energy usage. Thanks to the Parish Council, the Forest of Marston Vale Community Fund and Bedford Borough's Climate fund for providing substantial grants for this work.

Bob Wallace 19/04/23

Wootton WI Annual Roundup 2023

Wootton WI have had a very good year and been able to maintain a good membership, drawn from the village and surrounding villages. We have had a good variety of speakers through the year ranging from a retired policeman's life in the Metropolitan police, a history of churches across Bedfordshire and how to improve the harmony in your home by bringing lots of houseplants into your house. We heard how to recognise and deal with signs of domestic abuse, a heart rending talk but necessary to know about these things happening to women. We provided members with a very tasty afternoon tea to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and intend to do the same in May for the King's Coronation. We even indulged in a spot of Indoor Curling which brought out quite the competitive side of our members.

Between us we created a cookbook full of favourite recipes, all tried and tested by ourselves, which we sold at the Christmas Craft Fair along with a number of hand made Christmas items. We were very pleased to provide lots of cake and drinks at the Craft Fair and again at the Spring Craft Fair, both held in the community hall. We met so many lovely stall holders and old friends at both and hope we get invited back at the next event to fuel people with our lovely cakes.

All in all it has been a successful year for us which we intend to continue over the next twelve months.