



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



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WoottonParishCouncilBedfordshire

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 17th April 2024 at 7.02pm 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; Jeff Noakes, Member Wootton Parish Council, Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities; 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 for Wootton and Kempston Rural (Deputy Speaker effective May 2024 and including Adult Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Corporate Parenting Panel, Fostering Panel, Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for Primary and Secondary Education and Schools Forum), Alderman Newton's Educational Foundation, Bedford Sports Foundation, Community Voluntary Service Bedfordshire, East Anglian Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, Friends of Bedfordshire Youth Music, Governor (Local Authority) – Wootton Lower School, Governor (Vice-Chairman) – Wootton Upper School, Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity, St. John's Hospital Trust and Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities; Sue Abood, Bedford Borough Councillor for Wootton and Kempston Rural; Jo Roberts, Forest of Marston Vale;

	Victoria Robinson, Liloom Home Care Ltd; Sue Doulton Smith, Oddfellows; Christine Pavey, Oddfellows; Marcin Mieczkowski, Wootton Academy Trust; Gary Williams, Wootton Baptist Church; Kath Pearce, Wootton Neighbourhood Group Chat; Carrie McMorn, Wootton Upper School; Judy Chandler, Wootton Upper School Governors; Ronnie Simms; Laura Stanton.	
Agenda no	Agenda item title	Comments
APM24/001	Apologies for absence. Gerald Bygraves, Vice-Chairman Wootton Parish Council; John Kay, Member Wootton Parish Council; Alex Swain, Member Wootton Parish Council; The Revd Canon Peter Ackroyd, Vicar of St. Mary's Church; Diane Murray, St. Mary's Church; Sue Randell, Wootton WI.	Noted for the minutes.
APM24/002	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 19 th April 2023.	The meeting agreed the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 th April 2023.
APM24/003	To receive the following reports from Wootton Parish Council. Chairman's report. Responsible Financial Officer's Financial report.	It was noted both the Chairman's report and Responsible Financial Officer's financial report would be detailed in the 2024 Annual Report.
APM24/004	To receive reports from outside bodies. Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillors Abood and Wheeler; Bedfordshire Police; Forest of Marston Vale.	<u>Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor Sue Abood</u> Refer to Appendix One. BBCllr Abood was thanked for her work since coming to office in May 2023. <u>Bedford Borough Council – Borough Councillor John Wheeler</u> Refer to Appendix Two. BBCllr Wheeler wished to clarify the two tier education system for Bedford Borough would be going ahead and Central Bedfordshire Council would be working to address their own issues.

		BBCllr Wheeler then referenced a meeting held that morning at which funding for Wootton schools was anticipated from Central Bedfordshire Council. BBCllr Wheeler confirmed his appointment as Speaker of Bedford Borough Council, effective May 2024. BBCllr Wheeler was the first from Wootton to hold this position and would also be the first Speaker to have a nominated charity for charitable donations. Those present were invited to send him suggestions for this new charity. A question was raised in relation to the appointment of a School Crossing Patrol person, however BBCllr Wheeler confirmed the vacancies remained unfilled. BBCllr Wheeler was thanked for his work during the past 12 months. <u>Bedfordshire Police</u> No report received. <u>Forest of Marston Vale</u> Refer to Appendix Three. Jo added both bitterns and nightingales were currently in song and Cllr Wallace added some ¾ of a million trees had been planted in this area thanks to the 'Trees for Climate' project. Jo was thanked for her and her colleagues work during the past 12 months and for assisting with the planting of a new hedgerow at Lorraine Road cemetery.
APM24/005	To receive reports and/or accounts from village/local organisations.	<u>Liloom Home Care Ltd</u> Refer to Appendix Four. (It was noted the Fun Fest for 2024 had been regrettably cancelled). <u>Robert Edward (Bob) Lunniss Charity</u> No report received. It was noted Cllr Tristan Tyerman was a new trustee of the charity. <u>St. Mary's Church</u> Refer to Appendix Five. <u>Wootton Academy Trust/Wootton Upper School</u>

		No report received but the following was noted on the evening: • Delivery of the synthetic pitch project was on schedule for completion by the end of May 2024. And end of summer opening ceremony would take place. Wootton Parish Council was thanked for its donation of £250k towards the build, which was exceeded by £400k of Wootton Academy Trust's own reserves and developer funding in excess of £800k. • Michael Gleeson's retirement after 37 years was announced and his replacement was currently being sourced. • A business case in relation to the two tier education system had been submitted to Bedford Borough Council and building plans were being drafted. Anticipated funding from Central Bedfordshire Council would be transformative. • The upper school's creative drama and dance continued to thrive with a performance of Sister Act in the bag. The next performance would be after GCSE's had been taken. • Some 110 pupils had been taken to Disneyland Paris with 11 members of staff who had given up their holiday. • A significant number of pupils were working to complete bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes. The gold medal was available for completion at Kimberley College. • A strong focus to break down barriers in relation to attendance records had seen the school buck the national trend across all secondary schools. • Finally, it was noted the school had a very active governing body in place. A question was raised in relation to toilet doors and the locking of them. The doors were back on, but were not open in large numbers during learning times. <u>Wootton Baptist Church</u> Refer to Appendix Six. <u>Wootton Church and Poor's Land Charities</u> No report received but the following was noted on the evening:
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		• The charity received income from Wootton Parish Council in respect of rent due for the allotments/paddock areas and also recycling credits (bottle bank situated behind the village hall on Church Road). Funds had been granted to help with a wide range of issues including the purchase of white goods, aid with hospital transportation and accommodation and the addition of ramps and aids in homes/gardens in Wootton and Stewartby. • The charity was looking to work with Bedford Borough Council to deliver a ‘warm coats to school’ project and help had already been given to those requiring financial assistance with school uniforms. • Christmas 2023 saw the delivery of 85 food hampers to families in need. • Any application was not means tested and BBCllr Wheeler urged people to apply if in financial need. It was thought the reference ‘poor’s’ might stop applications and a suggestion was made to make this reference on any literature as small as possible. • It was also suggested flyers be given to the schools for inclusion in book bags. <u>Wootton Good Neighbour Scheme</u> No report received. <u>Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group</u> Refer to Appendix Seven. It was noted an ear wax removal scheme was in operation on Wednesdays at The Hub, Wootton New Life Methodist Church – costing of £47.50 for both ears. A young children’s messy play group was up and running at The Hub, Wootton New Life Methodist Church Road and Sian and Laura were thanked for their commitment. This would carry on during the school holidays. <u>Wootton Patient Participation Group</u> No report received. <u>Wootton Speed Watch</u> No report received.
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		<u>Wootton Village Hall</u> Refer to Appendix Eight. It was noted an automated bollards entry system would be installed at the car park entrance, week commencing Monday 22nd April 2024. Works were anticipated to last one week and the car park would likely be closed at all times during that period. <u>Wootton WI</u> Refer to Appendix Nine.
APM24/006	General Parish Issues.	The following general parish issues were raised on the evening: • Residents attending the Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group had referenced too much in the way of online communications and not enough paper communications (some had not known about tonight's meeting for example). It was noted in addition to online communications, the parish council included a list of upcoming meetings in the noticeboard opposite The Cock Inn PH and carried agendas for all upcoming meetings in its other noticeboards. In addition, a list of upcoming meetings was also included in each newsletter (delivered quarterly to all households). If these were not being received, residents were asked to inform the Clerk to the Council so she was aware and could remedy the same. • An unrelated example was then given relating to the diversion of buses along Cause End Road and lack of information provided. It was explained this was outside the control of the parish council who had also not been informed. • Concerns were raised over tickets for the annual Bob Lunniss lunch. Block bookings had historically been made, meaning some residents missed out. BBCllr Wheeler confirmed the charity was aware and was making changes. The lunch this year would be held on 4th December with tickets available on 27th November at The Hub, Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road. Residents would need to attend in person to secure their ticket – removing the opportunity for block bookings.

		• Concerns were raised over speeding traffic in Mepham Road and a request was made to lower the limit to 20MPH (white lines were ineffective). It was noted a request was made by Wootton Parish Council to Bedford Borough Council for the same. • Further concerns were raised over cars parking adjacent to Lorraine Road Green and also the junction of Lorraine Road and Cause End Road. The Clerk requested photographic evidence of the same and confirmed this would be taken to the next meeting of the parish council's Roads and Pavements Safety Steering Group. • Concerns were also raised over public litter and dog mess bins not being emptied according to Bedford Borough Council's weekly schedule. It was noted whilst the bins were the assets of the parish council, emptying them was the responsibility of Bedford Borough Council. Cllrs Abood and Wheeler were asked to raise this issue and establish why regular emptying was not taking place. A damaged dog mess bin was referenced at Hoo Close and the Clerk asked for photographic evidence before requesting a replacement by Bedford Borough Council. It was noted the replacement would likely be a dual purpose plaza-style litter bin as the borough council was looking to phase out single use dog litter bins and the borough council would have to agree to include the replacement on its weekly bin rounds. It was agreed to include a list of 'report it' numbers in the quarterly newsletter for those without internet access or smart phones. • It was noted how difficult it could be to make a doctor's appointment – without internet access or smart phones. Cllr Randell (as a Wootton Patient Participation Group member) agreed to feed this back.
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			• It was noted a bring and buy event would be taking place on 13th July 2024 at The Hub, Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road. • It was noted the Community Centre would be holding its Food Fest event at the end of August 2024.
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Meeting closed at 8.13pm.

Borough Councillor Sue Abood

Report for Annual Parish Meeting – Borough Councillor Sue Abood

It has been an interesting first year as a Borough Councillor for Wootton (and Kempston Rural.)

I have held two hour-long councillor surgeries on the first Saturday of the month in Wootton, every month since June 2023. These have taken place on the green near the library and opposite the lower school on Ashpole Avenue/Folkes Road and it has been a pleasure to talk to residents at these sessions and to help them with their issues. I have attended the Neighbourhood Chat sessions when my day job allows where I have also enjoyed talking to residents.

Much of my work 'on the ground' this year has been focussed on both issues raised by residents directly with me and on those that I have encountered myself in the village. Various issues have been reported to the council including:

- Potholes
- Uneven and broken pavements
- Loose manhole covers
- Missing street signs
- Non-functioning street lights
- Worn white lines
- Damaged traffic lights
- Overflowing bins and bottle banks
- Malfunctioning temporary traffic lights
- Broken/dead trees.

I have spoken to residents about riparian ownership, littering, antisocial behaviour, issues with speeding, liaising with BPHA and various other issues, including liaising with the council on their behalf.

I have liaised with the council and Persimmon regarding issues on the Berryfields estate including non-functioning street lighting, antisocial behaviour, algal growth causing slippery surfaces, broken bollard lighting and safety issues in the play area among other issues.

Within the borough council, I am a member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and continue to fight for the provision of a permanent health centre building in Wootton. This has involved one to one meetings with the Head of Estates and the Head of Primary care, along with workshops and meetings with staff from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) looking at alternative ways to improve primary care for the residents of the village. Despite the Parish Council meeting being told that there was £9million in the council budget to pay for new GP surgeries, it has been confirmed that this money is only to be used to get the various priority projects in the Borough 'over the line' and so it is unlikely this money will be used in Wootton as it is not classed as a priority by the ICB. I continue to push the Integrated Care Board to improve facilities and services for residents.

I also feed into the other committees on the council that I am not a direct member of by ensuring I read the paperwork and asking my colleagues to raise queries within these other committees on my behalf, ensuring Wootton residents are represented.

Within the borough council I am also a member of the Special Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) which sets the RE syllabus for all schools across Bedfordshire. This has an impact on all children within Wootton regardless of the school they attend. One of the most important parts of this work is making sure that all faiths are represented in religious education lessons, encouraging respect and tolerance for all. The launch of the latest syllabus took place in September 2023. The group also ensures that training and support are available for all teachers and staff involved with RE.

I have met with senior staff from Universal three times since October 2023 to discuss the plans for their theme park outside of the village, the benefits that that might bring to the area, and the undoubted concerns that residents will have. I am pleased to see the public consultation running and would encourage all residents to respond.

Most recently I have 'called in' a decision made by the Council single-party Executive that would see all residents of the borough pay additional council tax so that residents on new estates in Great Denham and Kempston West can have their management fees paid for them. This would be particularly unfair to those residents on the three new estates in Wootton who have to pay their own management fees, plus council tax, and should the decision be passed, additional council tax to pay the management fees of others. This is inherently unfair and the call in procedure will now mean that the decision will be scrutinised by a cross-party group of councillors. I will continue to stand up for the residents of Wootton in Council decisions that affect them.

I am currently liaising with the MP for Mid-Bedfordshire and discussing the impact of Central Bedfordshire's delay to the move from three tier to two tier education which affects children in Wootton.

Ward funding in the last year has been spent as follows:

- Dropped (pram) kerb on Foster Road
- Bus shelter on Cranfield Road – half funded by my ward fund, half funded by the borough council – work still to be completed.
- Donation to the 1st Wootton Scout Group for equipment totalling £637 including an archery net, knives, saws, flints and cut proof gloves.
- Donation to the 1st Wootton Rainbows of £350 for items including neckers and a parade flag.
- Donation to the Wootton Brownies of £350 for equipment.
- The rest of the ward fund has been spent in the Kempston Rural part of the ward on a speed indicator sign for Ridge Road to help combat speeding.

Looking ahead, I will continue to represent the residents of Wootton within the council chamber, challenging decisions which are not in their benefit. My surgeries will continue to take place each month, whatever the weather, and I will continue to meet with residents and discuss their concerns and how I can help them.

On a lighter note, I am still hoping to set up a craft group in the village and work is ongoing to bring this to fruition.

I will continue to work for and support the residents of Wootton directly over the next three years of my term of office as the borough councillor, and beyond.

Sue Abood
April 2024

Appendix Two

Borough Councillor John Wheeler

As you are mostly probably aware, I give detailed monthly reports to Wootton Parish Council which are incorporated in their minutes, as well as a quarterly report for the Wootton Newsletter and a report for their Annual Report. I also post regular updates on my Facebook page. So tonight, I will give you a brief synopsis of the last 12 months.

Highways

Cause End Road has not (finally) been completely resurfaced from Church Road to Bedford Road. Hilly Lane (opposite The Chequers PH at Hall End) has also been resurfaced as has the pavement in Monoux Road and part of Payne Road. The area of Lorraine Road from Cause End Road to the cemetery is scheduled to be resurfaced this year, along with the pavements on Bedford Road (both sides) between The Cock Inn PH and post office. Pavements along Lorraine Road are due to be programmed for resurfacing, however a date is not yet known.

I have been touring the village on a regular basis with the Highways team to undertake checks on the pothole situation, as well as roads and pavements issues and overgrown hedges and blocked gullies. Most of these issues can be reported online also, directly to Bedford Borough Council – using their online reporting system which can be found on their website's homepage: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/>

As you will know, we now have average speed cameras on Fields Road and Cranfield Road. The remaining cameras for Bedford Road, Keeley Lane, Hall End Road and Church Road are due to be installed by the end of June this year. The parish council is funding this project in full. The parish council also funded the replacement of four bus shelters on Bedford Road (three) and Cause End Road (one). They, and myself, are continuing to chase Bedford Borough Council on the possibility of funding to replace the damaged iPad-style Real Time Passenger Information Units with roof-mounted units, which will be more robust and less likely vandalised.

Developers are also due to install two bus shelters along Burgoyne Avenue and these will also contain Real Time Passenger Information Units. Infrastructure works within Berryfields and Berry Wood/The Kilns are ongoing and once complete, the roads and pavements will be adopted by Bedford Borough Council.

Schools

Delivery of the synthetic pitch at the upper school is almost complete and will be available for community use outside of school core opening hours – a Community Use Agreement is currently being drafted to ensure this. This has been funded in part by the developers of the Berry Wood estate, Wootton Parish Council and the upper school. Thank you to all parties who helped get this project off the ground – it's a much needed asset which I am sure will be well-utilised.

The two tier educational conversion is well underway and building works at the lower school are scheduled for summer 2024, ahead of the conversion start date of September 2025. Building works at the upper school are scheduled for 2025 ahead of its conversion start date in 2026. Bedford Borough Council took the decision ahead of Central Bedfordshire Council to convert to two tier and the extra year's notice has enabled Wootton families to have a clear indication on how the change will work for their children.

We bid farewell in Easter this year to Michael Gleeson, who retired from the upper school after an impressive 37 years of service. I wish Michael all the best in his retirement.

Doctors Surgery

Tom Wootton, Mayor and Leader of Bedford Borough Council attended a recent meeting of Wootton Parish Council and reported on progress made on the delivery of a new surgery for the village. I have been working closely with the surgery for a number of years now and recently attended a meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, to discuss the same. Progress is being made and I hope to have fuller news in the near future.

I am also continuing to work closely with Bedfordshire Police's Rural Team on issues that arise within the village. All my meetings enable me to then support local residents with their issues and this is something I shall continue to do. I will also continue with my village walkabouts as it is great to meet and talk to you all!

Finally, I would like to thank Wootton Parish Council for all the hard work they have done and continue to do for the village. I try and work as closely as possible with them to ensure the best for Wootton residents. I would also like to thank the churches, clubs, schools and other village organisations who do a lot for the village.

John Wheeler

Forest of Marston Vale

- The Forest of Marston Vale has just delivered the fourth year of Defra's 'Trees for Climate' project. Trees for Climate is a multi-million pound woodland creation programme that offers landowners and community groups the opportunity to transform their land through tree planting. The programme can provide funding to create the woodland, together with ongoing maintenance payments for up to 15 years. Thanks to the Trees for Climate programme, we have been able to extend our support to offer our expertise and experience, combined with an attractive funding package, beyond the Forest boundary. The Trust doesn't take a "one size fits all" approach to support or funding, instead we work with landowners to assess potential planting ideas and help to develop schemes that fit their business and environmental objectives. This planting season we have planted around half a million trees and shrubs, creating over 200 hectares of new woodland.
- Within our already established woodlands, our incredible Ranger Team have been carrying out an extensive programme of plastic tree guard removal. The team, joined by Forest of Marston Vale and corporate volunteers, have spent several days over the last two winters removing spiral tree guards from the trees that were planted over 10 years ago. Tree guards are placed on young trees as part of the planting process, and were made of plastic when the older woodlands were planted, to protect them from wildlife that may damage the saplings. The removal of tree guards on these trees is an exciting next step as trees reach maturity and no longer require protection. Although we recycle where possible, we have some exciting new developments as we continue to evolve our tree planting technique to better suit the environment of our sites. We are now trialling biodegradable tree guards which are made of entirely bio-based polymers which are wholly or partly derived from biomass.
Many of our sites still contain plastic tree guards which will eventually need to be removed. Much of our tree guard removal takes place in the winter as we do not want to disturb the activities of breeding wildlife, and so, work to remove these guards will continue from October onwards.
- Some of the paths in our woodlands, including the ones near Wootton, have suffered from the recent excessive rain, with channels developing along the sides of them. This was particularly upsetting given the investment to refurbish the path surfaces the year before. We'll be looking to hopefully carry out remedial work this summer.
- Following discussions with visitors to The Kill and Buttons Ramsey in Wootton who use mobility scooters, 3 kissing gates have been removed leaving 'gaps' to make the entrances fully accessible.
- The Community Fund has supported local projects, ranging from Marston Moretaine Allotment Society to Bedford Disabled Horse Riding Association. Grants of up to £2,000 are available for local groups and can be used on projects which benefit members of the local community and their environment.
- We are delighted to be partnering with Cranfield University - now the new home for the Green Business Network - whose aim is to foster a collaborative environment among businesses to promote and implement sustainable practices.
GBN brings together like-minded businesses so that they may help each other reduce energy and water consumption, eliminate waste, design products more sustainably, increase biodiversity, manage impact, gain an understanding of connected legal obligations, and put environmental issues at the heart of the business decision-making.

News from the Forest Centre and Millennium Country Park in Marston Moretaine

- Marsh harriers bred in the Millennium Country Park in 2023, which is the first confirmed breeding of the species in Bedfordshire!
- Our new playground equipment has been installed and has proven very popular.
- The Millennium Country Park achieved its 17th Green Flag in 2023/24 due to great efforts from the whole team and of course support from volunteers. This year's application is in, and we'll receive a judging visit in early summer.
- Dogs are now welcomed into the Forest Café, so that dog walkers can shelter inside and have a coffee with their furry friends even if the weather is wet (doggy ice cream and snacks are available).
- We have a new Community Bookshelf on the mezzanine above the Forest Café. This is in the area designated as a quieter, adults only space.
- The Sensory Garden is undergoing a facelift, with some of the old structures being replaced.
- The Balcony is also open now, allowing our visitors the opportunity to sit outside with views over the sensory garden, pond, and wetlands nature reserve.
- We now have the Changing Places toilet, adjacent to the existing outdoor toilet block, thanks to funding through Central Bedfordshire Council.
- Changing Places toilets help thousands of people whose needs go beyond traditional adapted facilities. Standard accessible toilets do not provide changing benches or hoists, and most are too small to accommodate more than one person. Central Bedfordshire Council applied for funding on our behalf from The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which has contributed towards the placement of the new toilet block. It is hoped that this will enable more people to explore our beautiful park more accessibly.
- Bike hire is available every weekend and during the school holidays.

Jo Roberts,
Community Engagement Officer, Forest of Marston Vale.



"Delivering high quality home care to local people, by local people, with a smile.
After all, a smile is happiness you'll find right under your nose!"

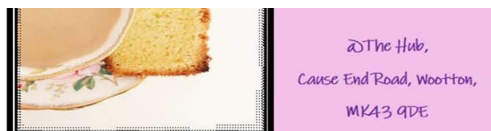
Launched in 2023, Liloom Home Care Limited was established to put people at the very heart of care services, allowing people to remain independently living in the comfort of their own homes. We have got off to a great start, achieving our registration with CQC (our regulators) in August 2023, and developing our values-based practice along the way. We have had some fantastic successes in supporting people in the parish to achieve their goals, overcome barriers, and effectively managing tasks of daily living, that they may otherwise find challenging.

We understand that for many people, reaching a point in your life where you need care is difficult and we are proud to have developed our practices to ensure that we make the process as easy as possible, listening to the individual to build a fully personalised service. You are the expert in your own care, and we value this in every step of your journey with us.

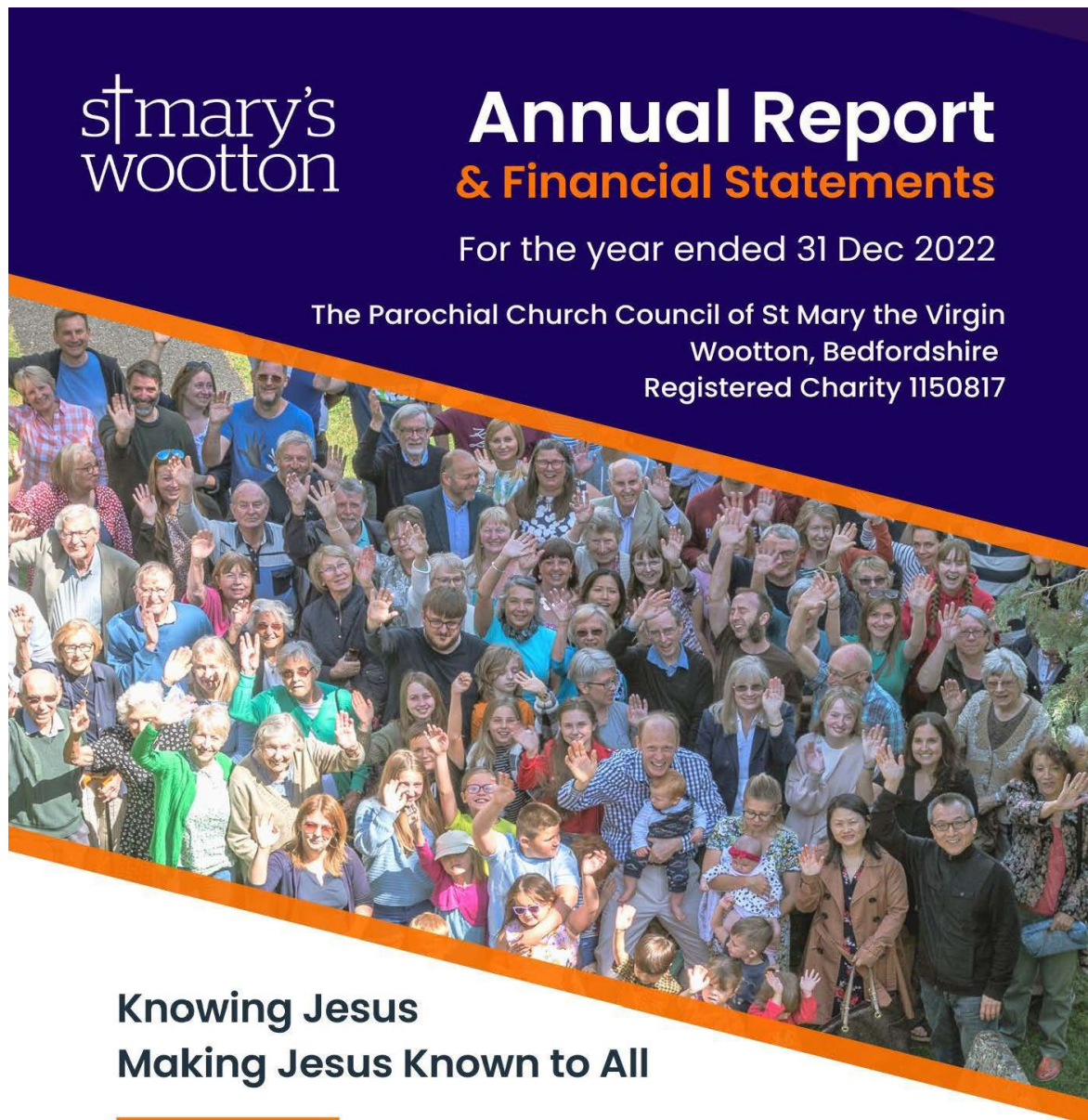
Family carers are very valued and a crucial support to many of our service users, often juggling work, caring responsibilities and young families and we have developed networks across Bedford Borough to ensure that we can signpost people to further support. We are pleased to have been able to open up our training facilities to support our service users and their families with aspects of care that are often overlooked, such as training them to safely use moving and handling equipment in the home. We continue to work in partnership with other health professionals to ensure seamless care provisions for all our service users.

A key part of our role as carers, is supporting people to remain active in their communities and we often support individuals to attend local events and functions. We are privileged to have been able to support the Bob Lunniss Christmas Lunch and continue to work with the Neighbourhood Chat group at the Hub each week. The Neighbourhood Chat has rapidly become an amazing community asset welcoming everyone. Liloom Home Care Limited are keen to continue to develop our community outreach, taking part in and supporting local events such as the Wootton Fun Fest in the summer.

We would love to see some more facilities for older people in the village and its surrounding areas, that are accessible and welcoming to those from all walks of life, whether it be due to limitations caused by medical conditions, physical disability, dementia, frailty, or vulnerability to make Wootton a fully inclusive community that fosters diversity in all its forms. We would like to take the opportunity to give a special thank you to Kath Pearce who has put so much time and effort into working with Marston Forest Centre for the Changing Places toilets, which will make a huge difference to people locally and to the individuals we support, being able to get out and about in the local community, without feeling trapped by their toileting needs and lack of provisions. We are looking forward to the launch event in May! Changing places facilities have also been installed at Russell Park and The Higgins Bedford, opening up these spaces to so many people. It really has been a great year for Bedford and the local community.



St. Mary's Church



st mary's
wootton

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.

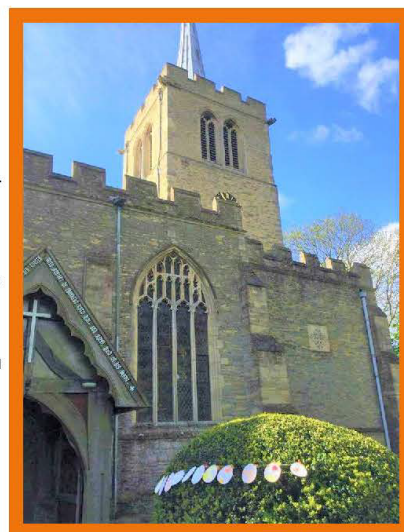
The safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults was a standing item on the agenda of every meeting.

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	This year	Total 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

st mary's
wootton

	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

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. Kerins Date: 19/01/2023
TRACEY KERINS

Deputy Manager: Lina Rosato Date: 19/01/2023
LINA ROSATO

Auditor: Lesley 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

Wootton Baptist church has been a Christian fellowship presence in the village since the early 1800's and at our current location on Bedford Road since 1836.

We have a strong faithful Christian belief in that while we were still sinners the Lord Jesus Christ died to pay the price for our sins, and the only way to spend eternity in heaven and be right with God is through accepting the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. We preach the true word of God as we read in the bible and believe that the bible is the inspired word of God.

We have two services each Sunday, A normal morning service at 10:30 and a more informal prayer and thoughts sharing in the evening at 6pm.

The church runs a coffee morning on Tuesday mornings from 10-12 and all are guaranteed warm welcome, real homemade cakes, teas, coffees and a chance to sit and chat with friends old and new.

We run a Childrens group on a Thursday at 3:45 for ages 5-9 where the emphasis is on learning about Jesus in a fun way with loads of games and activities. To save the parents having to collect the children from school we collect a lot of the children directly from the lower school next door as well as ones delivered by parents / carers direct to us. We regularly have 20 children attend, but would love to have more.

We have 2 home groups running where we have informal study sessions where there is no such thing as a stupid question.

Last year we had a stall at the fun day where we gave out Christian literature, had some games for the children and also had the organization 'Good news for everyone' (formally Gideons) attend to give away Bibles and New testaments. It was a great disappointment when we heard this year's event had to be cancelled.

In October we ran an evangelical outreach in conjunction with churches from other villages around the area, Wixams, Potton and Clifton. This was with the author, speaker and evangelist Roger Carswell, the whole event ran over a full week with events each evening in the different churches. We hosted the Thursday and had around 100 people attend. We are planning to run a similar event in September this year and would love the opportunity to advertise through the parish council if possible?

We are currently looking to recruit a Pastor for the fellowship as we feel this is the next step in our efforts to reach out to those in the village who do not attend church or even know about Jesus and His saving grace.

Gary Williams

g.williams37713@gmail.com

Tel: 07723327353

On behalf of the Deaconate of Wootton Baptist Church

Appendix Seven

Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group

Last December, with the support of the Methodist Church at Cause End Road a group of Wootton residents opened The Hub on Wednesday mornings, from 11-1pm. It is open to all ages, our youngest so far is 9 months and the oldest, 94 years.

We recognised that following COVID a lot of people in Wootton felt isolated and there was a need for people to be able to come together, have a chat, coffee/tea plus homemade cake or biscuits. Since opening we are now averaging about 40 people each week and have a toy corner for the children that come. We have just tried a messy play session for children, age 0-7, and their parents. Everyone enjoyed it, including the organisers Laura and Sian, so we hope to have another in the next school holiday.

Neighbourhood Chat Group is a wonderful place to come with friends or on your own, to meet your neighbours. Since December, we have been joined by various people who can make our lives just a little better. The Good Neighbour Scheme can help with transport issues for those with limited mobility and have offered to take those with transport issues to the group.

Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group is open to everyone. We have our own Facebook page and newsletter to keep people updated about the group and items of interest to the community.

Kath Pearce.

Wootton Village Hall

General

Wootton Village Hall had a successful year making a surplus of £2391 in the financial year ending 29/2/2024. Hiring income was £15954. In summary, Wootton Village Hall is in a good financial state.

Refurbishment of the Hall

After almost 40 years the Village Hall needed an upgrade. Over the last three years the Committee has sought grants from numerous sources and have successfully transformed the building.

- The interior of the Hall was redecorated – funded by the Parish Council, Taylor Wimpey and Village Hall funds
- The Guttering and Facia boards were replaced – funded by the Parish Council
- Outside lighting to enable users to safely access the Car Park was installed – funded by the Parish Council
- A disabled toilet and new ladies and gents toilets were installed – funded by the Parish Council and Village Hall funds
- To save energy, new Loft installation was installed – funded by Bedford Borough's Climate Fund, the Forest of Marston Vale Community Fund and Village Hall funds.

Over £35000 of work. Many thanks to all the Village Hall funders. No major further upgrades are currently planned.

An affordable Hall available for hire

The Village Hall is available for hire for parties and events at weekends and during the week when regular users are not using the Hall. There is also a smaller committee room available for hire which is ideal for meetings. Kitchen facilities are available.

Current hiring rates are -

Monday to Friday £15 per hour (£10 per hour for Wootton community non-profit clubs)

Weekends £18 per hour

Committee Room £10 per hour

For more information, or to book the Hall please contact Leigh on 07546 300504 or email

WoottonVillageHallBookings@gmail.com

HELP NEEDED

Great thanks should go to the Village Hall Committee. This is a small group of people and NEW MEMBERS are needed. Please consider if you could contribute to the Village Community by joining the Village Hall Committee. Please contact Bob at robertwallace@ntlworld.com

Bob 15/4/2024

Wootton WI

WOOTTON WI ANNUAL REPORT TO WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL APRIL 2023- - March 2024

It's hard to believe that a year has gone by since our last annual report. During the past year we have needed to make some changes to roles held by members of the committee, due to the illness of our treasurer, another member took on the role and has now introduced online payments, which is proving very popular. In March 2023, we ended the year with 32 full members and 2 dual members. Two of Wootton WI's long-serving members did not renew their membership this year, due to age and health issues, and our oldest member will not be renewing this April, as she finds, at the age of 99, she gets a bit tired in the evenings! We do hope that we will still see these ladies at some of our daytime social events as guests, however.

We have had quite a few visitors during the year, some of whom have seen accounts of our activities on our new Facebook page, and who have now joined as members. We have had quite a variety of speakers and activities during the past twelve months. The Coronation cream tea in May was a great success, with elegant table settings, room decorations and royalty themed quizzes. After that, in June, we had a very well attended dabble evening exploring iris paper folding, sewing triangular bags, cross stitch bee cards and key ring designing. Our speakers were varied in the following months, with some very interesting talks. Among them, David Duker on the life of Victor Ekins, a World War 2 pilot from St Neots; and some amazing wildlife photographs taken by Alan Goodyer on his walks locally and further afield. John McCombe, from SERV, told us about the Blood Runners, volunteers who deliver life-saving blood products, and breast milk for premature babies. Freddie's Barnet's kicked off our Christmas meeting, with some lively audience participation accompanying their sea shanties, followed by refreshments of Puddings and Punch. The new year saw us Curling with Alison and Tosh, and, while the scores were not high, our level of enjoyment was! In February we had our Sausage and Mash Bash, (we do like our food!), and in March we were given tips on packing a capsule wardrobe for a holiday.

Other extra WI events were offered during the year, including a Picnic in the Park, which took place in August on the rec, where we played giant Jenga, and sipped Pimms and fruit punch; a Christmas wreath making session in early December, and a meal out in February at the Prince of Wales in Bromham. Wootton WI has also participated in village events, which helped fund our activities and made us known to the local community. Our bottle stall did well at the Wootton Fun Fest in July, and following a lovely, creative day making various craft items at a member's house and at home, we were ready to sell our wares at the Christmas Craft Fair in the village. Our members also baked cakes and provided beverages for the refreshment stall at the event, which were enjoyed by customers and stallholders alike! Some of our members have donated cakes for a local hospice and charity, and members have knitted warm items of clothing, to send to Ukraine and for the premature babies in the hospital. We have also liaised with the lower school in Wootton to make bunting for their school fair using material from old school uniforms. Our members have attended and participated in many of the events offered by the Federation. In July our quiz team took part in the Three Counties Quiz Final in Wheathampstead, and this year we came 2nd at the Bedfordshire County quiz night and have qualified for the 2024 final in June in Buckingham. February saw our new group of local WIs formed. This Group will now consist of Wootton, Aspley Guise, and Wharley End, and will meet once a year, with each WI taking turns to act as host. All in all, we have had a busy year.