

St Neots Parish Church APCM Sunday 30th April 2017

Annual Vestry Agenda

Opening Prayers.

Apologies for absence

1. Minutes of 2016 Vestry Meeting.
2. Election of Churchwardens for the Parish.
3. Charities Report.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting Agenda

1. Minutes of last APCM and matters arising.
2. Electoral Roll Report.
3. Annual Report of Parochial Church Council (including subcommittee and organisation reports)
4. Annual report of the financial affairs of the parish.
5. Examined accounts of the PCC.
6. Examined statement of the funds and property in the hands of the PCC.
7. Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church.
8. Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.
9. Election of 3 Deanery Synod Representatives.
10. Election of 5 representatives of the laity to the PCC.
11. Appointment of sidesmen.
12. Appointment of Examiner to the PCC.
13. Vicar's report.
14. Any other business
15. Closing prayers.

St Mary's Church St Neots APCM 2016

Annual Vestry Meeting

Held on Sunday 24th April 2016 in church after the 10.00 am service.

Chairman: Fr Paul Andrews

Prayers: Fr Paul opened the meeting with prayer.

Attendance: 49

Apologies for absence: Jacky Isaac, Lloyd Barnett, Ann Barnsley, Marion and Robin Hunter, Liz Elson, Sophie Easey, Christine Green, Mary Richardson, Colin Freeman and Philip Barrett.

Minutes: The minutes of the 2015 Vestry meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

1. **Election of Churchwardens:** Margaret Bail proposed, Gertrude Wheel seconded that Philip Barrett be re-elected. Jane Gill proposed, Rosemary Darrington seconded that Ann Williams be re-elected. There being no other nominations the meeting agreed unanimously to appoint them both as Church wardens. Fr Paul thanked them for their work during the year.
2. **Charities Report:** John Walker submitted his 50th annual report of the Church Charity Accounts. Charity funds are now held in the Charities Ethical Investment Funds which pay lower rates of interest but are not being invested in handguns and supporting oppressive regimes. John's 50th report was recognised by a small presentation and he was thanked by Fr Paul.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held on Sunday 24th April 2016 in the church.

Chairman: Fr Paul Andrews.

Attendance: 49

Apologies for absence: Jacky Isaac, Lloyd Barnett, Ann Barnsley, Marion and Robin Hunter, Liz Elson, Sophie Easey, Christine Green, Mary Richardson, Colin Freeman and Philip Barrett.

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 2015 Annual Parochial Church Meeting were approved and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.
2. **Report on the Electoral Roll:** The Electoral Roll currently stands at 237. The Electoral Roll Officer reported that 21 names had been added, 7 removed leaving an increase of 14. Elizabeth was thanked for administering the roll.

- 3. Annual Report of the Proceedings of the Council, Sub-committees and Church Organisations:** The reports had been circulated prior to the meeting and all were accepted with grateful thanks to all who had contributed reports and all those who had contributed to meetings within the groups. Revd Eleanor Whalley commented that in addition to Revd Helene Tame's work on Loves Farm, other members of the church are involved with pastoral care and other formal and informal work which complements Helene's work. Eleanor is involved as a trustee of the Loves Farm Community Centre. Fr Paul thanked everyone for their involvement in the activities which are the life of the church community.
- 4. Annual Report of the Financial Affairs of the Parish:** Steve Foster, Treasurer, presented the accounts. The larger deficit in 2015 (£7,996 compared to £2,992 in 2014) was mainly due to unforeseen repairs such as work on the windows and the new heating system. The church holds £157,931 in total funds. In response to a question by Glenn Coiley, Steve reported that with the absence of the unforeseen expenses, the church finances are in a very healthy state. Fr Paul thanked Steve for presenting such a clear report giving a good basis on which to build our ministry. This was reiterated by Peter Raggatt who added that we need to rethink how we use our money in the future.
- 5. Examined accounts of the PCC:** Peter Raggatt proposed, Glenn Coiley seconded with all in favour, that the examined accounts be accepted by the meeting.
- 6. Report of the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church:** The report presented by Ann Williams and Philip Barrett was accepted by the meeting.
- 7. Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod:** The report presented was accepted.
- 8. Election of 5 Representatives of the Laity to the Parochial Church Council:** Due to the 3 year rolling election process, there were 5 vacancies on the PCC. Of those whose 3 year term had come to an end, Colin Freeman, Geoff Matthews and Angie Robertson were not seeking re-election. Fr Paul thanked them all for their contribution to the PCC and in particular to Colin Freeman who had served for many years not only on PCC but also as the Restoration Committee Chairman. Caroline Foster, proposed by Alan Ashton, seconded by John Walker, and Carol Way proposed by Ann Williams, seconded by Tony Murfin were both re-elected to serve on the PCC. There are still 3 vacancies.
- 9. Sidesmen:** The following members were accepted to serve as sidesmen for the coming year: Margaret Bail, Rosemary Darrington, Margaret Gates, Jane Plumb, Sylvia Masters, Penny Murfin, Marion Noble, Janet Walker, John Walker, Derek Wheel, Gertrude Wheel, Paul Plumb, Lesley Smith, Alan Ashton, Nan Rye, David Read, Philip Barrett, Jacky Isaac, Serena Gilbert, Judy Ruff, Jane Gill, Christian Laughton, Geoff Sodeaux, Jenny, Michael, Natasha and Suzanna Pepper, Sophie, Paul, Henry and Edward Easey, Caroline and Molly Foster, Cathryn, James and Beth Neuhauser, and James Mills.

10. Appointment of Examiner to the Council: The accounts are now with the Examiner, Robert Manderson, in preparation for presentation to the Charities Commission. There was uncertainty about whether or not Robert wished to continue as Examiner. It was agreed that Robert be accepted to serve if willing and if not the PCC will look for a replacement.

11. Vicar's Report: Fr Paul thanked the Churchwardens, Ann Williams and Philip Barrett; his colleagues in the Ministry Team – Revd Eleanor, Revd Helene, Revd Robert Sibson, Revd Derek Draper, Revd Melvyn Barnsley and paid tribute to the work of Revd Bill Taylor; Lay Ministers – Ann Williams, Rosemary Darrington, Catherina Griffiths, Christine Green and welcomed Glenn and Maggie Coiley to the team; to PCC members and Catherina Griffiths, Secretary and Steve Foster, Treasurer; to all those serving on working parties and committees; to Geoff and Rhona Matthews and those on the Church Room Committee; to Colin and Val Freeman, Jackie and Ken Minney and Audrey Pearson for their work on the Restoration Committee; to Peter Raggatt for liaising with architects and building projects; to Rosemary Darrington and Sylvia Masters and the flower team for a fantastic Flower Festival; to Jane Gill and Jane Plumb for children's work; to house group leaders, to Lloyd Barnett and the choir; to David Read and the serving team; to the sidesmen and welcoming team; to the craft group; to the bell ringers and handbell ringers; to the church cleaners. He outlined the ongoing work of the church, namely Inclusive Ministry; Children's work and Singing groups; Preparation of children for communion; Ely 2025, the Diocesan Strategy; Initiatives in Spirituality; Roof repairs; Toilet and refreshment area; What does it mean to be a people fully alive. Fr Paul is embarking on 3 months study leave to look at different ways of spirituality and doing church.

Any Other Business: a) Rosemary Darrington asked about money held in the funds for the kitchen/ toilet work and will it go ahead. Fr Paul had concerns about how a refreshment area would be used.

b) Alan Ashton expressed concerns that there were 3 vacancies on PCC. Fr Paul replied that many people had been canvassed but with no results.

c) Frank Owens thanked Serena Gilbert for organising the 10 Pin Bowling evenings which has been a good outreach social event.

d) Ann Williams thanked Fr Paul for all his hard work during the year.

e) David Wells thanked Revd Eleanor and Revd Helene for their work on Loves Farm.

f) Judy Ruff explained about the Diocesan Strategy document People Fully Alive. There are 2 working groups meeting for 5 sessions to produce an audit of the work in St Mary's Church. The outcomes of the meetings will be shared with the congregation at a Bring and Share Lunch on Sunday 22nd May. An action plan of priorities will be produced from the results of this meeting and be presented to the June PCC.

The meeting closed with prayer at 12.55 pm.

ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, ST NEOTS, CAMBS

CHURCH CHARITY ACCOUNTS

ANNUAL REPORT TO VESTRY MEETING APRIL 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in presenting my 51st annual report on the proceedings of the Church Charity accounts in the twelve months' period up to 31st January 2017.

I can today report on the third full year of our revised local Investment arrangements that sees the £10,000 invested with the Charities Ethical Investment Fund via the Charity Commission bringing in regular interest to the overall fund. This £10,000 is made up of 17 individual investments from our various charities ranging from £5,800 from a Rowley Charity to just £20 from the Joan Cromwell Charity. Grouping these charities permits me to get the best possible return but under Charity Commissioners regulations the accounting has still to be kept on a strict individual basis. Our investment income this year based on a wild fluctuation in the Stock Market reduced slightly to £1,395.86 but our reinvestment means that our balances are likely to rise each year.

This year I have been able once again to contribute £530 towards the insurance of the Church Windows as well as our customary Christmas time distribution and that the overall value of the fund has increased by a further £550.86 to £13,365.83. The Trustees will now be considering future distribution in line with the instructions of the initial legatees.

I trust the meeting will feel able to approve this report.

John Walker

John Walker

21 February 2017

(Chrep17)

PCC

The PCC has met regularly to discuss affairs of the parish; to approve the budget and monitor finances and approve charitable giving; to discuss and approve necessary repairs to the fabric such as the repairs to the North Aisle roof and Dove Chamber roof. During the year time was set aside to discuss the Diocesan Strategy which led to 2 discussion groups meeting to look at various strands of the document. This in turn has produced The Development Action Plan with 4 working parties to further these findings. An experiment in the early part of the year has led to a change in the time of the start of the Family Eucharist after 50 years at 9.30am. Judith Andrews retired from the post of Parish Administrator and was succeeded by Nichola Donald who has since taken on some of the treasurer's administration work after Steve Foster our treasurer moved away from the area. Children's Work featured regularly in PCC meetings but with the departure of Glen and Maggie Coiley some ideas have had to be modified. Stewardship has been a cause for concern with income dropping and fewer pledged gifts and so a letter was sent to all members of the congregation at the end of the year requesting a review of responses and to consider Gift Aid.

Catherina Griffiths

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee to the PCC consists of the churchwardens, the vicar, PCC Secretary, treasurer and Vice Chair. The Standing Committee meets regularly in advance of meetings of the PCC in order to:

- Progress items previously agreed by the PCC
- Generate new policies for PCC consultation
- Monitor work in progress
- To set PCC agendas
- Exceptionally to take urgent decisions in between PCC meetings.

Fabric, Goods and Ornament

The annual checks of the Inventory has been made and noted for the additions and deletions since 2015. This has been another busy year with various projects within the Church. 2016 was very important as we had to replace a large section of the North aisle roof and then found the south porch roof was at a point of collapse costs approx. £60000 in total This includes architect fees, builders costs and various associate costs. We were helped by a grant, a donation from the Friends and from the restoration fund. We also have used reserves.

We would again like to record grateful thanks to all who assist with the varied tasks in and around the church.

AnnWilliams / Philip Barrett. Churchwardens

Deanery Synod

The Synod has met four times during the year to discuss matters of interest for the parishes of the deanery. There are continued concerns over the Ministry Share and how parishes are struggling to pay their portion of it. In November, Becky Fanning came to speak about the Parish Giving Scheme which may benefit parishes. Canon Janet Perrett has kept the synod updated on matters arising from the General Synod. There has been much discussion about the Diocesan Strategy. Revd Jes Salt gave details about The Discipleship Course, 2 of which were run in the deanery during the year. Jes also reported on Food banks. Tara Skey of

Eynesbury reported on youth work in the deanery with the possibility of employing a part time Youth Worker. Glen and Maggie Coiley gave a presentation of their Puppet Ministry. The Lent Services followed the theme of Pilgrimage which included talks by deanery members on their experiences, culminating in a talk by Bishop David on Little Gidding as a place of pilgrimage. Revd Judi Clarke retired from the Staughton benefice group and Revd Steve Rothwell moved from the Gamlingay benefice leaving several parishes once more in interregnum. Catherina Griffiths

Sub-committee Reports

Church Rooms Committee

Church room committee members are;

Ann Williams

Jacky Isaac (chair)

Philip Barrett

Roy Gill

Sophia Easey (secretary)

Tony Murfin

Val Freeman

The committee needs to make a plan for rebuilding the lean-to which can then be presented to the PCC. More immediately it needs a clear out and a new, smaller and more efficient freezer. The west wall leaks but Philip and Roy are looking into this. On a more positive note. The committee bought 100 fire retardant and multicoloured chairs for the rooms. They are not only much safer but also brighten up the place. Sophie Easey

PCC Finances and Finance Sub-Committee – 2016

The big problem this year has been that we have had no PCC treasurer. Stephen Foster took on this role and he did keep things ticking over, paying bills etc. But he could not attend Finance Sub-Committee meetings so this committee had no information and there was no point in meeting. Stephen produced income and expenditure accounts for PCC meetings (but rarely in advance of the meeting). So PCC could not make many comments.

Then the Foster family moved away from St Neots and Stephen resigned. No-one could be found to take on the role of treasurer. Since then, Phil Barrett has worked very hard trying to understand the many bank accounts we have, with many different signatories and for many different purposes. It proved that there were accounts that we did not know existed and which had been dormant for years. Other accounts had money in them but were inactive. All were entirely proper and responsibility for them was exercised by a number of different people. There is no evidence that any money has been lost or used wrongly. But it had become very difficult to know where the money was for particular uses and particular purposes. Phil Barrett will report that the accounts do contain the money that they should contain and that we have paid our bills. The accounts he has produced do provide a fair, truthful and complete account of the receipts received and the payments that the church has made in 2016.

Nicola in the Office has taken on the role of recording financial transactions and all receipts and payments now get reported to her and she enters them into the financial accounting system. Any transactions not so recorded have to be sorted out at the end of the year. It seems that we are probably spending on routine running of the church more money than we receive in Stewardship, donations and Gift Aid. The operating surplus from the Church Room letting has provided the extra money we need to remain solvent. A Stewardship renewal letter was sent out before Christmas 2016. But at present it is not known how successful, or otherwise, this was. Nor do we know the predicted Stewardship income and Gift Aid for financial year 2017. The large sums drawn from reserves and spent on restoration work (particularly the South Porch Roof) in 2016 will mean this money is not available for other purposes.

Peter Raggatt

Buildings and Restoration 2017

We had originally hoped to get the repair to the North Aisle Roof done in 2015 but it was unclear whether we had the money or not. We applied for a Grant from the Listed Places of Worship Urgent Roof Repair Scheme (Government Scheme) - applications had to be in by 31st January 2015 and a grant of £22400 was announced at the end of March. Then we had to go out to tender to find a contractor, wait for responses and then make a decision. There were three tenders and we chose the lowest, C.E.L. a company based in Whittlesea, Peterborough. The problem then was getting the company to start work. In the event they could not find time to do the work before winter, so it was postponed to 2016. We were advised to get a Bat Survey done - if bats are found, the work has to stop. But fortunately no significant signs of bats were found. Work had to be done to protect the organ which is nearly underneath the work area and it proved we needed to move some of the equipment of the roof intruder alarm. The contract was finally signed and the work started in May 2016. The first thing was discovery that one of the masonry blocks which form the decorative edge of the roof in the working area was loose so that had to be secured with internal stainless steel rods and re-set with mortar. When the lead was lifted the boards on which it was laid were badly damaged by damp, but it proved that the main structural beams were not affected. The cause of the problem was that the lead had been laid on tightly fitted tongued and grooved boards which form a nice flat surface but which do not allow ventilation. So when the flashing let in water, the boards rotted. The replaced boards are to the original simple medieval design: plain boards with a quarter-inch gap between each. The old lead was taken away and re-cast and re-used. New and better-designed lead flashing was inserted. But the work stretched on and on; workmen were diverted to other jobs but it was eventually finished but not until September 2016. The workmen were good about stopping work during services such as funerals. The Friends of St Neots Parish Church gave a grant of £6000 towards the cost of the North Aisle Roof work and we gratefully acknowledge this. So the grants totalled £28400. The work, including architect fees, protection of the organ etc came to £30,614. Of course VAT at 20% had to be paid on top of this but we can and did reclaim it.

It was known that a small amount of work was needed on the lead of the roof of the south Porch. When the new heating plant was installed, the chimney which passes through this roof

had to be moved. A lead repair was needed. However inspection revealed a much more serious problem. Firstly many objects had been 'stored' in the room above the heating plant, including old carpets, timber, inflammable solvent-based chemicals etc. It took many trips to the dump to clear this. Some bits of masonry and old carved woodwork were left there but tidied. The rafters had been replaced at some point but not bedded properly on the top of the wall, the main medieval beam was no longer properly supported and the boards on which the lead was laid provided no ventilation. It was also clear that the lead rain-water gullies on the roof of the porch regularly overflowed in heavy rain. So these needed to be re-designed and re-made. The other thing that was discovered is that a cosmetic repair had been made to the inside wall some many years ago and this repair had concealed the problems from view, but did not fix any of them. The logical thing to do was to get this work done by the contractor while he had the lead workers, stone-masons and carpenter on site. The work on the South Porch was finally certified as complete in February 2017. The total cost was £ (about 20,000 including architect fees but excluding VAT, all of which can be recovered.).

For the two jobs, the balance of money over and above the total grants came from existing Restoration Funds. But this means that these funds are gravely depleted and there will not be money to do another major job.

Gas and Electricity – Heating - A good deal of time has also been spent fine-tuning the heating system to ensure that there is adequate but economical heating for services and events. We have a fixed price contract for gas and electricity which expires in January 2018. This meant that we did not benefit from the period of low gas prices, but neither did we get hit by the recent rises. In 2018 it is likely that we will have to face a large rise in costs for gas and electricity.

Peter Raggatt

Christian Nurture and Discipleship Group

This group met 3 times in 2016 to report on and discuss matters concerning the way in which the church can grow in its discipleship and outward looking initiatives. We have covered such things as House Groups, Children's Activities and training courses from the diocese.

The work of the group has been, in many ways, duplicated by the ongoing parish development strategy and so will not be meeting for the foreseeable future. Ann Williams

Wintringham Road Housegroup

We are warmly hosted by Elsie and Roy Gill and meet on alternate Monday evenings except in Lent when members are free to join other groups. Our average gathering is about 10. Our aim and method is to explore subjects together giving everyone a chance to put their thoughts into words even if they choose for that to be only with their neighbour. Our themes this year have been The Eucharist (its origins, 'remembering' and the variety of forms);Baptism (it's meanings ,the responsibilities of parents and the parish church and,this was particularly lively, how we as a parish might connect better with families) and lastly Pictures of Christ in Music (a wide range!). There is never a shortage of contributions and a good deal of laughter and friendship! After Easter we shall begin to look at St. John's Gospel. Derek Draper

Loves Farm Ecumenical Bible Study Group

This Group meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday morning to look at the Bible in more depth. We meet from 10.30am to approximately 12.30pm at the home of Rebekah Fullerton, 6 Bargrove Avenue, Loves Farm. It is situated right at the top of the Estate nearer to Priory Hill, but is only accessible from the main road to Cambridge. So far this year we have been looking at Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, using the Ely Dioceses Lent Course for the Philippians study. We were very pleased to be able to welcome members of the Methodist Church to our Lent Study as we have lost two members over the last year due to health problems and work commitments. This took our numbers up to eight again and it is a very friendly group looking to find out more about what the Bible is saying to us through both Old and New Testaments. If you would like to come along and see us please do ring Rosemary Darrington on 01480-476334 or 07780842952.

Wednesday Fellowship Bible Study Group

This group has been meeting for many years now at the home of Wendy Ibbett, 5 Parkway, St Neots on a two week basis starting at 7.30pm on a Wednesday.

Already this year we have studied the book of James, and Philippians during the Ely Diocese Lent Course. After Easter we will look again at the wonderful story of Ruth. If you would like to know more about joining this group please ring Rosemary Darrington on 01480-476334 or 07780842952.

Kings Road House Group

At parish development strategy group meetings, it was felt that there was demand for a new house group to meet as the other groups meeting are long established, have reached the optimum number and so would be unable to accommodate new members. Tony Murfin offered to host a new group at his home in Kings Road and so this was established to meet fortnightly after Christmas. The members, from both Eynesbury and SNPC, are mainly those who had followed a Pilgrim course with Revd. Debbie and Ann Williams after their confirmation. We met four times between Christmas and Lent and looked at aspects of Mark's gospel. All members have joined Lent groups, and the Thursday group will begin again after Easter. There is room for new members and anyone at any stage on their journey of faith is welcome to join us.

Ann Williams

Mission and Care

The Mission and Care Committee has met once during the year to discuss the allocation of charity monies and any business relating to mission, both worldwide and locally. Thank you letters from the charities we support are displayed on the Mission Board in Church. It was agreed to support a specific Leprosy Mission project in Nepal "Overcoming Stigma and Poverty" rather than giving to general funds. There will be bi-annual feedback from this. It was also agreed to donate to a new diocesan project in Kigali to fund short term training modules for pastors. There has been little feedback from US (USPG). John Lobei has now finished his training in Kenya and we have embarked on a new Crosslinks project – Equipo

Impacto – to seek out and train church leaders to preach the gospel. This is based in Cuba. Rachel Ullmer, our CMS link continues to send regular link letters which are posted on the Charity noticeboard.

A team from SNPC visits Hinchingsbrooke Hospital twice a year to assist at the chapel services by pushing patients in wheelchairs and occasionally beds to the chapel and provide a supporting congregation. The pastoral care team continue to visit some members of the congregation and take regular Home Communion to those who are housebound. Bereavement visitors although no longer meeting regularly, continue support those recently bereaved.

Catherina Griffiths

Worship Committee

This group has met only rarely in the past twelve months when past services have been discussed but little future planning was within its remit. The terms of reference of this group are to be reconsidered in the light of the parish development plan. Ann Williams

Social Committee Report – 2016 – 2017

The Social Committee meets approximately every two months. There are usually about 8 members attending and I currently chair.

Its purpose is to provide opportunities for the church community to come together for social events and opportunities to get to know each other better and to have fun!

Food plays an important part in many of your events and we are hugely fortunate that Jacky and Andrew Isaac provide their time and expertise to mastermind the catering side of our activities.

Over the last year there has been lunch following the ACPC, a Family Barbecue, lunches for Messy Church days, Harvest Lunch, a quiz, support for the Noughty Party, a Candlemas Supper, Frugal Good Friday Lunch, support for the Children's Disco, and refreshments for the advent Carol Service and Easter Eve.

We are not a fund-raising group but charge just enough to cover expenses with any carry-over going towards the children's Messy Church lunches etc.

We would warmly welcome new members and ideas for events for next year! Carol Way

Church Organisations

Choir Report 2017

‘Psallam Spiritu et Mente’

The choir continues to lead worship at most services apart from Taizé but including weekday services such as Ash Wednesday and Ascension. A number of the choir also attend the sung Lenten Compline service on a Friday evening. This year we are using the original style music. It is the same in sound as previously but written out differently in the way it would

have been when originally sung but the monks. Unfortunately we now only have one evensong a month but do try to make this a cathedral style service.

It is exciting to have five children in the choir. Two have now passed their RSCM 'White Level' and have progressed on to the Light Blue level. The others are working hard on their white level. There are usually three children in the Singing Saints group but sometimes five. I have merged the two groups twice to sing at the Family Service. The next merger will be on Mothering Sunday.

Last year we sang at Coventry and Peterborough cathedrals. We were joined by our friends from Christ Church, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, David Gower and Jo Richardson who is an ALM from Buckden. We have a booking for Southwark cathedral in June 2018 and I am trying to fix up a date to visit Lincoln Cathedral.

We need more singers especially in the Contralto and Bass parts. It has been good to welcome Ernie Bell to the tenor section. If you know anybody who would like to sing in the choir on a regular basis please point them in my direction. Lloyd Barnett Director of Music

Craft Group

2016 was not quite as good with regard to raising funds. Our URC stalls did not raise as much money as in previous years, However, our special orders for mainly "Arran" garments was good. We continue to knit and sew and meet weekly on a Tuesday evening. If anyone is interested in joining our fundraising group for the church they would be very welcome. Please see Jill Henthorne. Glennys Smith

St Mary's Guild

We have had a variety of activities during the year including a practical craft evening led by Andrea Eckloff; a musical evening led by Fr Paul; a visit to the museum to learn about what goes on there; a talk by David Rudd on life in the 17th century; as well as visits to Woodview Farm, Gamlingay and Willington Garden Centre; a meal out and a social evening with Mothers Union. Members ended the year with a relaxing evening in Waterside Court in December playing Christmas Games. Thank you to all who have helped arrange the meetings especially Bev Rawlings, our president.

The Guild meets on the third Thursday of the month, at 7.30pm in the Church Room. There is no membership subscription, or election. Anyone is welcome to join for as many or as few meetings as they want. Come along to the AGM to decide next year's programme. Suggestions of possible speakers are always welcome! Catherina Griffiths

Mothers Union

The year began once again with a short service and New Year lunch for all in The Chequers. Mothers' Union work is rooted in prayer and someone somewhere throughout the world is praying for us. We met during the Wave of Prayer in December to pray for our link dioceses in Lusaka, Zambia; Shyogwe, Rwanda; Skoto and Ikka in Nigeria; and Karimnagar in India.

We were fortunate to have a visit from Ruth, former Diocesan President of Lusaka Diocese who was staying with her family in Welwyn Garden City. She spoke about how the Mothers Union manifests itself in Zambia. Once again in August we celebrated Mary Sumner Day with a Eucharist and we followed up with fellowship and coffee in Beales. Speakers during the year included Richard Noble who spoke about everyday phrases with their origins in the Bible; Jenny Cooper spoke about “Slave ships and past legacies” and her work in the Movement for Reconciliation and Justice; Christine Giles and Jill Gibbs spoke (on separate occasions) about how Luminous and the Fire Service can work together to support the community; and Revd Helene Tame enlightened us about her work as Community Chaplain on Loves Farm. We also joined with St Marys Guild for a social evening in May. In June we held a tea party in The Church Rooms to celebrate 140 years of MU and several of our members attended a Garden Party continuing the 140th celebrations in the Bishop’s Garden. Some of us also attended the Worldwide celebrations in Winchester Cathedral in September at which the Archbishop of Canterbury was the preacher. Our last event of the year was to host the Deanery Christmas Party at which we were delighted to hear first-hand news of the work done by the Refuge and how our money and gifts are used.

The Travelling Crib which visited many homes in the parish during advent, returning to church at the Family Carol Service on Christmas Eve. MU is also involved with many local as well as international projects. Two of our members continue to attend the service in the chapel at Littlehey Prison each month to support inmates and also help with a monthly Coffee and Chat morning for prisoners who do not get visitors. Other members help with Tots Praise, Coffee Craft and Chat and many other activities in the life of our church.

Mothers Union is not an organisation just for mothers or women – it is open to **all** who share its vision – “**to bring about a world where God’s love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships**”. We meet together on the first Thursday of the month in the Church Rooms at 7.30pm and **all** are welcome.

For more information contact Catherina Griffiths (393372) or Mary Draper (384031).

Children’s Activities

Holy Terrors Report 2017



The Holy Terrors is the Church social club for children in the last 2 years of primary school. This year we have 7 (from St Neots and Eynesbury Parish Churches). We meet for one and a half hours on Mondays during term time. They are very regular in attendance. Activities are varied - cooking, indoor and outdoor games, handcrafts, quizzes and celebrate seasonal things from Hallowe'en to the Chinese New Year. The harvest loaves for harvest thanksgiving are made by the children. We have a Carol party at Christmas and a barbeque in the summer, both hosted by the children. The rest of the report is in their own words.

Eileen Raggatt

Holy terrors is really fun! We usually make tasty treats such as: hot cross buns (for the good friday frugal lunch; perfect pancakes (with perilious races); and many, many more. Hear at Holy terors we do lots of fun things like:) making food like:) pankakes Hot cross buns and today we are making flower broches for muthers day seeing as it coming up so year that's it.

Holy terrors is fun and we get to make brileant brockes for mother's day. We all so play bored games after.

Holy Terrors is fun and entertaining especially when it was christmas time because we all got messy and ate lots of food (I love food)! I also loved when it was Guy Fawkes (even if it was like 2 days away). We made a Guy Fawkes out of leaves and when we roasted marshmallows after setting Guy Fawkes on fire.

I like baking at Holy Terrors because afterwards we get to eat them. I also like playing hide and seek and croquet in the summer.

Holy Terrors is very fun to go to. You can do all sorts of things like: marsipan eggs, making things and just having a laugh.

I enjoy running around outside and playing hide and seek. I enjoyed making pan cakes.

Amy, Ella, Frank, Issy, Isaac, Lucy, Stacey

Play Church

Play Church has had a very positive year. Since Christmas we have had an average of 9 parents / carers coming each week with their little ones. We provide a safe space for the children to play, for the parents / carers to chat, make friends and support one another and for everyone to encounter God through worship, Bible stories and prayer.

Play Church has been meeting weekly, during term-time, since April 2016. Before this, sessions were once a fortnight. The change to meeting weekly has been a great success. Meeting weekly seems to have given Play Church momentum - encouraging families to come regularly and providing more continuity for friendships to form and to grow. This February we also decided to trial an earlier start time, to allow more time for the parents / carers to chat (and for the children to play, of course) before the service. This too has been well received.

In the past year the team co-ordinating Play Church has also changed. Ingrid, Cathryn and Marcie stepped back from Play Church at the end of the Summer term (thanks to them for all their effort and enthusiasm over the years). Glenn and Maggie also stepped back from their leadership role at Autumn half term, although they still sometimes come along with their grandchildren :-).

I took over the co-ordination role after Autumn half term, but Play Church is very much a team effort. All of the Mums (and Dads and Grandparents) help out. Father Paul, Ann and Julie (one of the Mums) lead the services. Alison provides great support through organising craft activities and helping to make the parents / carers feel welcome. We are also very fortunate to have a wonderful team of ladies who serve refreshments. Thank you so much ladies, your help is so greatly appreciated and a special thank you to Sylvia for putting the team together.

Play Church was adopted as the name for what was previously called Tots' Praise, because it was what one of the children spontaneously called it. It's particularly appropriate that the word 'Church' is in the title, because for many of the families, it is their church, and they belong no less than those who attend on Sundays.

Please keep Play Church, and the families who come, in your prayers and, if you're free, why not pop in and meet the families any Wednesday in term time.

Catherine Weaver

Little Saints Report

This year has been more difficult for little saints as the children's leaders' team is very small and with a member of the team moving away in the summer it has left only myself and Jenny Pepper running the sessions. Hence we have gone from running three sessions a month to just two (the 2nd and 4th Sundays). But fortunately for us Serena has agreed to join the team and from April we should be back to running three sessions a month. We also have the issue of safeguarding as we need to have a second adult present at the sessions. With no regular volunteers coming forward we have been relying on one of the parents accompanying their children but as the children are becoming older this is likely to be more of a problem in the future.

On a positive note we now have a small core of families that come to church on a semi regular basis and there are always children attending little saints though the numbers can vary from week to week. This is likely to grow in the future as several babies have been born into the congregation. This brings its own challenges as the sessions have to cater for a very broad age range currently from 3yrs of age to 12. Ideally we would like to run separate sessions for the growing number of older children but this is not possible at the moment as we do not have the volunteers.

Also over the last we have started using a new source for our Little Saints material. This follows the lectionary and seems to be working better. Helen Blackhurst

Journey Together

Unfortunately this group for young families has disbanded since the Foster family moved away in the summer and several of the members returned to work. During the year members had met regularly to listen to a variety of speakers.

St Neots Handbell Ringers

We reluctantly said goodbye to Anita Hale as she returned to live in Surrey in February, which means that our team is more depleted. We have performed twice during the year – at Gt Staughton Day Centre and as part of a living Advent Calendar in Godmanchester in December. The latter occasion involved us ringing in a very small Beauty Parlour while our audience stood outside in the cold to listen!

We continue to meet on Sunday evenings at 8pm and anyone wishing to learn should contact Catherina Griffiths (393372).

Tower Bell Ringers

Attendance for Sunday service ringing continues to be low and unfortunately there have been occasions when we have not been able to raise enough ringers and service ringing has been cancelled. David Griffiths has been teaching 2 more ladies to ring.

Alan Winter continues to run a monthly 10 bell practice which is preceded by a quarter peal and Phillip George has co-ordinated the other Friday practice nights which have attracted ringers from the district. During the year 7 successful quarter peals and 2 peals were rung on the bells.

Several jobs on the list for the year were completed by David but there is still a need for maintenance and decorating sessions in the Bell chamber. A new St George flag was purchased with thanks to Mrs Norah Brown. Thank you to all who have rung for services and supported practice nights during the year.

Catherina Griffiths

Church Flower Team

First of all Sylvia and I would like to thank all the ladies and gentlemen who have worked so hard to keep the standard of flowers we love over this last year. We are a very friendly bunch and love meeting up when we combine our gifts and talents for the Church Festivals. We usually have a bring and share lunch when we sit and spend a short while together in between arranging. Over the years we have had the blessing of putting on two Flower Festivals in 2013 and 2015 raising money for the Church and for the much needed Kitchen area at the back of the church (north aisle). If you are interested in coming along to learn, (we do have workshops too), then please contact either Sylvia on 01480-476907 or Rosemary on 01480-476334

Coffee and Chat, with Craft on the side

It is with great sadness that I have to report that this group has now closed. Several reasons, due to small children now being in school themselves and mothers returning to work. While some parents have unfortunately removed their children from St Mary's and despite giving out a great many flyers to advertise it, no new mothers/carers came along and so it closed on the 6th February 2017 as there were only four members of the church meeting together for the last 4 sessions.

Rosemary Darrington

Mens Group

We have continued with the Churches Together in St Neots Mens Forum. This meets once a month usually at the Berkley Street Methodist Church. Members from the Methodist, URC, Catholic and St Mary attending. This included activities (Pub games, ten pin bowling, Outdoor bowling and snooker evenings) also a visit to Queens College Cambridge which was very interesting and well attended. We also had evenings of talks by guest speakers on illustrated talks on the leprosy Mission, Family history and how to trace your relations, and D.N.A in modern healthcare. These were open meetings including wives and partners took place during the year. The year was brought to an end with a New Year's Dinner.

More men from St Mary are always welcome as it is good to meet members from other churches in the town and the subjects discussed are very interested.

Planned evenings for 2017 including Talk on The St Neots Assassin, Japan and two Dragons, Heavy horses and POW's in Bedfordshire. Also visits to Panacea Museum Bedford and

Bletchley Park, and these are all Open Meetings. (Yellow 2017 programme cards in the church). Philip Barrett.

Churches Together in St Neots (CTSN)

Churches Together is like a large umbrella under which several churches join together to meet the needs of the Community.

Littlehey Prison We continue to lead the Worship in the Prison in January, March, May, July, September and November, working alongside Chaplain's David Kinder and Terry McFadden. We are always looking for people to come in and chat with the guys, and help to lead the service through taking part in a reading the Talk or intercessions. If you feel that you could do that, please have a word with me. Rosemary Darrington 01480-476334.

Tree of Hope Shop We aim to sell Fairly Traded Goods and cards to the community, and we have a shop in the United Reformed Church on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning, 10.00am to 12.00pm. The Committee is made up of people from most of the Churches, and we are always looking for NEW people to help run the shop on each of these days. We have a team of helpers, but it is always good to have more available. If you are free to commit once a month on either of these days, please give me a call, Rosemary Darrington 01480-476334.

Other CTSN Events: **Women's World Day of Prayer** is organised by ladies from all the churches and held at a different church each year. CTSN also plan several other events within the Community. **Christian Performing Arts** and **ACTIOS** are also run under the CTSN umbrella. There is also a monthly **lunchtime prayer** meeting in the URC. CTSN also organises events during the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** as well as the annual **Good Friday service** on the Market Square. Rosemary Darrington

Report from Love's Farm 2017

I have been in post for two and half years as pioneer minister (community chaplain) on Love's Farm, I can't believe how the time has flown!

I remain extremely grateful to all those who prayed and planned toward pioneer ministry on Love's Farm and am so very conscious that those efforts laid a foundation that I have had the privilege of building on.

Breakfast Church continues to meet every Sunday except for the first Sunday of the month – we are a growing community of between 40-50 people gathering each week. In the last year we completed an Alpha course, which we chose to do as a whole church community; we've had our first baptism and had one of the families who started out with us decide to stop. That's the reality of any gathered church community, people drawing in closer and growing as disciples of Jesus and some others deciding that that is too much for the moment...We've been spending some time in the Sermon on the Mount over the last few weeks, noting that chapter 4 ends with crowds coming to Jesus for help and healing whilst chapter 5 opens with Jesus calling his disciples to himself to teach them. That invitation, to move from being one of the crowd to being a disciple, a learner of Jesus, remains. Some of that discipleship happens as we gather mid-week for 'Wednesday Church' and some happens as we work together through the week – it happens through relationship as we learn to trust one another and the work of God in our midst.

Outside of Sundays our service to the community happens in a variety of ways and we're grateful to the team of volunteers who work to make that happen. Little Loves, our parent and toddler group, has grown hugely since starting; we're about to mark our first birthday! Last week we had 126 people come for play and chatter, crafts, snacks, stories, songs and prayer. Our junior youth club continues to meet on a Friday evening where 30 children gather for the usual mix of fun and games. We continue to enjoy a great relationship with our local school and have added an early intervention coaching programme to the things we're involved in there. We're at the beginning of this particular venture but are hopeful that for the children involved it will prove to be a helpful contribution to their school experience, enabling them to remain engaged and supported. We continue to experiment with MakeLunch and over the last year have tried getting the children to make some of the food we share together (mostly successful) and then during the last half term gathered the parents that stayed for conversation about pocket money around coffee and cake!

One of the areas that we would love to see growth in is a work across the community to provide money advice and debt counselling – we're exploring the option of becoming an outpost for the Rainbow Saver Credit Union and have also talked with the area manager of the nation-wide Money Advice Centre initiative.

We want to further resource our work with children and families, both those that gather on Sundays and those with whom we have contact through the week. We are hoping to be able to bring someone on to the team who could work with us in a paid capacity for up to 12 hours a week. God has faithfully led and provided for us thus far so we trust this next step to him too.

Helene Tame

St Mary's Church Book group

The book group meets every six weeks at the home of Joan and Jim Turner. Group members take a turn in choosing a book for the group. We all find that this has widened our reading choices and it leads to interesting discussion.

Over the past year we have read:-

The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy – Rachel Joyce

A Lot Like Eve – Joanna Jepson

Small Island – Andrea Levy

The Girl on The Train – Paula Hawkins

Shades Of Time - Sandra Dennis

The Snow Child – Eowyn Ivey

In recent months we have joined Cambridgeshire Libraries reading group service. We now loan our books from the library in a sets for the six week period between each meeting.

Jenny McLeod

Peace Vigil

A weekly vigil for peace started in mid September, taking place outside the west door every Friday from 1.15-2.15pm. Our large board reads: *Join us for a while to reflect, to remember, to pray... for peace in our lives, our community, our world.*

The point of the vigil is to *witness publicly* to humanity's calling to work for peace, to raise the profile of a peaceable existence as a desired human condition and for the need to work for the 'things that make for peace.' This last element is often overlooked. We can all do something!! Peace is fragile, cannot be taken for granted and each one of us has a responsibility to be aware day by day of how our actions, words and attitudes may build or destroy peace – around us or in the wider world.

Our presence is a challenge to each person who passes, to respond somehow. Even if they choose to look away and ignore us, they have still had to make a choice when faced with our message! The issue has been brought to their attention and maybe got them puzzled, introduced some questions which may challenge them somehow in their lives. 'Why do those people do that, why do they think it's so important? Surely the UK is at peace, what do they mean?' and so on...maybe someone who scurried past will bring it up down the pub that night - 'guess what I saw today, these people had this board, it said ...what do you think about that?'

Over the months we have had many individuals stand with us for part of the time – from just a few minutes to well over half an hour. Some are returners. Some pass by with a supporting

comment or thanking us for what we are doing. Some will come over and want to talk about a particular issue or question us – which is very welcome. Some offer us money! Occasionally we have a side table with information about Christian peacemaking groups like Fellowship of Reconciliation, or briefings and cards to send to MP's on current peace and justice issues.

For two Fridays before Christmas we handed out a total of 60 small bags containing a night light and the Universal Prayer for Peace, with a printed invitation for people to light the candle at some point over Christmas and spend time reflecting or praying on the need for peace in the world and for how they might personally be able to act as peacemakers in their own lives in the year ahead. These were very well received, especially by young people.

Future plans include a large board on the table headed with the question ' Why do you think peace matters?' People will be invited to write their responses on paper provided , then stick these on the board for others to read. I have seen something similar done elsewhere and it can be an excellent way to raise awareness and stimulate debate.

Those attending the full hour have ranged from two to six. The most we have had at any one time was 12. We stand in all weathers as it is important to be consistent and witness to the fact that the need is ongoing regardless, and any inconvenience or discomfort to us is insignificant compared to what others are going through when suffering oppression, injustice, war, despair and all ways the absence of peace might manifest itself in their lives. The message can also come over more strongly in bad weather, as the strength of concern for peace may be thrown into sharper focus by our willingness to endure rain hail or bitter cold! This has proved to be a powerful public witness and means of outreach.

Christine Green

Food bank report

Summary taken from report submitted to Charity Commission in January 2017 – this covers the period from April 2015 – March 2016. The full version can be accessed on the Charity Commission website. Content in italics gives the current (2017) position.

The operation of the Foodbank serving St Neots has continued throughout the year supporting those in need. The four Distribution Centres are now well established and they and the warehouse are operated and staffed by volunteers.

The Foodbank is operated in conjunction with the Trussell Trust as part of the network of Foodbanks across the country. Where surpluses in collected food exist these are passed on to another Foodbank with need. (*This is where a particular commodity is in surplus – e.g. tinned baked beans; **it does not mean** that the Foodbank has an overall surplus of food, indeed other commodities may be in short supply.*)

A MakeLunch project started in May 2015 at the Roundhouse school, to provide a weekly cooked meal during the school holidays. The project is run by volunteers and the Foodbank has supported this venture by donating cereal and food items. (*This project continues to run during school holidays – it is not part of the Foodbank but is supported by it.*)

Voucher holders were asked to make nominations of those they thought would benefit from a donation of food at Christmas. As a result, over 120 Christmas hampers were distributed. (*At Christmas 2016, 183 “hampers” were distributed.*)

During the year we provided food for 973 people. (*This was for the year ending March 2016 – numbers show no sign of decreasing in the current year. Crisis types prompting use of the Foodbank continue to be benefit changes, benefit delays, debt, delayed wages, domestic violence, homelessness, low income, sickness, unemployment.*)

The Foodbank has ‘drop boxes’ in Tesco, Waitrose and the Co-op Stores which are collected weekly (*there are also ‘drop-boxes’ in some churches*) and two, three day collections at Tesco, Eynesbury in July and November made up 69% of the total donations. Tesco then give a 30% financial ‘top up’ of the weight of food collected. A number of churches, schools and businesses also donate food throughout the year. (*Tesco are reducing the collections and the top-up rate for the coming year, which could impact our income significantly.*)

The Foodbank is run entirely by volunteers and it is estimated that they have donated about 4000 hours of time. This has included manning supermarket collections, transporting food from the warehouse to distribution centres, running the four distribution centres, the warehouse and office. Much of the day-to-day operation of the Foodbank has been run by a small management committee, which is made up of office and warehouse staff, representatives of the distribution centres and two trustees. The expenditure incurred by St Neots Foodbank has been necessary to operate the foodbank. This period included regular running costs and purchase of essential equipment. We are audited regularly by the Trussell Trust. Some cash was used to buy additional food. Gifts were made to the CAP scheme and the Eaton Socon Christmas lunches scheme and to the Make Lunch project. Top-up money from Tesco (money donated by Tesco based on the food collected in store collections) is designated to purchase needed supplies for clients (e.g. baby food, special diet, shortage/short-date items such as milk). (*Expenses are minimised as we have no paid staff, do not run a van and our costs at the warehouse are well below market levels thanks to the generosity of Brittain’s. Printing costs are also low thanks to the help we receive from St. Mary’s Eaton Socon. There are utility costs, stationary and materials needed for the efficient running of the Foodbank.*)

Footnote: Trustees, one from each of the founding churches, meet four times per year. The Foodbank relies on the trustees to keep their respective churches informed about activities and needs for volunteer help and financial support. Input from a church, via the trustee, would be welcome.

Marcie Champion

Parish Development Plan

APCM Report Parish Development Strategy

Strand One Nurture a confident people of God

This area of the development plan has replaced, if temporarily, the work of the Christian Nurture Group. Originally, it was decided to concentrate on growing the prayer life of the church, but this has evolved to other initiatives.

A prayer board has replaced the basket for prayer requests in the Lady chapel, but it hasn’t been used very much as the church has only recently re-opened on a daily basis. There needs to be a more prominent and permanent place for it. An addition to the prayer concerns on the weekly pew sheet is the inclusion of the names of those recently baptised or whose anniversary of baptism is that week.

A variety of Christian books has been placed in church and all are available to be borrowed by anyone interested.

A new house group, hosted by Tony Murfin and led by Ann Williams, began just after Christmas, meeting on a Thursday evening. It stopped for Lent and will resume after Easter. All those going to the house group have attended the Monday evening Lent group.

It is encouraging to see the growth in number and in confidence of those meeting at Play Church, and one of the mums is happy to lead the worship occasionally. Initial discussions about Bible Study for the adults are underway, in conjunction with Eynesbury.

Christine Green's initiative of a silent vigil for peace each Friday has provoked thought and interest from passers-by. Christine has been supported by members both of our congregation and of other churches.

There has been a concerted effort to visit more regularly those who have become too frail to attend church.
Ann Williams April 2017

Report on the Parish Development Action Plan

Background

Just under a year ago, two working groups comprising 20 parishioners were set up to discuss a possible parish response to the Diocese of Ely's Strategy Document 'People Fully Alive'. The groups met across April and May in 2016 over a 5 week period to discuss the four levers for growth, which had been identified in the Strategy Document :-

1. To nurture a confident people of God.
2. To develop a healthy church and leaders.
3. To serve the community.
4. To re-imagine our buildings.

The main priorities which emerged from these discussions were presented to members of the congregation on Trinity Sunday with a shared lunch together. The Plan was agreed by the PCC at its meeting on June 14th 2016. The following weeks copies of the Plan in the form of an A5 booklet were given out at Sunday services. Each strand was allocated a leader from within the congregation to ensure that each strand was progressed.

Leaders are:-

Strand 1: Ann Williams

Strand 2: Christian Laughton / Angie Robertson

Strand 3: Judy Ruff

Strand 4: Philip Barrett

The Plan is designed to go across a 10 year period, taking us up to 2025. During this time, it is expected that the Plan will change, be adapted and amended as needs and priorities emerge. However, it does set out a clear programme for how we can move forward as a parish,

supported by Diocesan training, resources and expertise to fulfil our mission both within and outside of the worshipping community of St Mary's St Neots.

So, what has happened to date?

Strand 1: Nurture a confident people of God

To renew and refresh the prayer life of the parish

This area of the development plan has replaced, if temporarily, the work of the Christian Nurture Group. Originally, it was decided to concentrate on growing the prayer life of the church, but this has evolved to other initiatives. A prayer board has replaced the basket for prayer requests in the Lady Chapel, but it hasn't been used very much as the church has only recently re-opened on a daily basis. There needs to be a more prominent and permanent place for it. An addition to the prayer concerns on the weekly pew sheet is the inclusion of the names of those recently baptised or whose anniversary of baptism is that week. A variety of Christian books has been placed in church and all are available to be borrowed by anyone interested.

To expand opportunities for people to meet and discuss their faith

A new house group, hosted by Tony Murfin and led by Ann Williams, began just after Christmas, meeting on a Thursday evening. It stopped for Lent and will resume after Easter. All those going to the house group have attended the Monday evening Lent group.

- 1. To ensure that visitors and those new to the church feel welcome**
- 2. To encourage lay members of the congregation to train as leaders within the parish**
- 3. To expand and develop the work with children and young people**

It is encouraging to see the growth in number and in confidence of those meeting at Play Church, and one of the mums is happy to lead the worship occasionally. Initial discussions about Bible Study for the adults are underway, in conjunction with Eynesbury. Christine Green's initiative of a silent vigil for peace each Friday has provoked thought and interest from passers-by. Christine has been supported by members both of our congregation and of other churches. There has been a concerted effort to visit more regularly those who have become too frail to attend church.

Strand 2: To Develop a Healthy Church and Leaders.

❖ Improve Communication.

1 Ensure website is up to date.

- This started well with Paula Phipps taking on this role – she has subsequently had to resign and we need to identify a permanent replacement. A situation vacant notice for a "Communication Officer" will be posted in the magazine and in church.

2 Use local media and other outlets to publicise church work.

A “Welcome Leaflet” has been produced with 1500 copies printed. Approximately 300 were taken to St Mary’s School for distribution at their discretion. Approximately 400 were also given out to people attending the Christmas services during December 2016 and the leaflets are now available in church for visitors or anyone to take. It lists some of our weekday activities as well as the main services in the Parish Church and information on “Fresh Expressions at Loves Farm Chaplaincy. It also has very basic information on the Parish Church building and a prayer for people who may be visiting the church for sanctuary from problems or pain.

The main problem with printed material is keeping the information up to date and we note that one service time has changed and one group had disbanded since printing.

3 Produce a display in church for enhanced understanding of diversity of groups and initiatives currently in place.

- A Display Board has been erected in the North West area of the church. This shows all the activities that happen within the church and also show where church members are active in outreach in the town. There is available a list of all the contact names and telephone numbers for every activity shown. From time to time we hope to be able to focus with more detail on some of the activities with photographs and contact details of the people to contact.

❖ Develop pastoral work across the parish

1 Establish a systematic and geographically focused model for pastoral visiting.

- This has had some provisional discussion and we shall move this forward with a meeting to be arranged after Easter which will include our ALM’s, LLM and Father Paul as they have primary responsibility for Pastoral Care.

❖ To expand the work under the “Inclusive Church” initiative.

1 *This area has not been explored yet.*

Strand 3: Serving the Community

1. To develop baptism support systems

- Ann Williams and Father Paul attended a Bishop’s Study Day in March, where there was a presentation from the Reverend Dr. Sandra Millar on her work for the Archbishop’s Council on Baptism.
- As an outcome from the day a resource pack on Christenings entitled, ‘Amazing Journeys Start Here’ was shared with the PCC at the March meeting. It is full of exciting ideas, research findings on parents’ attitudes to christenings and resources to purchase to support families to understand more about the process.
- The Diocese of Ely is running a ‘Baptism Authorised Lay Ministry Course’ starting in September particularly aimed at training lay people to support their clergy with baptism ministry. I have booked a place on this programme, which involves a Saturday followed by five Wednesday evening sessions, starting on the 20th September. It is free and open to all who are interested in this area of ministry.
- We will be looking at our approaches to baptisms here in the parish and hoping to put together a small group of people who would be willing and

interested in becoming involved with our young families who are enquiring about a christening for their child.

2. To ensure that the PCC works effectively and efficiently and members understand their roles and responsibilities

- We are now moving forward with up to three focused meetings across the year. This will mean that we have more time to discuss key areas of our mission in the community and to agree a strategy that will be best suited to meet our needs.
- The Parish Development Day on the 1st April came out of discussions around the fact that we needed to hear from key members of the Diocesan staff about their thinking on the various levers, resources that could be deployed for us to use and to learn from other parishes with innovative approaches to working with and reaching out to the wider community.

3. To work with local schools

- The Local Governing Body at our parish church school, St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy, is made up of a majority of members from the St. Mary's Church congregation. These people are giving up their time willingly to support and guide the school as it seeks to improve practices and therefore the life chances of its pupils.
- Ann Williams holds the post of School Chaplain and Father Paul leads weekly collective worship at the school.
- Other members of the church congregation go into school on a regular basis to support reading and this is a very valuable support for the children.

4. Development of an effective stewardship model for use within the parish

- The recent letter sent out encouraging congregation members to review their current levels of giving had had a limited response.
- We continue to look for an effective stewardship model, which has a proven success record in other parishes to see if the amount of regular pledged giving can rise.

5. To encourage awareness and understanding of the work of local, national and international Christian charities and organise charitable giving

- This area has not yet been explored or addressed.

Strand 4: To re- imagine our buildings.

Following our previous sessions we agreed a general plan and are now listing to various ideas being put forward by various staff from Ely. The initial start has been to look at health and safety to provide a position to be able to serve hot water for supplying drinks with in the church. We have sourced equipment specification and prices and are about to produce this for agreement. To enable the church to be used more the first level is to remove the pews in the rear of the church, replace the flooring as at the front of the church and then make the rear pews movable as at the front. This will enable the church to offer more functions that require the larger building which is not available within the centre of the town. We have asked builders for quotations for this work so then we can look at funding.

Judy Ruff