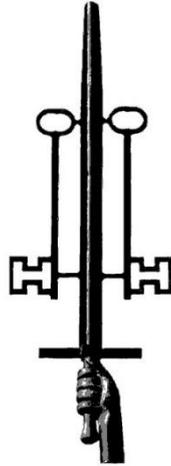




God's growing family; praying, loving, transforming.



*Annual Parochial
Church Meeting*

Celebrating the Life of our Church

Monday 23rd April 2018

7:30 pm

The Chapter House

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LIST OF SIDESMEN

Tony Brown	Rachel Thompson	Rebecca Edmunds
Richard Harris	John Russell	Mary McKeand
Gill Anstee	Stuart Anstee	Anthony Davis
Wendy Harris	Ian Cook	Steve Simmons
Trevor Davis	Carol Latham	Carol Thompson
Dennis Gale	Brenda James	Ciaran Diver
Sheila Briggs	David Golding	

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
to be held on Monday 23rd April 2018, at 7:30 pm
in the Chapter House of St Peter and Paul's Church

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

- 1. Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 24th April 2017**
- 2. Election of 2 Parochial Church Wardens**
- 3. Election of 2 Deputy Wardens**
- 4. Chair's Closing Remarks**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners
held on Monday 24th April 2017, at 7:30 pm
in the Chapter House of St Peter and Paul's Church

The Revd Lucy Davis chaired the Meeting and led the opening prayers. She welcomed 30 parishioners which was the same number as last year.

**1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY
24th ARIL 2016.**

These were signed as a true record.

2. ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

Two nominations had been received for Churchwarden. Ciaran Diver had been Proposed by Anthony Davis and Seconded by David Watson and David Watson had been Proposed by Mary McKeand and Seconded by Anthony Davis. As there were no other nomination it was unanimously agreed that Ciaran and David be our Churchwardens.

3. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Lucy said it is an absolute delight to work alongside Ciaran and David and she was so glad they are both able to take on the role again this year. She thanked them for all that they do.

4. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHURCHWARDENS

Lucy explained that Deputy Wardens are people who are actually doing this job at the moment. They are helping to set up on a Sunday and also helping in Church and by appointing them as Deputy Wardens this will assist the Churchwardens and allow them to have a Sunday off occasionally. Two nominations had been received for Deputy Wardens. Mary McKeand had been Proposed by Tony Brown and Seconded by Helen Butler and Richard Harris had been Proposed by Carol Thompson and Seconded by Marion Tucker. As there were no other nominations it was unanimously agreed that Mary and Richard be our Deputy Churchwardens. Lucy said she was very grateful to them for taking on this role for us.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

to be held on Monday 23rd April 2018, at 7:30 pm
in the Chapter House of St Peter and Paul's Church

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 24th April 2017**
- 3. To receive**
 - a. The Electoral Roll**
 - b. A Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council**
 - c. A Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod**
 - d. The Annual Report and Financial Statements 2015**
 - e. A Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments**
 - f. A Report on Safeguarding in the Parish**
 - g. Mission Action Plan**
 - h. Reports from Church Groups**
- 4. Election of 9 Representatives to the Parochial Church Council**
- 5. Appointment of Sidesmen**
- 6. Appointment of an Independent Examiner to the PCC.**
- 7. A Report of the Ministry and Witness of the Church throughout 2017**
- 8. Questions**
- 9. Closing Remarks**

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
held on Monday 24th April 2017, at 7:30 pm
in the Chapter House of St Peter and Paul's Church

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Rachel Thompson, Alison Billington, Helen Mckay, Kevin Sims and Win Barker.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 18th April 2016

These were signed as a true record.

3. To Receive

a. Electoral Roll

The Roll was now standing at **141** an increase of **24**. Lucy thanked Dennis for all his work on the Roll this year and she much appreciated this legal job he had undertaken.

b. Report on the Proceedings of the PCC

Lucy thanked Jennie for her role as PCC Secretary.

c. Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod report was received. Tony and Rachel have been our Representatives on the Deanery Synod for the last three years. Tony pointed out the size of the Deanery which runs from the A1 down to Woburn Sands which makes it the largest Deanery in the Diocese.

d. The Annual Report and Financial Statement 2016

Steve gave his first report as Treasurer taking over from Helen in April 2016. He thanked Helen who had helped him with the changeover and he also thanked Anthony who undertakes all the book-keeping and provides so much information to the PCC including the production of the monthly Report and Financial Statement. He also wanted to thank Terry Thurley our Independent Examiner who gives his services free of charge. Everyone had received a copy of the Report and Financial Statement either prior to, or at the Meeting. He particularly pointed out that the figure of £10,159 shows the surplus of Income over Expenditure. He also said that planned giving had increased by 37% following the campaign. He said he hoped that the meeting would agree that the reports and financial statements show a true and healthy state of last year's finances and activities.

Mary said it was pleasing to see an increase in gift aid.

Lucy thanked Steve very much for all his work on the accounts and commented that he was a Treasurer with "a sense of humour"!

e. A Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

The written report was received. Ciaran said the only thing to highlight was the Quinquennial Inspection which took place in May 2016. A 59 page report identified 100 individual tasks that need to be considered over the next five years. To complete all these tasks would cost over £100,000 and therefore work will be prioritised. Lucy said that the Church had been very well cared for over the

years which was due to our present and past Churchwardens and she also thanked the Fabric Team which has been newly set up in the last year.

f. A Report on Safeguarding

The written safeguarding report was received. Wendy said it had been a challenging year and Lucy commented that while there is no room for complacency we are in good shape here trying to keep up with everything. She thanked Wendy so much for all her work and expertise.

g. Mission Action Plan

Lucy reported that we came to the end of our five year plan and this year has been spent discerning where we might be going with God in the next five years. The process of renewing our MAP started in the Spring and by the Autumn we were ready to priorities our goals leading to a renewed Mission Action Plan in 2017. The steering team have put forward four things to do this year and also a five year document. Lucy circulated the Mission Action Plan Spring 2017 – Spring 2022 document.

h. Reports from Church Groups

Lucy said all the reports from our various groups made for very encouraging reading. She said it was absolutely amazing what goes on in the Church and the ways in which this Church has responded to God's love in this place and beyond.

4. Election of 4 Representatives to the Parochial Church Council

There are four spaces on the PCC these are due to Alison Billington and Paul Swannell, who has been co-opted for a number of years, standing down. Lucy was sorry that they were not at the meeting but thank you letters will be sent to them. There were two nominations: Mary McKeand Proposed by Tony Brown and Seconded by Carol Thompson, and Richard Harris Proposed by Helen Butler and Seconded by Carol Thompson and unanimously agreed. There are still two spaces for co-options during the year if appropriate.

5. Election of 3 Representatives to Deanery Synod

Because we have grown we are entitled to 3 members on the Deanery Synod who are elected for three years. We have to be prepared to work together as a lot of the Churches are getting smaller. Nomination had been received from Tony Brown who was Proposed by Mary McKeand and Seconded by Carol Thompson, Rachel Thompson Proposed by Ciaran Diver and Seconded by Anthony Davis and Karen Rabjohn Proposed by Anthony Davis and Seconded by David Watson. Tony, Rachel and Karen are ex-officio members of the PCC.

6. Appointment of Sidesmen

List of Sidesmen appears on page 2. This is an important function as it is the first face on the door when people enter the Church. Richard Harris Proposed and Steve Simmons Seconded the list of sidesmen which was agreed unanimously.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Mary McKeand Proposed Terry Thurley to be the Independent Examiner which was Seconded by Brenda James and unanimously agreed.

8. A Report of the Ministry and Witness of the Church throughout 2016, offered by Revd Lucy Davis, Vicar

“It’s a huge pleasure to offer some reflections on our common life as the Church here in Flitwick. Jesus came to bring abundant life, and our life together here in 2016 was certainly abundant! So abundant that it’s pretty difficult to know where to start, so I’ll start with God.

At the heart of all we do is God. Without God at our heart and in our hearts Church become a Sunday Club with some communal singing! We find our identity in our worship together and we respond to our Living God in that worship. The core of our worship is our Parish Eucharist at 10:30 on a Sunday morning, with a faithful congregation continuing to gather at St Andrews at 9 am. 2016 saw some additional forms of worship which have enriched our approach to God, especially during Holy Week. We had a memorable procession from Manor Park on Palm Sunday, starring Pixie the Pony. Eucharists on the evenings of Holy Week, with testimonies offered by members of the congregation, led into a Maundy Thursday evening service of foot washing and stripping the altar which many present found emotional and effecting. After the darkness of Good Friday we met Easter Day with a 7 am service of vigil and first light as we approached the mystery of the resurrection. This was followed at 10:30 by an All Age Service including a giant daffodil and plenty of chocolate.

Our aim worship is always to offer our very best to God. This takes the dedication of a huge number of people, it's not just a question of the vicar strolling in on a Sunday morning. We need to thank also our cleaners, brass polishers, sidemen, readers, intercessors, bell ringers, readers, servers, chalice assistants, flower arrangers, organist, choir, choir mistress and music group all of whom make it possible for us to approach God when Sunday morning comes. In the Autumn of 2016 Rachel Thompson and Sophie Tucker started training as Lay Leaders of Worship, a wonderful development of their own existing vocations. We look forward to them offering their skills in leading worship in varied ways once they are commissioned.

Prayer and study of the scriptures are not limited to a Sunday morning. Our pattern of morning prayer forms the heartbeat of our prayer during the week. During the last week of May had a series of prayer walks through Flitwick as we prayed that people would come to know Jesus Christ, and on a Saturday in Lent hosted a prayer space in conjunction with Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick. Our work ecumenically with other Christians in the town is vital to our witness, and I would encourage any here to become involved as a representative with Churches Together along with Mary McKeand. Back at this Church and following a very well attended Pilgrim Course in Lent 2016, I was delighted that a group decided to continue to meet to study the bible together on a regular basis. This group has developed and continued to meet outside Lent and Advent, facilitated in the Autumn by Ian Smith. Ian joined us in September from Toddington for the final year of his training for ordination, and we have very much enjoyed his fellowship, leading of worship, teaching and preaching. Our prayers go with him as he is ordained this Summer and begins his curacy in Silsoe, Flitton and Pulloxhill.

In the Spring, after thinking together as a whole congregation, we developed our vision statement, expressing who we want to become: God's growing family: praying, loving, transforming. So, keeping God firmly first, I turn to the second and third word. Growing and Family.

Growing. Well, yes, we are! Anyone who worships with us regularly will see that we are growing. I want to give you some context. An average church will decline by 12% from the start of a year-long vacancy to the end of the first year of a new incumbent. In the equivalent period, September 2014 to September 2016, Flitwick Church grew by 26%. In other words, there were 39 more people worshipping with us each Sunday than we might expect if we were average. The evidence is that Churches who are prepared to change are prepared to grow, and small, incremental changes have a significant impact. Change is not always easy, but I believe that our shared vision is helping to move us towards who we can become with God. Growth brings its own challenge as we make space for new members of the family, space not just in our pews, but through encouraging the ministry of every individual in all sorts of roles in the Church: servers, readers, intercessors, coffee makers...

Another significant growth in 2016 was to our income, with our Planning Giving campaign more than filling our deficit of £8,000 per annum, thanks to the commitment and generosity of our congregations. Our thanks are also due to the newly formed Planned Giving Team who coordinated the campaign.

A second newly formed group in the year was the Fabric Committee, led by our Wardens and blessed by the involvement of an architect and a drainage engineer from among the congregation. Following the quinquennial inspection on our building in May, the Committee had a list of 100 mostly minor jobs

to tackle. But further investigation of the Lych Gate uncovered more serious repairs, a significant project which the team are taking in hand. One further member of the Fabric Team is John Russell, who has kindly taken on the role of Churchyard Coordinator. The Churchyard is looking in very good shape, especially following two visits from the staff of Tesco as they helped to cut back undergrowth and weed our drains.

Let's turn our attention then to our life as Family. It has been a great joy to see an increase in the number of children worshipping with us, enabled by our wonderful Children's Church team led so ably by Alison. On many Sundays there is a real buzz around Church and in coffee time as the church family of all ages enjoys one another's company. Three of our younger members were prepared to receive Communion in the Autumn, and the occasion of their first communion was a wonderful celebration – with cake. As well as the usual services, Advent saw a Posada, an olive wood crib travelling round from house to house, making space for Jesus at this busy time of year, and bringing the Church family into each other's' homes for hospitality. We have also been brought together as a Church family on a quiz night and harvest lunch, this latter arranged and hosted by our new Events Team; another of our newly formed groups this year. As we care for one another as family, a group undertook Pastoral Care training to enable us to visit those who are house bound or unwell, and we hope that area of ministry will continue to expand in the coming months.

The family of this Church is perhaps at its best when we are working together for a common cause, and our Craft Fair in November, led by the events team was one such event! From publicity to baking, sewing and knitting to table moving, tea brewing to raffle ticket selling, it felt at times as though every member of the congregation was involved one way or another. The day was a huge success, with outside stall holders very happy and Steve our treasurer very happy with the £2,000 profit!

It is wonderful to look back at the things we have achieved as God's Growing Family here in Flitwick. But we would be failing as Church if we concentrated on Church Family alone. There have been many ways we have connected with the wider community of Flitwick this year. Not least of course is through pastoral offices: we saw 27 children and 2 adults Baptised, celebrated 13 weddings including of course our own Helen Sims to Dave McKay, and took 37 funerals either in Church or at the Crematorium, sadly saying goodbye to Jean Osgood, Wilf Bunker, Susan Waters and Mary Mitchell from our own church family. Over the course of the year, these pastoral services bring us into contact with literally thousands of people, which is a huge privilege and a significant opportunity of showing God's love to those around us. I'm grateful to all those who help with these services from preparation to music to verging. In the Autumn, Marion Tucker, Carol Thompson and I undertook a day's training about engaging with Baptisms and Baptism families. We left enthused and with new ideas of little things to try as we work out the best way to those who approach us to ask for Christenings.

Also involving Marion and Carol, but with different hats on, perhaps our largest scale engagement with the local community this year was through our Flower Festival. Held on the weekend of our Patronal Festival for St Peter and Paul, the flower team here organised the most fantastic number and mix of groups to be involved from flower clubs to Brownies, the WI to local schools. The Church was not only full of wonderful displays but full of people as well over the two days. The kitchen team did a superlative job with lunches and teas and a great time was had by all. We even got a spot on local radio and in the paper! Saturday night saw a packed church as we were treated to a wonderful concert from the Salvation Army, with half time drinks taken on the lawn. On our Saints Day on the Sunday we had the pleasure of welcoming Bishop Robin Smith as our preacher, and then rounded off the celebrations with a barbeque for the Church Family. Nobody really seemed to want to go home!

Part of our Mission Action part was to look at ways of expanding our engagement with local schools. Following a Deanery Living God's Love day with a visit from Bishop Alan in September, along with various other nudgings of the Holy Spirit, we began to explore taking Open the Book into Kingsmoor and Templefield Lower Schools. These are assemblies based on Bible stories delivered by a small team and with lots of involvement from the children. We are beginning to build a team and resources and are delighted at this emerging area of ministry with the young people of the town. A number of

unchurched families continued to enjoy our Monthly Messy Church during 2016; at the end of the year it was decided to take a break for a while as we reassess the best way forward for this fresh expression of Church. But, to paraphrase the line from the movies, “We’ll be back!”

The second part of our vision statement is a tag line: Praying, Loving, Transforming. From our prayers, love in action must emerge. In his first letter, John says “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” We show God’s love to the world in many ways. Corporately, we do this through our support of various charities during the year. Individually I know many, many of this congregation who live out their Christian faith in innumerable ways. But if we are truly to transform the lives of those around us by our lived-out faith, we need to work together as Christ’s body here to meet the needs of those around us and actively take our part in building God’s kingdom. In the Autumn as a congregation and led by a Mission Action Plan steering group, we began the process of looking and discerning where God might be taking us next. A presentation about the needs of Flitwick was followed up by a questionnaire to members of the congregation and others in the town as we began to think how we might transform the lives of local people for God’s sake.

I’m going to cheat a little here and slide into 2017 when through a process of thinking and feedback with the PCC and the whole congregation, we developed our new Mission Action Plan for the next 5 years. This is the road map for our way ahead with God. Please do take a copy home with you and pray for the different elements. It is both an exciting and a challenging plan, one which we hope will value the ministry of all involved in Church and reach out with God’s love into Flitwick.

It is impossible to cover everything in this report. There are so many who give sacrificially to our common life in so many ways. Our thanks are never enough, but please know that the ministry of every single person is valued and recognised not just by me or by us here, but by God, the one who made us and saves us.

9. Questions

Karen asked about our MAP and how would she know what was happening?

Lucy replied that there would be updates asking for help, publicity coming out and things will be advertised and there will be information on the website.

Anthony asked about the growth in the year after the vacancy? Lucy replied that we have continued to grow since then in the region of 34%.

Karen asked if the Childrens' Church had grown. Lucy was not sure but asked Wendy who said that sometimes there was one child and another twelve and because of family life these days she couldn't really see this changing.

10. Closing Remarks

Ciaran gave the closing remarks. He said that last year we looked forward to the development of our Church following Lucy's arrival and it is safe to say that we have indeed moved forward over the previous year. We have seen many new initiatives in lots of different areas of Church life and we are thankful to Lucy and to God for the challenges to which we have all risen. We have seen remarkable growth in our Church both in terms of numbers attending services on a regular basis and in terms of the outreach within our community. We have an increasingly positive financial outlook and more resources to accomplish greater things in the future. We should be proud of what we have already achieved, and myself and David, as Churchwardens would like to thank each and every one of you for your help and support in making this possible. It is clear that each of us possesses “Gifts of the Spirit” and have come together to form a vibrant Church with a renewed energy and sense of purpose. Looking forward, there is still much to do and there are so many more opportunities to advance God's mission here in Flitwick. So I encourage you all to continue to offer your support as we work towards our vision : **God's growing family, praying, loving, transforming.** Thank you.”

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The Electoral Roll has been revised this year in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

- In April 2017 there were 141 persons on the electoral roll.
- During the year 7 people left and 20 people joined the roll.
- The net effect is that the total has risen by 13 in the last year.
- There are 154 persons on the new Electoral Roll.

Of these, 32 live outside the parish.

Richard Fullbrook
Electoral Roll Officer

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

Background

The Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility of the maintenance of the Parish Church and Chapter House, and for St Andrews Hall, Windmill Road.

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, or co-opted during the course of the year. Three members of the PCC sit on the Deanery Synod which provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

The PCC have had seven meetings in the year and the Standing Committee consisting of the Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary and one member of the PCC have met five times. We have been pleased to see our Church growing here in Flitwick and Lucy and the PCC continue to work together to do God's work in Flitwick. All members of the PCC have been DBS checked and all have attended a safeguarding training course. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a registered charity.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC (number of meetings attended in brackets):-

Incumbent	Revd. Lucy Davis	Chair	(7)
Churchwardens:	Ciaran Diver	Lay Chair	(6)
	David Watson		(6)
Representatives of the Deanery Synod			
	Dr Tony Brown		(7)
	Mrs Rachel Thompson		(3)
	Mrs Karen Rabjohn		(4)

Elected Members	Mrs Jennie Frost	Secretary	(7)
	Mr Dennis Gale		(6)
	Mrs Rita Gale		(6)
	Mrs Wendy Harris		(6)
	Mr Richard Harris		(6)
	Mrs Valerie Hyde		(6)
	Mrs Brenda James		(4)
	Mrs Mary McKeand		(7)
	Mr Steve Simmons	Treasurer	(3)
	Mrs Carol Thompson		(7)

*Jennie Frost
PCC Secretary*

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Synod had three meetings.

27th March at Flitwick

Election of officers.

Deanery MAP (Mission Action Plan). New housing estates, Work with Schools.

Social Media Revd Lucy Davis.

4th July at Langford

Speaker Dean Pusey, Diocesan Youth Officer

What should we do if there no youth in our Church?

What could be done together as a Deanery?

How would we organise a Deanery Youth event?

8th November at Ampthill

Speaker Revd Canon Tim Lomax, Diocesan Director of Mission

Areas of Mission aimed at Young.

Mission Action Plan aimed at people who did not attend Church.

Fresh Expressions programme to enable the wider community to engage with the Church.

Parish Share Factor

At the moment the Share Factor is 1.1 and the Pastoral Committee recommended this be maintained.

The Synod agreed to this (several Parishes indicated they had had difficulty in meeting the Quota)

Tony Brown

A REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

1. St Peter and St Paul's

1.1 Quinquennial Inspection Progress

Following the quinquennial inspection last year, signification progress has been made by the Fabric Committee towards rectifying the issues that were identified in the report. Of the tasks identified, major repairs to the Lychgate roof and walls were deemed most urgent and work will commence this

May. Thanks to the magnificent efforts of the Fundraising Group, all the necessary funds to cover the cost of the Lychgate repairs have been secured.

The rubber-backed carpet tiles have been removed from the lower part of Sanctuary in order to assist with the drying of the floor following the repairs to the external walls.

The Fabric Committee continues to progress through the actions from the quinquennial report as well as investigate other issues and projects, such as the fitment of additional speakers in the church and Chapter House, and the practicalities associated with the future opening of the church during daylight hours.

1.2 Church Maintenance

One-off unbudgeted repairs over the year included:

- Repairs to the water heater in the kitchen (£114);
- Repairs to the organ to fix a split pipe;
- Repairs to splits in the lead on the North and South aisles (£399);
- Repairs to water inlet valve (£120);
- Replacement wireless router purchased (£70).

1.3 The Churchyard

The Churchyard Team continue to perform an excellent job in maintaining the churchyard and ensuring that it is presentable throughout the year. Our thanks to:

- John Russell for continuing to manage our churchyard plan;
- Don McKeand for managing the mowing rota;
- The Mowing Team for keeping the grass neat and tidy throughout the year.

1.4 General Housekeeping

Routine housekeeping activities included:

- Portable Appliance Testing was completed in June;
- Servicing the roof alarm in July;
- Annual inspection of the fire extinguishers in July;
- Archdeacon's Inspection was completed in August;
- Servicing the church and Chapter House boilers in October;
- Checking and clearing the drains and gutters in November.

2. St Andrew's

Peter Franklin has continued to undertake maintenance and minor repairs to the building and grounds.

Various repairs were completed including reattaching wall and ceiling panels, fixing the guttering, repairs to the toilets and constructing a pair of disabled ramps.

3. The Year Ahead

The main focus for the coming year will be to complete the repairs to the Lychgate and to continue to tackle the quinquennial report. After the Lychgate project, the main areas of attention will be repairs to the South Porch and addressing the flooring in the Chancel, Sanctuary and under the Tower (as recommended in our quinquennial inspection).

4. Thanks

Our thanks to:

- The Fabric Committee for their work in maintaining the fabric of our churches;
- Rosemary Spilling, Dennis Gale and Rita Gale for their work at St Andrew's;
- Val Hyde, vergers and booking secretary for the Chapter House;

- Steve Simmons and Anthony Davis who have kept our accounts in order and helped sort out all the necessary payments for our repairs;
 - And finally to all the unseen volunteers from the congregation, too numerous to mention here, who gave of their time and talents to perform invaluable work in keeping both our churches presentable and welcoming throughout the past year.
- Thank you to you all.

Ciaran Diver and David Watson (Churchwardens)

A REPORT ON SAFEGUARDING REPORT

I am pleased to report that during the last year our Safeguarding policies and procedures have continued to work well and have been supported fully by the Vicar, PCC and volunteers. I am particularly grateful for the positive response from new volunteers to the not inconsiderable recruitment and suitability checks they undertake, as well as the safeguarding training that is now required.

We continue to review our practices in line with requirements and recommendations in the regular Diocesan Safeguarding Newsletters. This year in particular, The Diocese of St Albans and the Church of England as a whole has raised the profile of our need as church communities to support victims of Domestic Abuse. Therefore we have adopted and displayed the Diocesan Policy as a means of communication of this and Rev Lucy has referred to this in a sermon. Also it is now recommended that Sidesmen receive basic safeguarding training so this was incorporated into a Sidesmen Briefing Morning, which was attended by a large proportion of the current Sidesman.

In September 2017 St Albans Diocese undertook an Independent Safeguarding Audit, the results of which are available on the Diocesan website. They have reported that although the result was positive it will not lead to complacency and there will be further improvements to come. One consideration is that although the diocesan leadership are fully committed to safeguarding there is sadly still reluctance in some parishes to accept that it is relevant to them. I am very pleased to say this does not appear to me to apply to us here in Flitwick.

All this means we are once again in a good position to complete and return the diocese Safeguarding Declaration Form, which forms part of our annual return. However, I must stress to you again that policies and procedures are just part of safeguarding the young and vulnerable in our parish and it is important that everyone, whether or not specifically involved in activities, remain aware and are confident to discuss with Lucy or me any worries or concerns they may see or hear either within the church or in the parish in general.

Wendy Harris

MISSION ACTION PLAN

Our new MAP (Mission Action Plan) was launched in March 2017, following extensive input from the whole congregation, and covering the 5 years through to 2022.

This year we have:

- continued to contribute regularly to the local NEED project through collection points in the Church and Chapter House.

- seen an enriched pattern of worship on Sunday evenings, including Contemporary Worship and healing services. We have also had a Harvest Songs of Praise service and Nine Lessons and Carols.
- re-established Messy Church, with very successful events in October and December.
- begun a monthly soup lunch, which is rapidly becoming popular and well established in the Church calendar.
- continued Open the Book assemblies in two local lower schools with them help of an ecumenical team.
- had a presence at the Flitwick Carnival and leafleted a number of street with welcome fliers, including the new estate on Steppingly Rd.
- seen the establishment of a regular home group and bible study group.
- run a seekers courses based on 'Puzzling Questions'.

Other areas of the MAP already seeing progress are Open Church, charitable giving, welcome, Fresh Expressions and the further development of the Churchyard.

It is remarkable how far we have come in just one year, and we look forward to seeing what the next four years will hold.

Lucy Davis

REPORTS FROM CHURCH GROUPS

Bell Ringers

We currently have 9 experienced ringers. We have recently held a ringing taster session that was attended by 9 people. All have said that they would like to carry on and learn to ring.

The bells were rung for most Sunday services and for most weddings where bells were requested, the exception being one or two midweek weddings where it is always difficult to raise a band.

The bells and fittings are inspected by the ringers on a regular basis to ensure that the frame, ropes, wheels, pulley blocks, stays, sliders, headstock and clapper bolts are in good order. Whites of Appleton also carried out a bi-annual inspection in April 2017. All fittings were fully inspected and found to be in good order. The next inspection is due in Spring 2019 and the ringers will arrange for this to be carried out. Some of the rope tail ends are showing signs of wear and it is likely that new ropes and sallies will be needed within the next 2-3 years.

Paul Swannell

Children's Church

Children's Church meet at St Peter and St Paul Chapter House during the morning Holy Communion Service every Sunday in school term time except the 1st Sunday when everyone is welcome to join in with the Sunday Celebration in church. We start at 10.25am and aim to join the service at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer.

At present there are 7 Children's Church Leaders, all of whom have successfully undergone the required DBS checking and recruitment procedures. There is a minimum of 2 adults each session organised on a flexible rota system, which is set at the beginning of each term and we use materials from ROOTS, that follows the Church of England Lectionary. Therefore, the children are usually

learning from the readings of the week that are used in the church service. Leaders work hard to plan and prepare interesting and stimulating activities for the children, bearing in mind we never know how many will come along.

We actually have approximately 18 children on our register, representing about 11 families, although the average weekly attendance is only between 5 and 8 children. However, Rev Lucy assures us that this is in fact very good, as many churches have no children attending at all. From September 2017 we introduced a group for the Middle School age children, running alongside the younger group. They chose a name for themselves of God's Gang but as there are only about 4 or 5 children who fall into this age group at present the "gang" is in reality only 1 or 2 children on most Sundays, which can be challenging to make their specific activities work. Unfortunately, we are up against so many other weekend activities available for the children in this area, however we may look into some form of additional/better advertising to try to reach more children in this age group.

Wendy Harris
Children's Church Co-ordinator

Choir

The choir has completed another successful year thanks to the dedicated support and enthusiasm of all its members and other occasional singers. A new Bass member was welcomed in January and an "Open House" invitation throughout September brought about eight visitors, three of whom have continued to attend practices and services fairly regularly.

Weekly choir practices have continued on Friday evenings and the choir has sung at all Sunday morning services (except for the first Sundays of each month), for weddings as requested and for other specific occasions including Maundy Thursday, a Deanery Confirmation service Patronal Evensong, Harvest Praise (with "Open House" singers), In Loving Memory and, for the first time for many years, a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Also, a choir of 17 singers came together on Christmas Eve for the Midnight Mass - another great achievement.

New choir robes, ordered from Wippells of Exeter at the end of 2016, were dedicated and worn for the first time in February 2017

Susan Sims
Choirmaster

Helen McKay
Organist

Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick

The Churches together in Ampthill and Flitwick group is made up of representatives from the Anglican churches, the Methodist churches, the Roman Catholic church and Ampthill Baptist church.

The group as a whole has met three times during this year. A sub-committee to plan the Pentecost Celebration has also met. Several events have been organised by the group:
-On each Saturday of Lent a prayer space was set up in each of our six churches in turn. This was the second time that it had been done, attendances were higher than in 2016 and those who came were appreciative of the chance to prayerfully stop in the lead up to Easter and take time out from everyday rush and noise. This event is being repeated this year too.

- On Good Friday the Walk of Witness was held in Ampthill. It was a great experience and very well attended.
- A group from Lidlington church were financially and prayerfully supported as they manned a Christian stall at the Mind Body and Soul day in Flitwick.
- Pentecost Celebrations in 2017 were held at the Hub in Ampthill Park with games, a short service with music from Ampthill Band and cakes!
- At the Remembrance Day Services in both Ampthill and Flitwick wreaths were laid jointly by our six churches.
- At the Christmas Lights switch on in both Ampthill and Flitwick mince pies and leaflets about Christmas activities in all our churches were distributed.
- During Advent a children's sheep trail was arranged in Ampthill.

I am the only lay representative from Flitwick Parish Church who attends this group and a second person to help with this very valuable work with others from different Christian traditions would be very welcome. Revd Lucy is very supportive of the group and her input has been much appreciated.

Mary McKeand

Events Team

The events team consists of eight people who generate ideas and plan the activities, however, it is supported by the entire Church family, without whom the team could not run the events. The team meets roughly every six weeks throughout the year, at the Chair's house. In 2017 the team organised two large fundraising events and two social events.

The Social events were a pancake and quiz night in March and a 'Flitwick Church's got talent' evening in September. Both events proved very popular and allowed members of the Church to come together in a social setting to enjoy each other's company. The events definitely highlighted the talent and the brains within our church.

The two fundraising events were the Summer Fair on May bank holiday Monday and the Autumn Craft Fair, held at the beginning of November.

The Summer Fair was very popular and not only filled the Chapter House, where beautiful cream teas were sold, but used the grass areas around the Church for stalls, a BBQ and a very popular beer and Pimms tent. Stalls also spread on to the lawns of Flitwick Manor, where there were family games. Many people from the local community attended the afternoon and local children entered a best dressed teddy bear competition and a cake making competition.

The Craft Fair was held in Flitwick Village Hall and again attracted many people from the local community. Stall holders were very pleased with the number of visitors and found it a really well run and profitable event, with many asking to return again in 2018. Leading up to the event the Church held craft sessions for some very talented crafters to make items to sell on the Church craft stall, this proved to be really profitable for the Church raising over £800 just on its own! The refreshments were once again a fabulous hit with visitors and raised much needed funds for the Church with a fabulous 'tag-team' of ladies working very hard in the kitchen.

Overall the events organised by the events team and supported by the whole Church family, raised £4,487 towards Church funds, however, the team's remit is to do more than just raise money. They are tasked with bringing the Church family together outside of worship activities and to raise awareness of the Church in general, holding events which encourage the whole community to come together.

Karen Rabjohn

Flower Arranging Team

Our team includes Marion Tucker, Wendy Harris, Val Hyde, Anne Hardy, Carol Thompson, Pat Payne, Noreen Clark and Pam Parker and thanks go to them all for their time and dedication over the past year. In 2017 we provided flowers for 41 weeks of the year including major festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We are grateful to 43 individual sponsors, those who contributed to the basket collections for the major festivals and the Royal British Legion for their generous donation, all of which, ensured the flowers incurred no cost to the church.

Over the past year Marion and Carol have offered wedding couples their services to decorate the church for their wedding. This they did on five occasions which resulted in extra funds being raised for church. They will continue to offer their services in 2018.

In December they also ran again a Christmas Wreath workshop in the Chapter House attended by 17 people. As a result of the profits from the session a further £100 was donated to church funds.

Church flowers are an integral part of church life and we are very lucky to have an enthusiastic team who provide lovely decoration during the church year. New volunteers are always welcome and we encourage anyone with an interest in flower arranging, expert or beginners, to join.

Carol Thompson

Friends of Flitwick Church

The main Friends activity for the last year, as indeed for the last 14 years, was involvement in the annual Bike and Hike event organised by the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust.

The Friends and those who have participated and donated should be proud of themselves. All promised funding is remitted without any need for prompting. No costs are incurred. All funds are sent to the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust, and 50% of this is returned to the Church. The Trust has made a donation to the forthcoming repairs to the lychgate.

In 2017, volunteers went beyond their normal geographical area.

I acknowledge that the annual organisation of this event is becoming burdensome for me, and I am pleased to announce that Richard George has agreed to take this on.

It would be useful if further means of raising funds could be identified. But all funds raised by the Friends are nonetheless made available to the PCC for the upkeep of the fabric.

Derek Shelton - Smith

Healing Team

The Healing Team has existed for quite some time (begun in the days of Barbara Davis and Dr Felicity Savage) and comprises now of a small number of parishioners who pray individually and collectively for those who are unwell and in need of God's healing touch. We pray for those in our parish and the wider community.

We meet on a monthly basis to update the prayer list and then hold a short service of healing which is led by a rota of members.

Over the past year we have also held Healing Services in the Parish Church where all who feel the need of prayer for themselves or loved ones can come and receive prayer.

Crista Long

Little Fishes

Little Fishes is a 'Mother and Toddler' Group for preschool children and babies for mums, dads, grandparents and carers. We meet in the Chapter House on Monday mornings 10. – 11.30, term time only. This is run by a team of Church members of Enid Clark and Lesley Coglan helped by Christine Denton and Rita Gale.

We have regular attendance from grandparents, mums and sometimes Dads. We have a variety of activity toys, jigsaws, books, etc. which are used by the children for the first 45 minutes or so. We also have a craft table for an appropriate specifically pre-prepared activity by Enid each week which the adults help the children.

The children also have fruit and squash sitting at the tables altogether, with the parents having tea/coffee standing away from the children by the kitchen hatch.

We then have a more structured / learning activity for a little while followed by a short singing session with a children's prayer at the end.

Our numbers have increased this year varying from anything from 12 to 22 one week as they attend when able and can vary widely, only knowing on the day. We have adverts and information for Little Fishes with various organisations, including Library, Children's Centre, Church notice board, pew notes, website and magazine.

The charge of £1.50 per child (free for under 3 months) covers the refreshments, all craft materials and occasional replacement/new equipment. We have replaced the substantial folding floor mats at a cost of over £240 which are safer and cleaner, and have also been able to contribute towards the church heating with a cheque for £100 per term.

We appreciate Lucy joining us occasionally for a short time when she can and introducing herself to the new mums and children.

Enid Clark

Magazine

1 Introduction

For over 120 years, Flitwick Parish Magazine has provided its readers with a variety of content including a leading article from the vicar, Church news and events, a Church calendar, a copy of the registers and local advertisements. We still have many of the early editions, extracts from which we publish from time to time. These all serve as a historical record of not only our Church but of a changing world covering two world wars, recessions and booms, and more recently the digital age. Indeed, many of the early editions would not be regarded as politically correct in these days of gender equality.

The production itself has also changed over the years from typewriters, sticking and gluing and photocopying, to computers and digital printing. Whilst it may appear simple to create a

magazine, there is a heavy reliance upon a variety of complex computer software making it less laborious to produce but requiring a different level of expertise. Although our Church has embraced change with new methods of communication, such as email, the website and social media, the paper copy of the Magazine still proves popular with little change in the number of subscribers over the past few years.

2 The Figures

The Magazine continues to cover its production costs through advertising and subscriptions as detailed below. Despite rising year on year printing costs, our annual subscription will remain at £5.00 for the coming year.

Note that the figures below may vary slightly from those published in the accounts as the Magazine year runs from April to March.

2.1 Income

The Magazine has two sources of income, namely subscriptions and advertising.

Subscriptions

Over the past year we had 212 paying subscribers and collected £1,062 (£17 less than the previous year). The numbers remain fairly well-balanced from year to year with new subscribers signing up to replace those that move away.

Advertising

As at 1st March 2018, we had 16 advertisers. During the year we lost one (retired from business) and gained three new advertisers.

The income from advertising for the period 31st March 2017 to 1st March 2018 was £874, which was £162 up on the previous year.

2.2 Expenditure

Printing

Printing ten issues cost us £1,730. This was our only cost and was slightly higher than the £1,610 from the previous year as some editions contained more pages.

We use Copykatz in Bedford to print 350 copies of our Magazine each month. Whilst this quantity is greater than the number of subscribers, spare copies are kept at the church for visitors as well as being distributed to the Library and the Health Centre.

During 2017, we also distributed just under 2,000 complimentary copies to local housing estates as part of our Mission Action Plan and outreach within the community.

Other

There are no other costs associated with the Magazine as our distributors kindly give their time freely.

3 The Year Ahead

Over the coming year, we will continue to produce 10 editions, look to maintain our subscription and advertising base, and distribute complimentary copies to newly built properties in Flitwick.

4 Thanks

Thanks are due to:

- Don McKeand for managing the advertising including the raising of invoices
- Richard Harris for managing the distribution including collecting printed copies from our printers in Bedford, batching them up and delivering them out to our distributors

- Our advertisers for selecting our Magazine as a means for promoting their products and services
- All 22 of our distributors who, come rain or shine, deliver the Magazine to our subscribers in Flitwick and beyond
- Those that contribute articles to help keep the Magazine interesting and relevant for its readers
- Our printers, Copykatz, who complete the print-run within the week so we can get the Magazine delivered on time

And finally,

- All our subscribers for their continued support over the past year.

Thank you to you all.

Ciaran Diver (Editor)

Messy Church

Messy Church took a break at the end of 2016 during which time discussions and much prayer took place. Following the break we decided to relaunch Messy Church but meeting on a Saturday afternoon, instead of in the morning. We hoped that this would enable more families to take part - this has proved to be the case as each session has had between 30 – 40 children and a similar number of adults.

We launched our new Messy Church in October with a Hallowe'en Special – we wanted to put a Christian viewpoint to this secular event and chose the theme of Salt and Light based on Matthew 5 vs 13 – 16. Forty children and their families arrived and carved pumpkins – there were crosses, hearts and even a church – they looked spectacular! Other activities on offer were apple bobbing, pumpkin shaped biscuit decorating, moulding candles, salt painting and glow bowling. It was lovely to welcome back some old friends as well as many new ones.

In December we held a Christmas special based on the Shepherds Story and how heaven and earth mixed as the angels sang. We were very pleased to welcome some real sheep from Redborne School Farm. On arrival the families met the sheep and then took part in shepherd den building (chilly but fun!), decorated sheep cupcakes, made lava lamps, herded balloon sheep, made carrier bag cribs and thought about shepherd and angel prayers. During the worship there was an opportunity to meet some ancient shepherds and take part in the drama.

Since re-launching Messy Church the leadership team has expanded as we have welcomed some new members. We have also been thrilled to see how some Messy Church children have returned as helpers and now make up the Messy Church Young leader team (proudly sporting their new Messy Church tee shirts) and helping to lead the worship and activities, as well as having a go themselves.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with the food and activities for Messy Church and to all those who have supported and prayed for us. Finally, a big thank you to all the children and their families who have taken part.

Jane Thompson

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union theme for 2017 was 'Faith in Action' and we had a stimulating talk by one of our Diocesan Speakers on what can be achieved by using our Christian faith to recognise a need, community or individual, and finding a way to fulfil it.

If you think a day out can be a visit to the seaside, think again. We were encouraged to think of a day's outing to Iceland, a fascinating country, and by going by aeroplane it can be done.

We had a Diocesan Songs of Praise service at St John's Church, Harpenden and one of the hymns was chosen by Val Hyde who also attended the service.

Our most successful afternoon was about the designing and making of the new Diocesan banner, which is very beautiful. We were joined by members of the congregation interested in craft work and had sixteen people at our meeting.

Unfortunately, because of low membership numbers and illness, on another occasion we only had two members at a meeting.

The Lady Day communion was taken by Rev. Richard Winslade, our Deanery Chaplain and the St Luke's tide communion was taken by Rev. Lucy Davis.

We had a branch 'Bring and Share' Christmas lunch this year which was tasty and enjoyable.

As usual, we made the Mothering Sunday posies and the Christingles and we delivered Baptism anniversary cards.

The cake stall after the Mothering Sunday service raised £125.00, which went to the 'Make a Mother's Day' project. Our Overseas fund box raised £40.00, £25.00 was sent to the Diocesan Reserve Fund and £25.00 went to 'Away From It All' to provide holidays for families badly in need of a holiday and cannot afford to finance one for themselves.

At the beginning of the year we had a membership of ten people and we are pleased to say that two more have now joined us. One is a new member and the other is already a member who will be welcomed into our branch. The enrolment and welcome will take place shortly.

We do need more members. We offer fellowship of a worldwide organisation, prayer based with concerns with marriage and family life and larger membership would enable us to increase our outreach.

Flora Harding

Music Group

For many years, we have maintained numbers at 8 or 9 in spite of comings and goings. As Jess left for university, so Rupert rejoined us, now a qualified musician, from the reputed Berklee College in Boston. It has been great to see several of our players progress to bigger things. Before long, our younger instrumentalists may also move on, so the time has come to encourage new players to the group, of whatever age. There is no pressure to be a certain standard, as people gain confidence from simply playing together.

We have been involved in a couple of special events. In December, some of us led carols and Christmas songs at a lively community event in Liddington, organised by the local church. In July, it was our turn to lead Sunday Celebration, a great opportunity to reflect on why we, as a church, sing. We sing together, because we are a worshipping “family”. We listen to each other, as we should in our lives. We try to keep in tune, as we echo God's “perfect pitch”. Finally, and above all, we sing because we worship. We hope our contribution helps.

Richard Luscombe

Pastoral Team

Our Pastoral Group has engaged conscientiously with congregational members through home visiting where needed.

We have started our Outreach via the monthly Church Soup lunch which is held on the first Wednesday of each month. This has proved popular with retired and single congregational members and attendance is steadily increasing. Church members have kindly offered transport to those in need.

We are grateful to all who contribute cakes, soups and their time helping with this event.

Planned Giving Team

The planned giving scheme now has 84 members, 10 more than this time last year. The members of the scheme give between £5 and £250 per month to church (on average about £45), either by standing order or weekly envelopes. Total planned giving increased by 20% in 2017 to £38,239. In 2017, as well as the day to day running of the planned giving scheme, the team sent out letters in the autumn to new and existing members of church who were not already part of the scheme, encouraging them to join. The team also designed a new leaflet advertising legacy giving, which was distributed to members of the congregation and at the funeral planning evening.

Anthony Davis

Scrabble Group

During the year the Scrabble Group met in the Chapter House on the first Monday of every month. Our group of seven members enjoyed the cut and thrust of the game and the break for tea is always welcomed. Scrabble is a competitive game many years old now, with a national competition held yearly. There are many clubs up and down the country enjoying the companionship the game brings. Ours is no exception. The winner with the highest number of points this year was Joan Brown. Congratulations Joan.

We could do with more support and if you wish to try the group please let Jill know.

Jill Coker

Website

The website aims to provide an open, welcoming insight into our church community by providing up-to-date information about our life and activities. The site underwent a complete redesign at the end of 2017 and is now much more user friendly on mobile devices. Subscriptions to the domain name and the web-hosting package have also been extended for a further two years.

Susan Sims
Webmaster

Youth Group

Our youth group has continued to meet monthly throughout 2017 for fellowship and fun. The group has members aged from 12 to 18 and meets either in the Chapter House or the Vicarage depending on the nature of the session. Food is often an important element of the evening, ranging from Pizza to popcorn. Activities this year have also included leading a Sunday Celebration, a movie night and a session about environmental responsibility. We often undertake Bible Study together, and discussion are wide ranging and illuminating. This year, we have also been part of a Deanery wide event, gathering young people from across the area; it was good to be able to meet with a larger group and enjoy input from Dean Pusey the Diocesan Youth Officer. Our thanks are due to Amy Rabjohn who continues to offer her Sunday evenings to lead and encourage our young people.

Lucy Davis