



Wantage

Methodist Church



Annual Church Report

2019

Church Stewards	4
Pastoral	5
Communion Stewards	6
Worship Consultation	7
Music in Church	8
Junior Church	9
Kids@church & YMOSES	9
Movers and Shakers	10
Action for Children	10
Tuesday House Group	11
Wednesday Fellowship	12
Church Lunches	13
Finance	14
Property	17
Chapel Acoustics	18
Copyright	18
Users	19
Communications	20
Circuit Matters	21
Wantage, Grove & Villages Housing Justice Group	22
Wantage and Grove Church Partnership	23
Wantage and Grove Food Bank	24
Wantage and Grove Street Pastors	25
Church Council Membership 2019/20	26
Church Appointments 2019/20	27
Annual Church Meeting Minutes 2018	29

From the Manse....

As we gather for our General Church Meeting, to elect our church stewards, representatives to the Church Council and reflect upon the work of the church; we are very conscious of how over this past year we have seen and felt God's hand at work, guiding, helping, encouraging and supporting us and for that we give Him thanks.

Indeed, there is so much to give thanks for.

We have new people coming to church and for that we say, "Welcome" as well as "Thank you". Thank you for enriching our worship and wishing to be part of us.

We give thanks to all who work so tirelessly and give so willingly of their time, thereby enabling all the various tasks and jobs to be done, we owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

We give thanks for new possibilities and opportunities, the soon to start Monday morning 'drop-in' for example as well as some other initiatives the viability of which, are currently being explored - watch this space!

We give thanks for the willingness of so many to participate in Bible study and other various events throughout the year that seek to deepen our faith and understanding of God and what it means to be disciples in the twenty-first century.

We give thanks for all the love and care that is freely given and shared amongst us as we 'look over one another in love'; crying with those who mourn and for whom life is difficult; celebrating with those who are rejoicing.

We give thanks for the open, welcoming, hospitable nature of our church fellowship, which is non-judgmental and accepting. A safe space to question and explore.

We give thanks for 2020 and all the preparations that are already in hand for our 175th Anniversary next year, an opportunity to look back but also and just as importantly, a launch-pad for mission, witness and service to our town.

We give thanks for our church building and our magnificent premises and especially this year, the work that has been done in connection with the church acoustics.

We give thanks to God for the lives of those who have died this past year and those who have moved away. Their witness and faith inspired and taught us so much and their influence lives on.

We give thanks for that sense of momentum and excitement that God is at work here and a willingness to work with him.

As this report gives us a snapshot of the past year – we give thanks to God for all that is past and we trust him for all that is to come.

With love and God Bless,

Keith

Church Stewards

Alison Phillips

At the ACM 2018 Carolyn Roche stood down from being a church steward, having done an extra year and we thank her for all she brought to the stewards' team, especially her years as senior. Carolyn had already been appointed a Circuit steward, and our loss is their gain, as they say. Happily, June Grunwald agreed to do another term as steward and we welcomed her back with open arms, although it had only been two years since she completed her first term!

This year we are saying thank you to Heather for her service over the last six years. Life as a steward when you are trying to fulfil duties as a professional in a global company is not easy and we are grateful to her for all she has been able to do for the church as a steward over the past six years.

As stewards, we are very grateful to Keith for all that he has brought to our church and the Circuit since he arrived three years ago. His positive attitude and energy are infectious, and he encourages the stewards in all they do. As a church we have enjoyed many services with a novel twist to them such as 'Pass the Parcel' on Christmas day bringing God's message of love and hope to all, and Keith also finds time to help with Friday lunches, launching angels and tossing pancakes for all those at a recent Worship consultation meeting!

This past year our team of stewards has been reduced to four, so we felt it was time to think of another way to do Sunday jobs to allow stewards time for other commitments. June and Gordon are regular projectionists, and Alison and Heather teach in Junior Church at least once a month, so we planned a role for Sunday Stewards. A Sunday Steward is one who helps on a Sunday before service by putting out the glasses of water, collection bags, setting up the crèche and saying a prayer in the vestry before the service begins, along with any other errands that turn up. After the service they take coffee to the counters in the vestry, tidy the crèche and help clear up the church. This includes dealing with the notice board for the following week, clearing the glasses of water, seeing that the chairs are put away and changing the weekly notices in the hall and on the notice board. We are grateful to Peter Preston, Diana Gawlas and Jan Abrahall for offering to be a Sunday Steward, and welcome any offers from others if you would be interested.

The vestry was renovated during the Summer tidy up of premises, and is now a lovely bright place to be. We are so grateful to Gordon for sourcing suitable furniture and guiding a team of helpers to put it together. Equally useful is a chart which tells you where to find everything!

Also during the Summer the church hosted a Family Day at Letcombe Regis Village hall. This was the idea of Jane Kent following the Church Away day held at church the previous January. Many people turned up, all ages and stages and many brought friends and other members of their families. As it was a week day, some people were unable to attend because of work, but those lucky enough to be on holiday or retired, were glad to meet together for craft, games, conversation and of course the shared picnic. Everyone helped, either with the activities (knitting became a new skill for the younger members), or setting out food and games, even

the washing up is fun when you work in a team. We are very grateful to Jane for coming up with this idea, and there are hopes that we can do it again.

We are thinking of the future now and beginning to plan for 2020 which will celebrate Wantage Methodist Church's 175th birthday and 200 years of Methodism in the Vale. Past ministers have been invited to take a service at different times during the year, and Mark Topping has been invited to come to perform his production of John Wesley. If you have further thoughts or ideas, please contact Keith or one of the stewards.

Speaking on behalf of the stewards I would like to thank the church for keeping the stewards' team in your thoughts and prayers as we continue to serve you the best we can in God's name and in His strength.

Pastoral

Ann Barber

One of the objectives that Keith has expressed from the beginning of his ministry here is for us to become a Dementia Friendly Church, and for that status to be established within the local community, paving the way to Wantage becoming a Dementia Friendly town. To that end our Pastoral meeting last April was the initial event in a planned programme of training towards that goal. The speaker was Louise Morse, a Christian author with much experience of working within environments created to welcome and support people with Alzheimers and Dementia and their carers. The meeting was open to all of the local churches in Wantage and Grove and to everyone in our Circuit.

During the past year we have lost five of our very elderly members. Dot Fern died in April and although Dot had moved from Wantage to live near to her daughter Janet, it was fitting that her funeral was held at our church where she had worshipped for so long. Our oldest member, Lois Knighton was almost 100 years old when she died in September. Unfortunately Lois too had been unable to worship with us for several years through frailty and ill health. The following month, and after a short illness, our longest serving member, Joyce Sharp died. Wantage Methodist Church had played a huge part in Joyce's life for very many years. She had contributed so greatly to every aspect of the church's life and we miss her presence with us. In March, another of our longstanding and well-loved members, Robin Trotter, died following a fall and only weeks away from his 90th birthday in April. Robin held many positions of responsibility in our church over a period of several decades. He served as a Steward, as Church Secretary and, together with Mary, he made Friday evenings at Shell Club such a special time for our young people in the 1980s. Our most recent loss is that of John Fordham who died peacefully at his home on 20th March. John had been a highly respected local preacher and Biblical scholar. He was a very active member of the previous Methodist churches in which he served and worshipped before moving to Wantage. We are sorry that his ill health prevented him from leading worship for us, but we give thanks for John's life and his service to God, and for Margaret's dedicated care of him.

In November there was an afternoon tea for which friends from the Circuit and the local community joined our own church family to say farewell and thank you to Pam Martin just before she left Wantage. Pam has been involved with almost every group and activity, as well as decades of service as a Local Preacher, School Governor, Christian Aid Chairperson, Amnesty International campaigner and tireless worker for social justice locally, nationally and internationally. Her move to Thame to live close to her son Tim and his family has meant that we are all missing her presence and all of her hard work, but Pam left us knowing that her contributions to the work of our church will be valued for ever,

At the younger end of the age spectrum we have during the year also welcomed little ones into our church family. In July Zoe Croft's Baptism took place, and at 'Worship through Thanksgiving' at the beginning of September, the service included a thanksgiving for brother and sister Oakley and Hope Ring. We had another Baptism in October for James, the son of Lucy and Rory Heaver. On each of the occasions the children being welcomed were accompanied by very large groups of family and friends.

Since the newest residential retirement establishment, Renaissance's *Fleur de Lis*, opened very close to us in Church Street, we have welcomed several of its female residents. Some worship with us regularly, and an even larger number have become regular guests at our Sunday Lunches.

For a while we have pondered over how best to maintain our Pastoral Care system in the face of an ever-aging team of Pastoral Visitors and virtually no younger people to come along as replacements. At our next meeting we will consider what changes we may need to make, and how they can be implemented in a sensitive manner. Our aim is to create a system acceptable to our whole church family, in the hope that it will be received and enacted considerately and with love and care.

We are extremely grateful to Keith whose pastoral ministry is such a highly valued and deeply appreciated blessing for our whole church family. We thank him for the pastoral care he gives generously to us all, and for his guidance and support to everyone in our Pastoral Visitors Team.

Communion Stewards

Eileen Rennie

During the period April 2018 to March 2019 we have had eleven 9.00 am, ten 10.30 am, the Easter Day 7.00 am service at the Millennium Stones, Ardington and the 11.30 pm Christmas Eve communion services. The average attendance at the 9.00 am service was 19, and at the 10.30 am was 65. The Easter Day attendance at Ardington was 16. The Christmas Eve attendance was 21. These figures compare favourably with last year. Communion was served in varying ways at the 9.00 am services. At the 10.30 am services it was served either standing at the front or served in the seats. We have introduced serving in the seats now to happen regularly once every quarter. The Benevolent Fund collections totalled £674.76. This shows an increase of £103.66 on last year. We thank all those who have led us in worship at these services.

The current Communion Stewards are Andrew Barber, Rita Lawrence, John Leake, Peter Preston, Eileen Rennie and Graham Wells, all of whom have indicated they are willing to serve for another year. Mary Trotter very ably performs the duty of keeping the communion cloths in pristine condition. She too has agreed to continue in this service. Our thanks go once again to Mary.

Thank you to my entire fellow Communion Stewards and other helpers for their support in ensuring that all the communion duties are fulfilled efficiently.

As always we appreciate any feedback you can give to assist us perform this duty to your satisfaction.

Worship Consultation

Carolyn Roche

Worship Consultation is an open meeting and anyone in the church is welcome to attend and put forward their ideas and suggestions. It meets once a quarter to look at all aspects of worship. The notes from these meetings are available from Carolyn Roche.

The meeting regularly begins with a discussion led by Keith. During the past year this has covered how to celebrate and share good news in the church family, prayers of thanksgiving and praying for those in need, preparing ourselves for worship and being active listeners and what does Advent mean to people. The last meeting was on Shrove Tuesday and we all enjoyed pancakes prepared and cooked by Keith.

The Worship through ... services continued on the first Sunday in the month except when this has coincided with a special Sunday such as Easter Day, Harvest and Covenant. Since the last ACM the themes for these services have included Prayer, Jonah, Poetry, Holidays, Thanksgiving, Colour, Pain, Questions and Change. The latter service was organised as café style church and received many positive comments. Each month a small planning group usually meets with the person who is leading one of these services.

The yearly round of services has continued as usual. At Harvest we again supported an All We Can project with the theme this year called Rays of Hope. Matthew Forsyth from All We Can inspired us when he preached on 15 April and told us how we had helped with the chicken project in 2017. At Advent we used a liturgy supplied by Keith and lit the candles on the Advent ring. The Christmas services followed the usual pattern with a carol service, Christmas Eve communion and AAW on Christmas Day. On 16 December the 10.30 am and kids@church congregations joined together for an AAW nativity service. This included the blessing of 1200 angels. Angel biscuits, made by the children, were greatly enjoyed after this service. 2019 began with the Covenant service and the recommissioning of the Pastoral visitors. Holocaust Memorial Day fell on a Sunday this year and was marked with a service sensitively led by Deacon Selina Nisbett. The Chapel was open all that afternoon for quiet reflection by all of all faiths or none. There is a full programme of activities during Lent including the Sunday Lent liturgy, Bible Study groups and films to make you think. Easter Day begins with the Sunrise Communion at 6 am.

There have been three Local Arrangements during the past year. On 1 July we used pictures from the Methodist Art Collection, some of which had appeared in the Nine Days of Prayer booklet, as a focus for worship. On 18 November the service was based on Bible in a Year – celebrating and reflecting on doing this. Our thanks to Alison Phillips for suggesting the themes used. We are preparing for Palm Sunday which will be the third. Bible Month took place again in June 2018. The book of Jonah had been chosen and this was used as the theme for four services as well as for the accompanying Bible studies. Bible Month will take place again in this circuit in July and the book of Colossians has been chosen.

2018/19 has provided many opportunities for Bible study throughout the year. Eileen has her regular group on a Tuesday afternoon and in Lent and Advent there has been an additional group run by Alison. Eleven people began the Disciple course with Keith on 30 August and are now well into the New Testament. Some have continued the challenge to read the Bible in a year. There is also the opportunity to come to a Bible study led by Keith at 9 am on the last Sunday of the month.

If you have ideas about worship that you wish to express, please come to the next Worship Consultation meeting on Wednesday 5 June at 7.30 pm or, if you are unable to be there, speak to a steward.

Music in Church

Gill Skidmore

As always, many thanks to all the musicians who contribute to the music in our worship. We say a special thank you this year to June Grunwald, who decided to take a well-earned rest after organising the music group for over twenty years. We miss June's contribution, but took the opportunity to review what we do. Over a bring-and-share supper to celebrate all that June has done, we discussed the way forward. Carolyn agreed to be the contact with the preachers. Some churches feature their music group on a particular Sunday every month. This is not very practical at Wantage because of all the "extras" – early communion, kids@church and bible study – which all have an impact on who is available to play. After discussing the options, the group voted to experiment with playing every third Sunday, accepting that we do not know in advance who will be available and the suitability of the service type. It was agreed to review the arrangement after seeing how it worked. If you have any comments to make, please do feel free to share them.

Junior Church

Cath Worth

We have a small group of primary & young secondary school aged children who attend Junior Church regularly. The mix of children varies from week to week based around the same group of regulars and a variety of other children who join us from time to time. Sometimes children of crèche age join us for a story or craft activity. We have continued to use the Roots resources, supplemented by ideas of our own. The group enjoy a variety of activities including looking at bible stories through drama, craft, painting, cooking. The children also attend kids@church. It is a real joy to work with the children.

Junior Church continues to be led by Alison Phillips, Heather Wells & Cath Worth, and we are very grateful to Carolyn Roche for taking the group if the other leaders are not available. It is still tricky to staff some weeks as both Heather and Alison are stewards and so are unable to teach the Junior Church as well as being on duty in the church. Offers of help are always welcome.

Many thanks to all the leaders for their time spent planning, preparing and teaching the children.

Kids@church & YMOSES

Jane Kent

It continues to be a privilege and a blessing to work with our young people in [kids@church](#) and YMOSES.

We enjoy worshipping God and exploring our faith with families on a monthly basis at [kids@church](#). We start in the church with photos on a powerpoint from the last service, a story, song, activity and prayer and then move through to the hall for a variety of activities - cooking, craft, games, parachute fun! Please continue to hold these families in your prayers. A sincere thank you to Linda, Rodney, June, Zack and Jordan who faithfully help us every month. We also want to wholeheartedly thank Nicky who has helped us with refreshments since the very beginning. Keith, Cath, Dave and Jane.

I really enjoy meeting with about 14 young people on a monthly basis on a Sunday evening as YMOSES. It is an ecumenical group drawing young people from a variety of churches. We have lively discussions, share good food, enjoy watching thought-provoking films, grapple with Bible passages and generally have fun together! Thank you for holding these precious young people in your prayers.

Movers and Shakers for Mission and Service

Alison Phillips

A service led by Mathew Forsyth from 'All We Can' was enjoyed last April and many fundraising events have been held during the year. Having launched our two year partnership with this charity after Harvest 2017, donations, breakfasts, coffee mornings, tea parties and a 'Taste of Summer' have all contributed to raising £1475 since September 2018. This charity brings help and relief to many countries round the world. Harvest this year was called 'Rays of Hope' and the money collected went towards buying solar panels for irrigation. Our two years will end this year, and we have yet to decide which charity will be chosen to replace it or whether to continue. Our thanks go to Jane Kent, David and Catherine Worth for co-ordinating our relationship with All We Can, and to the Smith family who have now taken this on.

Following the Dementia Friendly training, details of how to log on to their website are now on our church website. It is hoped that our church will be used again for a further training course this summer.

The Circuit Easter Offering went well last year, but numbers were down and it will be reviewed after this year's service as to whether to continue.

We continue to support Street Pastors and last year's service gave us an opportunity to hear about their work. They will be using our chapel this year for a performance of Mark Topping's 'Impossible God' as part of their fundraising work.

Christian Aid week happened thanks to Carolyn Roche and Helen Carter who organised the resources so that the House to House collection could take place. Around £8000 was raised including the proceeds from Caritas children's choir, and the service which was held in our church. This year Carolyn is willing to organise another House to House collection from May 12th – 19th and the service will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Charlton.

Methodist Homes have been celebrating their 75th anniversary. Booklets were available in the vestibule and an envelope collection was made. Thank you, Heather.

Action for Children prayer cards were put out. Fundraising through boxes continues and it was one of our Christmas charities. Thank you, Carole.

Since Julie moved away, church lunches have been reduced to one on the last Friday of the month and one on the second Sunday of the month. They are well attended and we are very grateful to Julie and her team for carrying on this much appreciated work. The money raised goes towards a number of charities and church funds.

In August an Away Day was planned at Letcombe Regis village hall. There was a 'bring and share picnic' and a variety of crafts and games for all ages to enjoy, and they did! We hope another such event may be planned this year, and thank Jane Kent for her inspiration and organisation.

In December Carolyn and her team of knitters exceeded the previous number of knitted angels, and over 1000 descended on Wantage overnight bringing much joy to all who found them. This year a Facebook page was set up for people to respond

to, and it was evident that the Christmas messages of hope and good will were gratefully received.

Carolyn also brought life back to the Christmas tree festival and many clubs and organisations took part and decorated a Christmas tree. Refreshments, a coffee morning and a Christmas lunch raised £975 for the local charity 'Little People' which will be put to good use, helping struggling families. Thank you, Carolyn, for organising the weekend, and to all who helped.

In January we remembered Holocaust Memorial day and our thanks go to June and Kelvin for organising the opportunity for prayer and quiet reflection in our chapel after the morning's excellent service led by Selina Nisbett.

Wednesday fellowship continues to run smoothly under the organisation of Diane and Mary. We thank them for their dedication and are continually amazed at how Diane fills the programme with such an interesting array of speakers, and special afternoons to match the liturgical time of year.

Thank you everyone for making sure we have flowers each week in church, and special thanks to Ann Barber for making sure the list is constantly filled and that the flowers are delivered to cheer someone up afterwards.

Toilet twinning continues, and our present number of toilets is twelve.

The foodbank collection is ongoing and much appreciated.

Home / World Mission raised £450 with a combined envelope and box collection and therefore support was able to be given to a variety of local charities.

As everyone is aware, there is a lot of new housing being built in Wantage and Grove. Mark Sandels in Grove has taken up the challenge with other local churches to try and visit each new household with information about our churches. We would like to be able to do this in Wantage too, so please contact Keith or a steward if you think this might be something you would like to do. There is training and advice given before you go out visiting people.

Finally, we are looking ahead to 2020 when we shall celebrate the 175th anniversary of Wantage Methodist Church and 200th anniversary of Methodism in the Vale. We are looking at several ideas, but if there is anything you would like us to consider, please let Keith or a steward know.

Action For Children

Carole Robbins

Currently we have got 15 boxholders who raised £244.59 during the last year. Small change is becoming more difficult to find so the collectors have done well. £433 was raised through the Christmas collections making a total of £677.59

If anyone else would like a house collecting box please let me know.

Tuesday House Group

Eileen Rennie

Our lively and friendly group meets on Tuesday afternoons during term time at 50, Warmans Close from 1:30 pm to 3:15 pm.

We have once more had a very successful year. Currently we have 17 people in the group. Our average attendance each week is 14. We are encouraged that one or two new faces have joined the group in the last year. The group is now in its eighteenth year of meeting. Everyone in the group appreciates the fellowship, sharing and caring they find for and from each other which has grown over the years. We are always happy to welcome anyone to this Study Group whether on an occasional or permanent basis.

Each meeting includes prayer, bible reading and discussion. In prayer time we have used the Methodist Prayer Handbook "A World Transformed" and the District Prayer Diary together with our prayers of concern and thanksgiving for people and situations in our own churches, our families, friends and beyond. Our meeting on the first Tuesday of each month includes the monthly prayer list from the newsletter. We start each meeting spending a little time for prayer requests in bringing our concerns to be noted for inclusion in the prayer session at the end of our meeting.

In the period April 2018 to March 2019 we have covered a variety of topics. In April and May we revisited the 5 sessions of the Lent study "On the Third Day". In June we studied Jonah for Bible Month and in July we studied Philemon under the heading "Mending Fractured Relationships". Another topic was Why Religion? based on Psalm 139:1-18 and we finished before our summer break with a Day for Quiet Reflection at St. Mary's Convent based on Jonah and led by Libby Bolton. We met the first week in August for the monthly prayer meeting, afternoon tea and to discuss topics for study for the next twelve months beginning with our return on 4th September. In September and October we followed a Lifebuilder Study entitled "Heaven". Following this we studied some parables based on a DVD and the appropriate Bible reading. Our Advent study this year was the York Course, "Life to the Full". On our return in the New Year we watched the DVD "The Nativity" and then returned to complete our studies of parables. We spent a session listening again to Gareth Powell's talk on Re-affirming "Our Calling" and then attempted to answer the questions posed on his handout at the end of his talk. This brought us to this year's York Lent Course Study "Daring to See God Now". Keith made his quarterly visits to the group and in April talked to us about forthcoming Lent, in July he led Session 3 of Jonah, in September about Crossroads, in December he led our second Advent session and in March he talked about Changing Times. We thank Keith for sharing with us in these meetings.

This year we again decorated a Christmas Tree for the Dickensian Christmas Tree Festival and based it on Heaven

We now look forward to another year's study with the welcome opportunity to study God's word and continue to grow together in our faith. We can assure anyone wishing to join us, at any time of a very warm welcome.

Wednesday Fellowship

Diane Barton

We have been very pleased to welcome a number of new members to Fellowship and have about 25-30 people attending most weeks. We thank Marina who has kindly joined our team of leaders.

We enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Fox and were entertained at our New Year party by a group of singers from Singing for Fun which we very much enjoyed. Our speakers this term have included Robin Radley from Chiks Children's Homes in India, Michael Bailey on his trip to Peru, a local Fireman on the importance of smoke alarms, Hazel Townsend on her train trip to Vienna, Jane King, receptionist at a local surgery and Jon Colville from Treloars. We also visited Aston Pottery in June.

As always we thank Gordon and Clive and their team for their help in getting the hall ready and clearing away, our team of helpers to set up and do teas, Margaret for the rotas and Alan for printing the programme. We are also grateful to Gill, Alison, Nicky, Diana and now Marina for leading and to Carolyn for playing for us.

Our meetings are happy, friendly places and a warm welcome awaits visitors and anyone who would like to come on a regular or occasional basis.

Church Lunches

Julie Horton

Since September lunches have continued on a monthly basis. Friday lunch is the last Friday of the month and continues to support a charity from the profit made. This is a drop-in lunch, where numbers have gone up from 35/40 to 45/55. We are a team of 10 who prepare and serve the food.

Sunday lunches take place on the second Sunday of the month. These numbers have also increased since going to monthly. We do like people to sign up if coming on a Sunday by the preceding Wednesday. It has always been based on self-service in order to use the minimum amount of help. The profit from Sunday lunches goes to church funds to cover costs.

Both lunches remain very popular and prove to be a big outreach to the community. I would like to thank all those who help in the preparation, serving and clearing away.

I am pleased to report that the church's current financial status is good. As you will know, our accounting year runs from September 1st to August 31st, and in November 2018 a full end-of-year financial report for 2017/2018, including formal accounts, was provided to Church Council and approved by our Independent Examiner. This brief report summarises some of the items which members may find interesting from that more comprehensive report, with some update from recent events.

Financially 2017/2018 was another satisfactory year. Our Operating Expenditure again slightly exceeded our General Income, due to substantial expenditure on Special Projects (the renewal or repair of major items) but the overspend was not great. At the end of the year our reserves stood at approximately £54,500 which is close to the reserves policy figure of £55,000 agreed by Church Council in 2016 and confirmed again for 2017/2018. The church also increased its giving to charities considerably.

Table 1 shows the balance of income and expenditure in our Operating Funds last year. Our total income was £63,178 and our expenditure was £65,438, a deficit of £2,260. The principal reason for this deficit was the expenditure on Special Projects.

Table 2 itemises income and expenditure for the General Church Fund. As in previous years I should point out the importance of our income from Lettings and from Gift Aid recovery. Lettings form a very important part of our income and we should recognise the work carried out by our Lettings Secretary (Gordon Skidmore) and the work of the Property Steward (Rob Charles) and others (particularly Peter Preston and Douglas Hatto) in maintaining our premises in good order. Gift Aid recovery is also very important.

In late January of this year (2019) I submitted a claim for the recovery of tax through the Gift Aid & Gift Aid Small Donations (i.e. loose change) Schemes from donations made during accounting year 2017/18, and the church received a total of £9,872, of which approximately 12% came from the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, showing how important it is to record and claim GASDS. From this the General Church Fund received £9,204, with the remainder allocated to the Benevolence Fund and charities.

Table 3 summarises our Special Project expenditure. Special Projects are expensive (about £1,000 or more) non-routine items of repair and renewal. During the year we replaced the vestry furniture and began the work on improving the church acoustics, which was masterminded largely by Rodney Tillotson with help from John Carter and Gordon Skidmore.

Table 4 shows our charitable donations in 2017/2018 and compares them with the previous year. There was again a very significant increase in donations over the preceding year, a trend which has continued for several years. I can provide church members with a detailed list of charities and the amounts donated if they wish. In October of this year we began our second year as a Partner Church of the Methodist Charity *All We Can*. During our first Partnership year we sent a total of £3,460. At the time of writing we had recently sent our third donation during our

second year as a Partner Church, totalling £1,475. Our “Toilet Twinning” continues to be a success. We have now “twinned” with twelve toilets and have run out of space to display new certificates!

The figures given in the tables do not include all items of income and expenditure for the church. In total during 2017/2018 the church income for all funds, including Benevolence Fund, Lunch Club, Wednesday Fellowship, etc, but neglecting charitable collections was almost equal to total expenditure at approximately £68,500.

What of the next year or two? It is always difficult and risky to try to predict our end of year financial status while we are only just over half way through the accounting year. However, I can report that: we have already spent just over £14,000 this year on completing the improvements to the chapel acoustics; at the March Circuit Treasurers’ Forum, the Circuit increased the church’s circuit annual assessment for 2019/2020 (subject to approval by the Circuit Meeting on May 1st) by £2,740 to £36,600, an increase of 8%; Property & Finance Committee are planning improvements to the ceiling and lighting in the Hall buildings. It is important that we maintain our buildings in good order and carry our share of Circuit costs. I anticipate a decrease in the reserve funds that we hold by the end of the year and an increase in our annual “normal” expenditure next year. I do not foresee difficulties but church members may like to consider the effects of inflation. At the end of Project 21 in August 2016 many members increased their offering to the general church fund as they terminated their regular giving to P21. This generosity has helped the church to maintain its good condition. Inflation since August 2016 is about 6% and church members and friends may like to reflect on this and consider a modest increase in their offering.

The figures in this report are not comprehensive and I will be pleased to provide any church member with a full copy of the report presented to Church Council last November if they require it. If any member has any questions about finances, it will be helpful to know about them before the meeting so that I can try to provide an accurate reply.

Many people help to look after the church money and we should thank: the stewards and volunteers who count the Sunday collection each week; John Carter who looks after the photocopier; Ann Barber who checks and banks the Sunday collection when I am unable; Eric Thomas who actively manages the Circuit Giro and by so doing increases the interest the church receives; John Guthrie for supporting our accounts software; and Geoffrey Stokell, the independent examiner of our accounts.

Table 1 Surplus (Deficit) on Operating Funds 2017/2018 (£)

Fund	Income	Expenditure	Balance
General Church	58,820	56,716	2,104
Special Projects	0	6,972	(6,972)
Capital Projects (Photocopier)	1,368	1,750	(382)
Lunch Club (money raised for church funds)	2,990	0	
Total	63,178	65,438	(2,260)

Table 2 General Church Fund Income and Expenditure (£)

	2017/18	2016/17		2017/18	2016/17
INCOME				EXPENDITURE	
Collections				Assessment	33,038
Envelopes	15,668	16,158		Utilities	4,722
Standing Orders	19,465	18,775		Insurance	1,823
Cash	3,134	2,230		Stationery	183
Transfer out	(400)	(400)		Repairs	4,045
Collections sub-total	37,867	36,763		Cleaning	6,256
				Junior Church	438
Other Items				Other	4,454
Gift Aid Recovery	9,776	10,774		Donations (Methodist)	1,735
Lettings	9,709	10,917		Donations (Other)	20
Interest	137	149		Total	56,716
Other Income	1,332	3,698			51,025
Other Items sub-total	20,953	25,537			
Total	58,820	62,300			

Table 3 Special Project Expenditure 2017/2018 (£)

Acoustic Analysis of Church	5,100
Meeting with <i>Sustainable Acoustics</i>	780
Replacement of Vestry Furniture	1,092
Total	6,972

Table 4 Charitable Donations 2017/2018 (£)

	2017/18	2016/17
Donations from General Fund	1,755	1,825
Donations from Benevolence Fund	1,100	1,110
Donations from Other Funds (Friday Lunches, Wed. Fellowship)	4,446	2,684
Raised directly by envelopes, etc	7,601	5,783
Totals	14,902	11,402

Property

Rob Charles

There has been a Quinquennial inspection of the property this year and a visit from Methodist Insurance. The urgent issues identified were to do with the hall roof where some slates had been displaced and the flashing needed Smartwater marking. Rowe Roofing has carried out slate roofing repairs, including re-bedding ridge tiles, and applied the Smartwater theft deterrent to the lead flashing.

- PK Electric has carried out routine 5-yearly safety checks on the church electrical circuits;
- Craig Colliass has fitted new taps in the ladies toilets and new tap tops in the gents;
- Mr New of All Things Guttering has been instructed to carry out the spring gutter clean. He has re-fitted the down pipe over the link which has become detached;
- Doug Hatto has carried out some good work including fitting the link floor plate, re-hanging the external doors to the hall, and repairs to the window frames and fittings.
- Arnold Tucker has refurbished the “coffee” tables in the hall.
- The vestry (Haven) has been refurbished with new furniture to create a more ordered and better working space.
- External painting has been completed for the hall and link buildings.
- A new side gate has been fitted to control access to the rear of the Hall following issues of “squatting” in the rear yard.
- Significant drainage repairs have taken place to seal the surface/foul water drain from the building to Church Street.
- Acoustic panels have been installed in the Chapel to control the acoustic. (see below)
- We are addressing the management of Lone Working and Working at Height.

The Hall is now 27 years old and we are planning to replace the ceiling tiles and update the lighting in the building. Care is being taken to specify energy efficient, low maintenance lighting. The other issue we are looking at is the heating in the Hall.

Replacement of the chairs in the Hall has been delayed by other priorities.

We are grateful for all the support we get from members and friends in the upkeep of the property. Without their help the place would be a very different asset. There is a need for a few volunteers to assist with a spring clean of the outside of the premises.

Chapel Acoustics

Rodney Tillotson

By now you have probably stopped noticing the sound-absorbing panels in the chapel, which is exactly as it should be! We know the panels are working, from measurements that our consultants took after the installation; but what matters is that we can all hear other people speaking without great effort by speakers or listeners, and it was not always so before.

A subtle bonus, that again we have ceased to notice, is that noise from outside the building such as traffic in Newbury Street is much reduced.

The unfinished business of amplifying people speaking, so that in the same way listeners hear clearly without noticing the amplification, is in fact hardly begun; and we have done nothing specific yet to help those who use the hearing aid loop, although taming the booming echoes has made a difference.

I am grateful to those who helped to agree and arrange the installation, including Church Council who had two additional meetings, and Property and Finance Committee; and particularly to Gordon Skidmore and John Carter. Ideas came from all of them, and from many others in the church family whose comments were useful from beginning to end and will no doubt continue to be so.

Copyright

John Leake

Copyright reporting has continued smoothly throughout the year.

For the year 1st Mar 2018 to 28th Feb 2019 the most frequent hymns were:

7 uses

SF545 Be thou my vision

5 uses

SF575 Before I take the body of my Lord

SF598 Shout for joy! The Lord has let us feast

SF662 Have you heard God's voice? Has your heart been stirred?

SoF2306 Go peaceful

4 uses

SF81 Now thank we all our God

SF88 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the Lord of creation!

SF247 I danced in the morning (Lord of the dance)

SF544 As the deer pants for the water

I thank the Stewards for feeding the hymn numbers to me and Rodney for his help over the tunes used (especially by the Music Group).

I also thank the projectionists for their work in ensuring suitable copyright notices are projected with the hymns.

Users

Gordon Skidmore

It has been another busy year for use of the buildings.

We have made more use of the premises ourselves, Knit & Chat are meeting fortnightly, and the Disciple study course has been meeting weekly on a Thursday mornings since September with a Study through the early summer last year at the same time. Wednesday afternoons are Wednesday Fellowship time with a continuing fellowship through August. Since Christmas, lunches have been monthly. Through Lent this year, films have been shown in the chapel under the title "Films to make you think."

We have hosted two mornings for Host Abingdon and from April 29th Monday mornings will feature the

Caritas Children's Choir are based here on a Friday afternoon. Wantage community Church and Christian Fellowship have used the premises for a number of events and of course we host Babes and Toddlers and Dads Out. We have also been pleased to be the venue for concerts, drama and Wantage Literary Festival.

Our regular community users are

AgeUK : Slimming World : Dietitian : MIND : Wantage Camera Club : Rock Choir :
"Poets in the Parlour" : My Life, My Choice : Wantage Stage Musical :
King Alfred's WI : Yoga : Babes & Toddlers and Dads Out :
Caritas Childrens' Choir : Cheek2Cheek

In February, we welcomed a Poetry group, "Poets in the Parlour" (our name for them) on a Monday evening.

We are sorry that Rethink and Music with Mummy have ceased to meet.

There have been 13 private parties and Community interest groups have used the premises on 6 occasions for major meetings.

We are publishing in the notices, and the newsletter, the weekly schedule.

In general, there have been few issues and our users have been good partners. The warmer winter has created a few problems with people turning radiators off and then not turning them back on when they leave the premises resulting in the place being cold for the following users. This then encourages interference with the heating controls and the place being heated during periods when the place is not in use. The more intensive use of the rooms means that all rooms have a default allocation of furniture and it is important that any chairs/tables borrowed from one room are returned to that room at the end of the session.

Thank you to everyone who helps us do our best to continue to keep the place clean, tidy and an attractive place to use. We are grateful to H J Knapp & Son for looking after authorised access to the premises.

The bookings mailbox is: wntgmethodistbookings@gmail.com

Communications

Wantage Methodist Website

Gordon Skidmore

<http://wantagemethodist.org.uk>

The site administrators are Rev Keith Underhill, June Grunwald and Gordon Skidmore and the editorial management of the site is managed by the Church Stewards with the minister.

We are grateful to Jordan and Zak Smith for taking on the job of setting up and maintaining our presence on **Facebook**.

Notices

Gordon Skidmore

We have tried to develop a house style for publications and the notices now have a colour header which has some consistency with our presence in the Church Partnership. Colour content however is only available in the on-line copy on the Website.

Thank you to all who contribute and particularly to those who help publish the notices when Gill and I are away. So that all the people who may be preparing the notices can have access to your articles, please use the following postbox:

wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com

Sector Newsletter

Gill & Gordon Skidmore

Thank you to all who contribute in any way to the monthly newsletter. There were 10 issues again this last year and 4 of these included Circuit content. Any articles to supplement the announcements would be welcome. We trust you find the material in the newsletter interesting.

It is, of course, now available in colour on the website.

The sector newsletter mailbox is

wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com

Email

To allow people to take holidays and still maintain support for the weekly notices, monthly newsletter, annual report and bookings, there are email addresses for these issues which are separate from personal email accounts and which can be accessed by deputies who are given the necessary password for access. **Please use these addresses rather than personal email accounts for these purposes.** Messages are not guaranteed to be dealt with in a timely fashion if not sent to the dedicated email addresses.

Bookings : wntgmethodistbookings@gmail.com
Notices : wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com
Newsletter (monthly) : wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com
Annual Report : wmcannualreport@gmail.com

Circuit Matters

Carolyn Roche

This past year has been another year of saying hello or farewell to members of the Circuit Meeting. On 22 July 2018 there was a circuit service to say farewell to Rev Katherine Pickering and her husband Ian as they prepared to move to Worcester. We also said farewell to Deacon Debbie Wilde, a chaplain at the JR hospital, before she moved to the Lake District. On 1 September we welcomed Rev Jocelyn Bennett, her husband Neil and family at a circuit service at Milton.

It is good to be able to write that Rev Ian Griffiths is now well and able to participate fully in the life of his churches in Abingdon and in the circuit. It is great to have him back as part of the team. The Circuit thanks everyone who helped during his period of ill health. Last August Ian took part in the re-invitation process and has been invited and agreed to be with the circuit for a further two years.

During the year Andrew Lockley, the previous senior circuit steward, moved to the Lake District with his wife Su. Mary Hancock has finished her term as a circuit steward but fortunately remains part of the Circuit Leadership Team as property steward. Alan Smith, Geoffrey Maunder and Carolyn Roche currently make up the team of circuit stewards with Alan taking the senior role. We are pleased to announce that Anne Matthews from All Saints has now agreed to become a circuit steward. It would be great to add two more stewards to work with us. It is an interesting and rewarding role helping the circuit to develop and grow and it is an opportunity to learn from each other on the CLT.

There are several roles available on the CLT. Geoffrey Maunder is looking to step down as Circuit Treasurer and Gill Skidmore is coming to the end of her term of office as Circuit Secretary. We thank them for all their hard work and support for the circuit. We also need a Circuit Safeguarding Officer.

We are grateful for all the excellent work done by our Local Preachers. Since the last Annual Church Report we have said goodbye to Pam Martin as she moved to Thame and we have welcomed Ian and Carol Sturt to Grove. Later this year, in a Circuit Service, we shall be celebrating that Ruth Dams has been a Local Preacher for sixty years.

Circuit Services are always good to attend as it gives the opportunity to meet with other Methodists in the area. In addition to the farewell and welcome services already mentioned there was the Easter Offering Service held at All Saints. There will be another Easter Offering Service on 19 May at 6.30 pm at Wallingford and it would be great to have even more people from Wantage there. This year Keith led Circuit Services for Ash Wednesday at Milton at 11 am and at Didcot at 7.30 pm.

Blewbury Chapel has now been sold and we look to put that money to good use within the Circuit. The CLT was pleased to see the work that churches had done on future growth and development and hope that this will remain an item on all church agendas. To help inspire us in the Circuit it was agreed to hold a third Circuit Meeting. This would not be a business meeting but rather an aspirational meeting with inspiring speakers. This began on 9 January 2019 when Rev Gareth Powell, Secretary to the Methodist Conference, came to speak at Wantage. The chaplaincy

work continues on Great Western Park, and we are looking at ways to develop this throughout the Circuit. Several of the young people from our various churches, including Wantage, went to Southport for 3Generate. It is wonderful that they have this opportunity to meet with other young Christians.

Finally thank you to Keith for all the hard work he does for the Circuit and for encouraging and inspiring us.

Wantage, Grove and Villages Housing Justice Group

Helen Carter

Homelessness is a concept that conjures up varied images for us all. Homelessness is here to stay. There are those who choose to be without a fixed abode and there are those whose personal circumstances result in them having nowhere to call home. Some choose to use services such as O'Hanlon House, but for some that is not a place they feel able to access for a number of reasons and so prefer to sleep on the streets of Oxford. In the winter months that is not a choice that many of us would want to contemplate.

Fortunately, the central Oxford churches once again mounted their joint initiative in January to provide beds for those who would otherwise be sleeping rough in Oxford. This was to be available through to the end of March. They were able to double the number of beds from 10 last year to 20 this year. This does not sound a huge number of beds, but this facility was to be available every night for three months – no small undertaking by the churches of Oxford.

Whilst the Housing Justice Group is not functioning on an ongoing basis, we still wish to support initiatives such as Oxford Winter Night Shelter (the initiative described above). We asked those involved with OWNS what would be helpful by way of donations. Their answer was that pot noodles, porridge pots and preserves would be much appreciated. Consequently, we approached churches in Wantage, Grove and nearby villages asking for donations those items, and once more there was a wonderful response.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this particular appeal. We know that these donations were much appreciated by the organisers on the scheme, and we were assured that, together with donations from churches in other parts of Oxfordshire, the cupboards were well stocked.

Wantage and Grove Church Partnership

Ann Barber

Throughout the year the Partnership has continued to encourage involvement in *Open the Book*, and *Prayer Spaces in schools*. The mentoring scheme, set-up between King Alfred's School and local churches, had previously provided one-to-one support for appropriate pupils over a school year, but a lack of volunteers has prevented it from continuing. It is hoped that it may be possible for this to be re-established if sufficient new volunteers can be found. A Prayer Connect Group has been set up by some members of St John's Church, Grove. It meets on the 4th Wednesday of the months in which a new school term starts, and welcomes everyone who wishes to be part of it.

The Partnership was represented at the Grove Extravaganza in the summer. Several of the local churches worked together to create a Christian presence at this event on Wasbrough fields. It was seen as a successful activity by which to engage with the local community, although its location was a little remote from the main area where the live events were taking place.

The AGM took place in September at St John's Church in Grove. The attendance was a little lower than usual, but there was great interest in the films and talk by Andy Worthington of the charity *Open Doors*. He gave inspiring examples of the work done in countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith, and told moving stories of the charity's work in supporting them in dangerous environments.

A proposal to amend the Partnership's Constitution was approved unanimously at the AGM. It has increased the lay representation within the Action Group. Previously the composition of the group was made up of the church leaders and one lay representative in addition to the Secretary and Treasurer. The change means that each church may now have two representatives. The aim of this constitutional change was to increase the diversity of the group and make it more likely that each of the eight member churches would be represented at Action Group meetings.

The sorting of the Christmas cards at the beginning of December, for distribution throughout Wantage and Grove, was completed in record time despite there being significantly more roads to be covered with the large number of newly built houses. Printing costs have remained reasonable thanks to economies of scale. This combination of production and delivery has been confirmed as the best way of ensuring that every household receives a Christian greeting from all of the churches.

At the beginning of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity in January an afternoon event took place at Wantage C of E School. It began with tea and was followed by a Service with Education as the theme. Speakers from *Prayer Spaces* and *Open the Book* gave presentations of the work being carried out in our local schools, as did Andrew Brown, the school's Head Teacher. The attendance was good, the atmosphere was warm and friendly and it was an uplifting and enjoyable gathering of people from all of the Partnership's churches.

Arrangements are in hand for Palm Sunday, [which will have taken place before the Annual Church Meeting], and will follow the pattern set last year. There will be no procession on account of the insurmountable hurdles surrounding Health and

Safety, but a Service in the Market Place will ensure that our celebration of Palm Sunday, complete with the donkey and Wantage Silver Band, will be a highly visible and audible witness in the centre of town.

Wantage and Grove Food Bank

Helen Carter

As ever, the very first thing that needs to be said is a huge 'thank you' for the generous and continuing support both in food, non-food and financial donations. You will see in the statistics shown below, that are for the calendar year of 2018, the need continues to be greater than one would hope. In fact, 2018 saw the highest demand in the history of the Wantage & Grove food bank for food parcels to be delivered to those in need.

Total number of parcels delivered	290
Total number of adults receiving parcels	460
Total number of children in families receiving parcels	291
Total number of people needing food through the food bank	751
Total number of new individuals/families in 2018	92
Total number of adults in need of more than one parcel	360
Total number of children whose families needed more than one parcel	229
Total number of people supplied with more than one parcel	589

In addition to the parcels given out during the year, Christmas hampers were given to many families so that they would be able to have some of the luxuries that many of us take for granted at that time of year.

Of course, the reasons for families and individuals needing the assistance of the Food Bank are varied. Some families and individuals have found themselves in receipt of no income through no fault of their own. Sometimes benefits sanctions are applied in an inhumane way. Sometimes benefits are stopped whilst a reassessment takes place. That cannot be fair or just. Statistics give us numbers, but behind each of those numbers there are human beings in need of our prayers.

To give a measure of the amount of food donated and distributed, the next table is again for the calendar year of 2018.

Total number of donations logged during the year from churches, individuals and collecting points in Wantage & Grove	268
Total number of donated items	14,718
Total number of items distributed	14,984

The statistics above will demonstrate the need for some financial assistance which enables items to be bought when the stock of particular items is running low.

There is a dedicated team behind the smooth running of the food bank together with a good number of volunteers who do the deliveries and prayers are much appreciated.

Wantage and Grove Street Pastors

Rodney Tillotson

Thanks once more to those within our church who are PSVs or support with prayers from home or at other times, to all who indicate support by being members of the organisation, and to Helen Carter who continues as a trustee.

We are grateful too for all donations, from the church and directly from several individuals. The financial position of the charity is satisfactory for the time being, but further regular donations will still be particularly welcome.

Helen and others have a programme of fundraising events, and the next is the performance of “An Impossible God” with Mark Topping in our chapel on Friday 12th April (a week before Good Friday). Details are in the newsletter and notices.

On 19th May we have another Street Pastors Sunday service similar to last year’s. As well as updating us on what SP patrols are encountering week by week, it will be an opportunity for us to reflect on the need for more volunteers, and for you to arrange to get involved if it is the right time for you. We are still waiting for the first trained and patrolling Street Pastors from our church!

Alongside the now familiar work in the night economy, WGSP will shortly begin afternoon patrols to meet with school students as they travel home through the town and village. This work may, because of its timing and the community it addresses, appeal to volunteers who cannot help with the night patrols; please ask Helen or Rodney for more details.

9th October is the tenth anniversary of the start of Street Pastor patrols in Wantage, and the trustees are planning a birthday event. Details to follow.

Meanwhile the work on the streets continues; monthly operations reports appear on the hall notice board and usually in the sector newsletter. In the chapel foyer are prayer bookmarks, occasionally updated, which may help you to remember all those involved directly or indirectly, the purpose of the work and any current needs.

Church Council 2019/2020

Minister	Rev Keith Underhill
Church Stewards	(Appointed by the GCM)
Former Church Steward	Heather Wells
Church Treasurer	Clive Phillips
Church Council Secretary	Alison Brown
Pastoral Committee Secretary	Ann Barber
Safeguarding Officer	Ken Smith
M & S for M & S	<i>Vacant</i>
Property & Finance Committee	Peter Preston
Property Steward	Robert Charles
Worship Consultation	Carolyn Roche
Junior Church Co-ordinator	Catherine Worth
Communion Steward	Eileen Rennie
Circuit Steward	As agreed by the Circuit Stewards
Elected Representatives	Elected for 3 years.
Eligible to be re-elected for second term. Max of 6 years (max 15 representatives)	

Diana Gawlas	Due to retire in 2020 (1 st term)
Margaret Fordham	Due to retire in 2021 (2 nd term)
Mike Skinner,	Due to retire in 2021 (1 st term)
Sue Haithwaite,	Due to retire in 2021 (1 st term)
Rita Lawrence	Due to retire in 2021 (1 st term)

Plus those appointed by the 2019 GCM

Eligible for re-election if willing to stand

Helen Carter	Due to retire in 2019 (1 st term)
Rodney Tillotson	Due to retire in 2019 (1 st term)

Not eligible for re-election

Gill Skidmore	Due to retire in 2019 (2 nd term)
---------------	--

Church Appointments 2019/20

Church Stewards (Appointed by the GCM)

Church Council Secretary Alison Brown
Church Treasurer Clive Phillips

Pastoral Committee Secretary Ann Barber
Pastoral Visitors

Nicky Atkinson, Ann Barber, Diane Barton, Alison Brown, Helen Carter, Faith Culshaw, June Grunwald, Sharon Hayford, Julie Horton, Rita Lawrence, Alison Phillips, Eileen Rennie, Carolyn Roche, Kelvin Rose, Judith & Mike Skinner, Mary Trotter, Mary Whittaker

Communion Stewards

Eileen Rennie, Andrew Barber, Rita Lawrence, John Leake, Peter Preston and Graham Wells, plus Mary Trotter for communion cloths.

Property & Finance Committee:

Chair Peter Preston
Secretary Gordon Skidmore
Church Treasurer Clive Phillips
Property Steward Robert Charles
Bookings Secretary Gordon Skidmore

Chapel Gardener Jan Abrahall

Other Committee Members

Ann Barber, Diana Gawlas, Doug Hatto

Independent Examiner of Accounts Geoffrey Stokell

Movers and Shakers: (Mission and Service)

Chair Rev Keith Underhill
Secretary tba

Worship Consultation:

Chair Rev Keith Underhill
Convenor Carolyn Roche

Music Coordinator Gill Skidmore

Baptismal Roll Secretary Catherine Worth

Junior Church Coordinator Catherine Worth

Junior Church Workers Heather Wells, Alison Phillips, Catherine Worth

Creche Helpers Jo Aldworth, Jane Kent, Eileen Rennie, Linda Tillotson,

YMOSES	Jane Kent
kids@church	Jane Kent, Catherine Worth, David Worth
Safeguarding Officer	Ken Smith
Health and Safety Officer & Responsible Person (Fire Safety)	Ken Smith
Copyright Coordinator	John Leake
Authorised Person (Marriages)	Keith Underhill
Representatives to Circuit Meeting	
	The Church Treasurer (Clive Phillips) and one Church Steward (Gordon Skidmore) are ex-officio representatives. The church is entitled to five elected representatives (one for every 25 members).
	Ann Barber, June Grunwald, Alison Phillips, Eileen Rennie
Representative to Wantage and Grove Church Partnership	
	Alison Phillips and Gordon Skidmore (Ann Barber is Treasurer)
Weekly Notices	Gordon Skidmore
Monthly Sector Newsletter	<i>(appointed by Stewards of the section churches)</i> Gill and Gordon Skidmore

WANTAGE METHODIST CHURCH
GENERAL CHURCH MEETING, SUNDAY 15 APRIL 2018, 1.30 P.M.

Present

Jan Abrahall, Nicky Atkinson, Ann Barber, Diane Barton, John Broadbent, Valerie Broadbent, Alison Brown (secretary), Helen Carter, Diana Gawlas, Richard George, Graham Godfrey, June Grunwald, Sue Haithwaite, Sharon Hayford, Julie Horton, Rita Lawrence, Jean Manners, Gill Morton, Alison Phillips, Clive Phillips, Eileen Rennie, Hilary Rewcastle, Carol Robbins, Jane Robinson, Carolyn Roche, Kelvin Rose, Pam Rose, Gill Skidmore, Gordon Skidmore, Geoffrey Stokell, Gloria Smith, Ken Smith, Linda Tillotson, Rodney Tillotson, Mary Trotter, Keith Underhill (Chair), Liz Underhill, Mary Whittaker, Catherine Worth

Opening Devotions

The meeting opened with welcome and prayer led by Keith Underhill.

Apologies

Margaret Fordham, Derek Morton, Felicity Morton, Keith Robbins, Joyce Sharp, Heather Wells, Jenny Wymark

Notification of AOB

There were notifications from Valerie Broadbent and Gordon Skidmore

Minutes of 2017 Annual General Church Meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

Election of church stewards

Thanks were expressed to Jan and Carolyn for their work as church stewards. Jan has stepped down, and Carolyn, who has served for 7 years as a church steward, latterly as senior steward is now a circuit steward.

Alison Phillips, Gordon Skidmore and Heather Wells were reappointed for a further year and June Grunwald was nominated and elected by those present.

Election of representatives to the Church Council

The nominations received were:

Mike Skinner, Sue Haithwaite, Rita Lawrence

Margaret Fordham - has agreed to continue to serve as a representative

- The meeting agreed to appoint the representatives to the Church Council.

Annual Reports

Reports as written and accepted; additional comments below.

Stewards

Keith thanked all the stewards for their support in the worship and mission of the church. Accumulation of knitted angels has already started in preparation for the Christmas drop.

Pastoral

Wantage Methodist Church is working to become a registered dementia friendly church and Grove Free Evangelical Church and The Corner Stone will be joining us for a training evening on Wednesday 18th April.

During the year, Rex Hartle, Dot Fern as well as relatives of church members have died and church members remembered them.

Julie will be leaving the area this summer, but will be returning to serve lunches once a month on Fridays and Sundays.

Worship Consultation

Recording of services with the digital equipment is being looked into.

Music in Church

June will be stepping down from coordinating the music group and was thanked for the many years she has been in this role.

Space to Be

There will always be a need for a quiet environment and the idea can be developed again in the future.

Junior Church

Catherine, Heather and Alison were thanked for their work with the young people.

Movers and Shakers for Mission and Service

The Holocaust Memorial Day was appreciated and was visited by the Mayor of Wantage, who would like to put future dates into the Town Council diary.

Kelvin was thanked for his time as secretary to this meeting.

Tuesday House Group

This group is appreciated by attendees and numbers are up.

Wednesday Fellowship

There have been projector difficulties but Graham is able to help out and thanks were given to him and others for help at the meetings.

Church Lunches

All who help with preparation and serving of the lunches were thanked by the meeting.

Finance

Thanks were expressed to Clive for looking after the Church's finances.

Copyright

John was thanked for maintaining the copyright status.

Chapel Acoustics

Edgar Taylor have been asked to quote for work on the panels but are not taking on any more new work at the moment.

Users

The church buildings are used for over 50 hours per week. Users are reminded to clear and tidy the rooms and floors after each use and restore the heating to its original setting if changed. Please talk to Gordon before arranging to use the rooms as they may be booked.

Wantage, Grove and Villages Housing Justice Group

Helen thanked everyone for the donations over the years, but the group is now going to close, though there may be an occasional appeal. Helen will continue to take useful items as collected.

Wantage and Grove Church Partnership

This year's Palm Sunday's parade was different and this will be reviewed at the next meeting, but so far the feedback is positive. It may be that next year there will be a parade with a small service at the end.

Wantage and Grove Food Bank

The recipients are very grateful for donations received. The need for these remains great.

Street Pastors

There will be a service on 22/04/18

Away Day at Home

The feedback on this event is captured in the leaflet prepared for this meeting and Keith along with the stewards are working on a report to be presented to the June Church Council.

There was discussion about the importance of being challenged by the children's report and what they are looking for. Through Kids@Church families have been brought into the wider church family by being met where they are. During the meetings they are made aware of other parts of the church and one of the families will be having a baptism in June or July.

Intentional Faith Development

- Keith introduced the disciple course "Becoming Disciples through Bible Study" which he will be running in September on Thursday mornings between 09.30 and 12.00. Attendees should be prepared to commit to reading for 15 to 25 minutes a day for 6 days and the bible study will be on day 7. The course will be publicised over the summer.
- The Thursday Bible study group will be looking at another course.
- It was noted that older people may have difficulties in getting to church and to meetings, and it was suggested that the church should buy a mini bus, possibly employing someone to drive it.
- 3 Generate – all the young people attending had an amazing time.

AOB

- Gordon and Gill brought greetings from our friends and their church in Oklahoma.
- Val Broadbent brought a booklet to the meeting called "Turn the Tide" about the erosion of religious freedom and asked if people would sign a petition.
- Keith was thanked for his guidance and making us realise that we are achieving things.

The meeting closed with sharing the Grace.