



*Wantage*  
Methodist Church

# Annual Church Report

2020

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
Community Drop-in Café	11
Action for Children	12
Church Lunches	12
Tuesday House Group	13
Wednesday Fellowship	14
Finance	15
Property	19
Copyright	21
Users	21
Communications	22
Circuit Matters	23
Wantage and Grove Church Partnership	25
Wantage and Grove Food Bank	26
Wantage and Grove Street Pastors	27
Church Council Membership 2019/20	28
Church Appointments 2019/20	29
Annual Church Meeting Minutes 2019	31

## **From the Manse....**

This year's General Church Meeting comes a third of the way into this special anniversary year when together we celebrate 175 years of faithful Methodist witness, worship, mission and ministry here in this building and for that we rightly give thanks to God.

Back in 1845, Stephen Perry patented the rubber band, the first cricket match was played at the Kennington Oval, an unprecedented number of railway acts received Royal Assent as the country's railway mania continued to grow.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS Great Britain crossed from Liverpool to New York for the first time, the potato blight broke out in Ireland and the Bank of England raised its interest rates to 3%.

Throughout those events and in all that has happened in our political, economic and social life since, God's praises have been sung, prayers have been said and the love of Christ offered to all.

For 175 years, this place of worship, this house of God has been a sign of light, life hope and love, in and out of season, as the saying goes. In times of flux and of certainty, jubilation and sorrow, war and peace, tragedy and celebration the doors have remained open and the Gospel proclaimed.

The many different events and special services we are holding this year all bear testimony to what has been, but of course "Wantage 175" is about far more than that, for it is also an opportunity for us to look to the future and to all that God is still calling us to be and do.

Our church website reminds us that we seek, as we always have, to be relevant and contemporary to the present age as we explore what it means to be disciples of Jesus in the 21st Century.

In these uncertain times, as we give thanks for the past and turn to face the future which is yet to be written, we could do a lot worse than to take the words of the hymn writer Marty Haugen to heart;

"Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone,  
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and love the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face,  
Let us bring an end to fear and danger:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place."

With love and God Bless,

*Keith*

## Church Stewards

*Alison Phillips*

Since the last Annual Church Meeting we have been looking at ways of celebrating the 175 years of Methodism in Wantage to offer a vision of what we are about. We asked Movers and Shakers to pick this up and Margaret Fordham, Ann Barber and Eileen Rennie were asked to look at the detail of this. Many ideas have been suggested and a programme for 2020 has been put together from these ideas. They were discussed and agreed with Keith and the wider church. Thank you to all those who have been involved with events so far, and we look forward to continuing these special occasions throughout this year.

In the past few years we have been encouraged to read all the Bible in a year and a group have completed the "Disciple" Course, exploring how the Bible, and church tradition interact with history to mould our understanding of Discipleship in the present day. In October 2019 we offered our church family the opportunity to come and find out about **Holy Habits**. Andrew Roberts from Bible Reading Fellowship came to speak to us for the day, and give us some ideas about how our church could develop these Holy Habits. There were good discussions (and a good lunch), and those present were very enthusiastic to go forward to explore Holy Habits further. However, it was felt that this year we are very committed to celebrating our Anniversary, so a proposal to launch Holy Habits at the beginning of 2021 was put forward and Church Council has agreed this. In the meanwhile the stewards felt a small planning group should be formed to begin to think about which order we might do each habit, and ideas of how we might achieve them. Please let Keith or any of the stewards know if you would like to find out more about this.

**In January 2020** June and Kelvin opened the chapel and offered a quiet space for Holocaust Memorial day. This was much appreciated by those who came and we thank them for the time they gave to preparing and hosting this event.

**We have been pleased to host other events for the Circuit and District this year.** Most recently was the Advanced Safeguarding training day for the District. Many very nice comments were made about our premises, so our huge thanks go to all who keep everything in such good order.

Over the last few years, a working party appointed by the Methodist Conference was asked to prepare a report studying **Marriage and Relationships**. This report was presented to Conference last summer and they received it and sent it out for consultation by the local congregations. The District Synods this Spring will debate the report and then vote on whether to accept or reject it. This will inform the Conference representatives on the views of the local membership before the debate this year in Conference at the end of June.

The report is a careful review of the whole subject and well worth studying. It is not a light read! Copies are available free from Keith or the Stewards. Keith has led four open sessions to discuss this and share views in smaller groups. These have given us an opportunity to learn more about the issues and understand the challenges we face in the modern world. The stewards would like to thank Keith, for the time he has spent preparing for these, and all who came and shared these sessions.

**Keith works hard** and continuously for us and the Circuit, and we are grateful for all the energy and enthusiasm he brings with him. In order for him to recharge his batteries he will be going on Sabbatical in September, not that he is going to put his feet up because he and Liz will be spending six weeks walking the Camino! (The path of pilgrimage across northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela)

While he is away, the stewards' team, church and Circuit, will be supported by Helen Cameron. We will look forward to meeting her in due course.

**It has been a blessing** to have Sue Haithwaite with us on the stewards' team, and I hope Sue has enjoyed her first year with us as much as we have enjoyed working with her. The stewards' team would ideally be made up of six church members but we have been unable to fill that gap so instead have what we call 'Sunday Stewards'. At present we have three, Diana Gawlas, Jan Abrahall and Peter Preston who act as second steward on certain Sundays. We are very grateful to them, especially as two of the main stewards are also projectionists and you can't be everywhere at once.

A quick mention of the **church rota**, another steward's nightmare, but made much better by all you kind people who step forward to help each week with a smile, and put up with my many and varied mistakes! Thank you all, stewards and Keith for making Wantage Methodist Church such a warm and welcoming place.

## **Pastoral**

*Ann Barber*

During the summer of 2019, for the first time in several years, our membership fell just below 100, but this total soon rose again. At a morning service in September, three of our young people were confirmed into membership: Charlotte Worth, Audrey Akowuah and Maureen Akowuah. At the same time, eight adults became members by transfer from their previous churches: Peter Bainbridge, Joan Kidd, Edwina Loftus, Alex Mwangi, Celia Roser, Mary Spalding, Margaret Watts and Margaret Wilson. We are delighted to welcome them all.

We were sad to record the death of one of our elderly members, Pam Scholes, on 17<sup>th</sup> October. Pam had been unable to worship with us since the decline in her health necessitated her admission to Framland Care Home, but until then she had been a faithful member at both Wantage and Grove over many years.

On 26<sup>th</sup> October Lincoln, the baby son of Dave Johnson and of Lizzy Horton who had grown up within our church, was baptised. We were pleased to welcome their families and friends to the service that morning, which turned out to be an occasion for a double celebration! Keith had become sixty the day before and we held a party for the whole church family. It was a very happy event for everyone, even if it was huge surprise for Keith, since the plans had been a well-kept secret. This was a chance for Keith, who is usually the one giving pastoral care to members of our church family, to be on the receiving end instead. It was good to have the opportunity of celebrating not only his milestone birthday, but also of thanking him for all that he has brought to our church in the last three years, and hopefully for many more to come.

With sadness we recorded the death of Terry Adams on 20<sup>th</sup> December in the nursing wing of St Katharine's. Terry had been a member of our church for many years, as

well as a local preacher within our Circuit, although he had not taken any services in the recent past. We give thanks for Terry's participation in the life of our church whilst he was in good health.

As the year has continued, the number of residents moving into the Renaissance Fleur de Lis apartments and choosing to worship us with has continued to rise. The proximity to our church makes it a short and easy walk for them, and they are also becoming involved with weekday church activities too. It is very encouraging to be told that we are a welcoming church, and good to know that our efforts at outreach are bearing fruit as we observe the increasing number of people participating in Sunday services and weekday groups.

A scarcity of Pastoral Visitors has long been a cause for concern in our efforts to provide pastoral support to all of our church family. Ideally everyone who worships with us would be allocated their own Pastoral Visitor. In reality we cannot achieve that without the lists for each one becoming unreasonably long. We ensure that everyone who has not committed to membership is personally given a newsletter each month, and therefore has a contact person within the team. It was a great joy at the annual commissioning service in January to include Jane Kent and Cath Worth who have kindly agreed to be joint Pastoral Visitors for our young members, Charlotte, Audrey and Maureen, as well as for Jordan and Zack. This is a pleasingly age- and activity-appropriate pairing through Jane and Cath's regular contact with them all through YMoses.

As a team we remain grateful, as always, to Keith, whose pastoral ministry is such a highly valued and deeply appreciated blessing for our whole church family.

## **Communion Stewards**

*Eileen Rennie*

During the period April 2019 to March 2020 we have had ten 9 am, eleven 10:30 am, the Easter Day 6 am service at the Millennium Stones Ardington, the 11:30 pm Christmas Eve communion service and the Circuit service for Ash Wednesday. The average attendance at the 9 am service was 23, and at the 10:30 am was 71. The Easter Day attendance at Ardington was 15 and the Christmas Eve attendance was 29. These figures all show an increase on last year's. Communion was served in varying ways at the 9 am services. At the 10:30 am services it was served either standing at the front or served in the seats. We continue to serve in the seats once every quarter. The Benevolent Fund collection's total at the time of writing is £631.99. We thank all those who have led us in worship at these services.

Andrew, Graham, Peter and Rita have indicated they are willing to serve for another year. John Leake wishes to stand down when we have found a replacement and Eileen Rennie has indicated she will retire by March 2021. Mary Trotter very ably performs the duty of keeping the communion cloths in pristine condition. She too has agreed to continue in this service for a further year. 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 meets each quarter to look at all aspects of worship at Wantage Methodist Church and also to plan and review any special services. This is an open meeting and all are welcome to come and express their ideas and suggestions about worship. The notes from these meetings are available from Carolyn Roche.

Most meetings begin with a discussion led by Keith looking at different aspects of worship. During the past year we have talked about Testimony and how sharing the positive experiences and struggles of our journeys of faith can be an encouragement to others. In September there was a discussion about the role of Music Group and also the use of copyright. We next reflected about how we worship beyond the church building and what this means to us. At the last meeting we discussed the use of the lectionary in our services and we also looked at the use of themed services. Once again the February meeting was on Shrove Tuesday and we greatly enjoyed the pancakes prepared and cooked by Keith.

The regular pattern of services has continued throughout the year. At Harvest we began our third project through our partnership with All We Can. Matthew Forsyth continues to inspire us when he comes to lead worship and to update us on the groups we have helped.

We thank Keith for providing the Advent and Lent liturgies, helping us to prepare for Christmas and Easter. The Scratch Nativity service with the blessing of the angels was much appreciated by both kids@church and the 10:30 congregation. Christmas continued with the Carol Service, Christmas Eve Communion and AAW on Christmas Day. The first Sunday of 2020 was Covenant Sunday, always a special service plus the recommissioning of the Pastoral Visitors. Lent began with the Circuit Ash Wednesday service being held at Wantage. There was a full programme of activities during Lent including the Sunday Lent liturgy, Bible Study groups and films to make you think.

We have welcomed a variety of people to lead the Worship Through .... services held on the first Sunday of the month, except when this has coincided with a special service such as Easter Day. The themes covered in the past year include History, Music, Poetry, Colossians, Taizé, Jigsaws, Memories, Stories, Books and 3Generate. If requested, a small planning group will usually meet with the person who is leading one of these services.

It was the turn of Wantage to hold the annual memorial service in November. This year time was changed to 6 pm. The service was well attended.

Bible Month in 2019 took place in July when the services and Bible study groups looked at the book of Colossians. In 2020 it will take place in June and the Book of Ruth has been chosen – a favourite of many people. Eileen's House Group continues to meet on Tuesday afternoons and Alison leads a group during Advent and Lent.

The Disciple course finished in July and the group felt they had really benefited from the in-depth study of the Bible. Many thanks to Keith for organising and leading this.

As 2020 is our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are welcoming past ministers or people connected with Wantage Methodist Church to lead worship on the last Sunday of the month. So far we have welcomed back Rev Andrew Hollins and Rev Janet Evans.

As a church we have agreed to use the Holy Habits course, beginning in January 2021. This will involve planning and preparation during 2020.

If you have any ideas about worship that you wish to express, please come to the next Worship Consultation meeting on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June at 7:30 pm or, if you are unable to be, there speak to a steward.

## **Music in Church**

*Gill Skidmore*

Thanks, as always, to the many musicians in our Church who offer their talents to enhance our worship experience. We have continued with the practice of music group playing for one service in three. There are occasions when this works well and others when, for various reasons, this is more of a challenge – for example, when it clashes with kids@church, in which several group members are involved.

It was especially good to have several of our young people playing with me in the Worship Through 3Generate service. There is a wealth of talent there, but we do appreciate that constraints of schoolwork and other activities make their availability to play somewhat limited.

We chose not to have a choir for carol service this year, but rather to conserve our time and energy to be channelled into starting rehearsals for “Firebrand” in the New Year. Although “Firebrand” is about much more than just music, I would like to say, here in my music report, how impressed I have been by the dedication and enthusiasm with which a group of some 27 singers, aged from 6 to 80-something, have tackled learning to sing in parts – something which is completely new to some people. Thank you all for your support. Experienced singers and novices alike, you are making a great sound.



## **Junior Church**

*Cath Worth*

Junior Church runs every Sunday except the third Sunday of the month when we have Kids@church. We have a lovely group of primary & younger secondary school aged children who attend Junior Church regularly plus 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 craft, painting, cooking. The under-11s also attend kids@church. It is a real pleasure to spend time with the children.

Junior Church continues to be led by Alison Phillips, Heather Wells and Cath Worth with Carolyn Roche taking the group if the other leaders are not available. In order to meet safeguarding rules there always need to be two adults with the Junior Church and crèche children once we go out of the service. The second steward is available as an extra adult but offers of help are always welcome.

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

## **Kids@Church**

*Keith Underhill, Jane Kent, Dave and Cath Worth*

It is always a joy and privilege to meet with the families on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month for Kids@Church. We continue to start in the church usually with a song, story and prayer and then move through to the hall for a game or cooking or a craft activity. Sometimes we share food together, which always goes down well! We are so grateful for the faithful support of Jordan, Zack, June, Linda and Rodney. Please continue to hold these families in your prayers.

## **YMOSES**

*Jane Kent*

I really enjoy my evenings with YMOSES! We meet at our house now, as all my children now attend, but do offer our sincere thanks to Cath, Dave, Chris and Charlotte for hosting every month for the last few years. Usually there are about 9-11 young people who faithfully come and actively contribute to discussions. It was a joy to accompany some of them to 3 Generate at the end of November and we are already looking forward to this year's youth event in Birmingham.

Please continue to hold these young people in your prayers.

## **Movers and Shakers for Mission and Service**

*Carolyn Roche*

Movers and Shakers meets three times a year and the meetings are open to all of the church who wish to attend. The group exists to promote most of the activities that occur outside of Sunday worship. These can vary widely and range from regular weekday meetings, one-off events designed to raise money for charities and church projects, as well as facilitating meetings to enhance our Christian life. Representatives from the regular meetings and activities e.g. Wednesday Fellowship, Church Lunches etc. are invited to provide updates to the group but make their own reports to the Annual Church Meeting.

Here are some of the ways that we have been engaging in mission during the past year.

- We are now in our third year of partnership with the charity 'All We Can', the Methodist Relief and Development Fund. During 2018/19 we raised funds for 'Rays of Hope', a project to buy solar panels for irrigation. Thanks to all who helped with this and particularly Eileen and her team for the splendid afternoon tea and Liz and Keith for 'A Taste of Summer 2'. Thank you also to the Smith family who co-ordinate our work with All We Can. Our third project is called 'Deepen Your Roots' – helping a group in Ethiopia grow potatoes so that they can have an income.
- Community Café began in 2019 and has proved to be a great success. It is open every Monday throughout the year. Thanks to the team that makes this such a warm and welcoming time and space.
- Knit & Chat has continued to meet on the first and third Mondays of each month. Their main focus is on knitting the Christmas angels with 1300 being provided for Christmas 2019. They also knitted green squares for the wonderful wooden Christmas tree made by Arnold Tucker. The squares are now being made up into blankets.
- The Christmas Tree Festival took place again on Dickensian evening and was a great success with many people visiting over the weekend. Once again the Caritas Children's Choir was greatly enjoyed. Refreshments, a coffee morning and donations helped to raise over £600 for Wantage and Grove Street Pastors. We also support the Street Pastors through individual Prayer Support Volunteers and now have a Street Pastor in training.
- Continuing our work to be a Dementia Friendly church, Keith has met with both Rose Butterworth and Kate Czecko and they have visited the Community Café. It is at their suggestion that we now have exit signs on the outer toilet doors.
- Once again we signed Christmas cards for the inmates of Bullingdon Prison. There was also the opportunity to sign greetings cards as part of the Amnesty International Write for Rights Campaign.
- The collecting tins in the toilets have enabled us to fund our thirteenth toilet for the Toilet Twinning project.

- The church was open for prayer and quiet reflection on Holocaust Memorial Day. Thank you to June and Kelvin for the displays and for organising this.
- We helped 13 young people from the Circuit go to 3Generate – an inspiring weekend for young Methodists.
- There was the annual envelope and box collection for World Mission.
- We continue in our support of a variety of charities, many of them local, including Foodbank, Little People etc.
- The church is an active supporter of Christian Aid. In Christian Aid week we provide collectors and this year the evening service will be at Wantage Methodist Church.
- In November we began our journey with Holy Habits when Andrew Roberts came to talk about his book and how we might use this in the future. It has been agreed that this is our project on 2021 and beyond.
- In March we hosted 'Breaking the Taboo' led by Rev Stephen Normanton of Peer Talk. This is part of the Circuit initiative on mental health.

## **175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

We are very grateful to the small planning team who have devised the list of events that will keep us busy and give us lots of enjoyment during 2020. So far we have had the Burns Supper and music quiz and there is so much more to come.

## **Community Drop In Café**

*Eileen Rennie*

This idea was brought to a Movers and Shakers meeting in February 2019 and it was agreed we should give this a go and see how it was received. We set up on 29<sup>th</sup> April and were pleasantly surprised at the number who dropped in. The numbers attending each week range between 35 and 45, but we have topped 50 on a few occasions. We have regulars who come most weeks, some staying for the entire morning and most weeks we welcome new people. There is the option to just sit and chat or to do jigsaw puzzles, or play games or colouring. We also have a table of books you can browse and choose something to take home to read.

We have 22 enthusiastic volunteers who sign up regularly for duties. We have two in the kitchen serving tea/coffee and two in the hall welcoming people as they arrive. The rotas for April, May and June are on the notice board outside the Parlour so please feel free to sign up.

There is no charge for tea/coffee, cake etc., but there is a donations basket. Since we opened we have been supporting the charity Fund for Human Need and to date we have reached around £1600.

At the Movers and Shakers meeting in February it was agreed that we would support four causes in our second year. These are:

- Clean Slate, a low cost, long term listening and support service for all victims of abuse and mental illness
- Hope UK, Equipping young people in your community to make drug-free choices
- Through the Roof, Transforming lives through Jesus with disabled people
- Our Church Hall Refurbishment Fund

We look forward to another successful year when new friendships and support will be established.

Why not come along and join us? We look forward to welcoming you. For further information please see either Eileen Rennie or June Grunwald.

## **Action For Children**

*Carole Robbins*

We have 16 boxholders who raised £216.52 during the last year.

£503.51 was raised through the Christmas collections and a stall at the Dickensian weekend making a grand total of £720.03.

If anyone else would like a home collecting box for their loose change please let me know.

## **Church Lunches**

*Julie Horton*

Our Friday and Sunday lunches continue to be well supported. We average around 40 people sitting down at both lunches, which is a pleasure to see.

We have kept the prices stable for a long time now and after Easter the Friday lunch main course will increase by 50p to £4. The dessert will remain at £2.50, therefore the two courses will cost £6.50.

The Sunday lunch will also increase by 50p and will now cost £8.

We will still be sending any profit from the Friday lunch to a charity suggested by one of our team. Any profit from the Sunday lunch goes into church funds, which helps with the upkeep of the building and also provides tea and coffee facilities etc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the kitchen and waiting-on staff for their continued support and help. Without a team of volunteers this would not be possible. And a big thank you to all who support the lunches. It is a pleasure to see everyone and the fellowship which takes place at the dinner table.

## 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 13. The group is now in its nineteenth 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 "Responding to the Gospel" 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 2019 to March 2020 we have covered a variety of topics. In April we completed our Lent Study "Daring to know God now" and visited St. Mary's Convent during Holy Week for prayer and reflection at the Stations of the Cross. This was followed by eight sessions on Christian Character which then brought us to our study of Colossians for Bible Month. In July we had a day for quiet reflection at St Mary's Convent, when we spent in-depth time on our study of Colossians. 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 3rd September. On our return we completed the last four sessions on Christian Character and followed this with a study of Acts 13 - 28. Our Advent study this year was the York Course, "Who are we praying to?". On our return in the New Year we took time to share our highlights of Advent and Christmas, then a week sharing our favourite, hymn, verse or bible reading and Esther Miller visited us to share her Elizabeth Letter with us. For February Mary Spalding kindly led a session on The Visited Planet, Valerie Broadbent a session on Mercy Ships and we listened to a Radio 4 Broadcast "A Bright Yellow Light" when Nadim Ednan-Laperhouse spoke to Emily Buchanan about his extraordinary religious experience when his daughter Natasha died from an allergic reaction. This brought us to this year's York Lent Course Study "Superstar". Keith made his quarterly visits to the group. In June he answered questions fired at him, in September he spoke on Things We Hold Dear, in December he led our third Advent session and in March he led our second Lent session. 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 Christian Character.

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*

At **Wednesday Fellowship** we have been happy to welcome several new friends to join us and have between 25 and 30 people attending meetings. I would like to thank Gill, Alison, Nicky and Diana for leading the meetings so ably. Thanks also go to Margaret for producing the tea and set-up rotas and Margaret and Francis for their invaluable help with the technology. Of course our sincere thanks go to Gordon for setting up the hall for us and to Clive for clearing away afterwards.

We enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Bear and the Ridgeway Handbell Ringers entertained us at our New Year party. Recent speakers have included Chris Caddy on The Lake District, Fay Pendell showed pictures of her Chelsea Garden, June Grunwald on her trip to Turkey, Michael Bailey on Buenos Aires and Peter Preston on British birds.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us on an occasional or regular basis.

## Finance

### Finance Report

Clive Phillips

The church's current financial situation is, with some significant reservation, satisfactory. Our accounting year runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> and last November a full end-of-year financial report for 2018/2019, including formal accounts, was provided to Church Council and approved by our Independent Examiner. A further report was provided to Church Council in February. This brief report summarises some of the important points from the more comprehensive Church Council reports. More detailed information is provided in the accompanying tables.

In 2018/2019 the church's income and expenditure on normal, regular items necessary for the day-to-day running of the church were nearly equal at approximately £65,000. ***The problem with this is that we had no significant surplus to put aside for future unusual large items of expenditure.***

The total income of our General Church Fund was approximately £62,000 but only about £48,000 of this came from regular giving by church members plus the associated gift aid recovery. The balance was made up mainly from lettings income of approximately £12,000. ***The church has become reliant on lettings income to pay its way and, even so, we are not generating a surplus for future needs.***

Our reserves should equal approximately a half of our normal expenditure plus additional funds that we can justify against specific, planned, future expenditure on large items. At September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 the church reserves were approximately £42,000. Of that about £31,000 is the essential basic reserve (recommended by the Connexion) calculated as half of our normal annual expenditure. That leaves only about £11,000 for unusual, future large items of expenditure.

The Church Council meeting in June 2019 agreed that the church should initiate a scheme to refurbish the church hall at a budgetary cost of £25,000. ***At the beginning of this accounting year we had only the £11,000 reserve and we therefore need to find another £14,000.***

During the year our fundraising for charities continued to increase and we donated over £15,000 to charities compared with about £6,400 three years ago. While this is very commendable, the church does need to consider whether we are applying too much effort and resources to generating income for charities while neglecting the church's needs.

It has been usual at the November Church Council meeting in past years to distribute "excess" money held in the Benevolent Fund to local charities. During the calendar year 2019 the Benevolent Fund made more donations to individuals in need than has been necessary in the past. This may be a reflection of the austerity imposed on Society by the financial crash of 2008 and the changes in the State's Benefits System (to Universal Credit) or a greater awareness by church members of the needs of disadvantaged local people. As a result the Benevolent Fund held less "excess" money in November than usual and Church Council agreed to delay making donations to local charities. However, by the February Church Council meeting the Benevolent Fund had recovered to a level at which Church Council agreed to make donations of

£100 each to ten local charities. The meeting also agreed that the gift aid reclaimed from the donations received by Community Café could be allocated to the Benevolent Fund.

In the coming year we can expect church expenses to increase significantly and by more than inflation (RPI or CPI). The Circuit Assessment is our largest single expense. In 2018/19 it was £34,545, this year (2019/20) it is £36,600, and it is very probable that it will be increased by about 7.5% to £39,355 from September. It is also likely that our utility bills will increase by at least 7%.

During this year (and in future years) the church needs to generate a surplus of day-to-day income over day-to-day expenditure in order to provide money for future expensive items of refurbishment, partly through increased regular giving by members and partly by fund raising. In recognition of this the February Church Council meeting agreed that all the profits from "Wantage 175" events will be allocated to the proposed Hall Refurbishment.

It is worth reminding church members that if we are able to reclaim gift aid on their donations the amount is increased by 25%. Gift aid can be reclaimed if you pay in income tax more than would be reclaimed from the total of your donations to charities. If you think that is the case, please consider discussing this with the church treasurer.

I am now in my seventh year as church treasurer and would like to hand over this duty to someone else. Wantage is not alone in this as Wallingford Methodist Church, All Saints Methodist Church and the Circuit are also seeking new treasurers. If we are unable to obtain new treasurers, we will have to consider outsourcing the jobs. This is not impossible but will be expensive. The tasks of the treasurer can be split between two or three people and can be done using our existing software package or a commercial system. If you are at all interested and want to know more please speak to Keith or me, without commitment.

For those who like figures and want to know more about our income and expenditure, the detailed tables from the 2018/19 end of year report are provided below.

I am sure the church will wish to join me in thanking the many people who help the treasurer through counting the vestry money and in other ways.



## Tables

### ***Church funds and their purposes***

<b>Funds</b>	<b>Purpose &amp; Comments</b>
<b>Operating Funds</b>	<b><i>Used for running the church and maintenance</i></b>
General Church	Week-to-week running of church. See Table 3 for details.
Special Projects	One-off projects exceeding £1000 in price
Capital Projects	Currently used only for photocopier
<b>Other Funds</b>	<b><i>Used as described below</i></b>
Benevolent Fund	Restricted - principally charitable
TMCP Trust 17820	Contains bequests. Used mainly as a reserve for future needs.
<b>Minor Funds</b>	<b><i>Under the control of church groups</i></b>
Wednesday Fellowship	Funds used for speaker expenses, charitable donations, and other
Lunch Club	"Expense" is funds donated to charities. End balance is for General Church use
Other	Currently dormant but ring-fenced for youth work
<b>Charity Fund</b>	<b><i>Raised from collections</i></b>
Charitable	Money raised by the church for charities

**Table 1 Overview of Fund Movements 2018/2019 (£)**

<b>Funds</b>	<b>Start 1/9/2018</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>End 31/8/2019</b>
<b>Operating Funds</b>					
General Church*	29,841	62,399	62,407	(3,339)	26,495
Special Projects*	7,259	1,500	14,011	5,253	0
Capital Projects*	352	1,537	3,133	0	(1,244)
<b>Other Funds</b>					
Benevolent Fund	2,485	1,333	1,890	0	1,929
TMCP Trust 17820*	16,591	108	0	0	16,699
<b>Minor Funds</b>					
Wednesday Fellowship	445	484	280	0	649
Lunch Club	200	3,572	1,858	(1,914)	0
Other (to be allocated)*	500	72	0	0	572
<b>Charity Fund</b>					
Charitable	(40)	9,774	9,734	0	0
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>57,633</b>	<b>80,780</b>	<b>93,314</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45,099</b>

**Note:** Items marked with an asterisk \* comprise the reserves at year end (£42,414)

**Table 2 Surplus (Deficit) on Operating Funds Neglecting Internal Transfers (£)**

Fund	Income	Expenditure	Balance
<b>Regular items</b>			
General Church	62,399	62,407	(8)
Capital Projects (Photocopier)	1,537	3,133	(1,596)
Sunday Lunches*	1,714	0	1,714
<b>Sub-total (regular items)</b>	<b>65,650</b>	<b>65,540</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Special items</b>			
Special Projects	1,500	14,011	(12,511)
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,150</b>	<b>79,551</b>	<b>(12,401)</b>

\*Sunday Lunches. Income from Sunday lunches is not technically an operating fund but it is intended for General Church Funds (Friday lunch income is intended for charity).

**Table 3 General Church Fund Income and Expenditure (£)**

	2018/19	2017/18		2018/19	2017/18
<b>INCOME</b>			<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Collections</b>			Assessment	34,545	33,038
Envelopes	14,713	15,668	Utilities	5,209	4,722
Standing Orders	21,275	19,465	Insurance	1,882	1,823
Cash	3,501	3,134	Stationery	201	183
Transfer out	(390)	(400)	Copyright licences	576	630
<b>Collections sub-total</b>	<b>39,099</b>	<b>37,867</b>	Website maintenance	297	297
			Repairs	7,892	4,045
<b>Other Items</b>			Cleaning	5,061	6,256
Gift Aid Recovery	9,204	9,776	Junior Church (see note)	1,376	438
Lettings	12,142	9,709	Other	3,192	3,527
Interest	201	137	Donations (Methodist)	2,175	1,735
Other Income	1,754	1,332	Donations (Other)	0	20
<b>Other Items sub-total</b>	<b>23,301</b>	<b>20,953</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>62,407</b>	<b>56,716</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,399</b>	<b>58,820</b>			

**Note:** The Junior Church figure is unusually high because it was decided to use funds which had been carried over for several years from the now defunct youth Friday Night Group, and ring-fenced for youth activities, to support YMOSES young people to attend 3generate in Southport. £500 was available and this was supplemented by a circuit grant of £72 so that the true cost to General Church Expenditure would have been reduced to £804. This fund transfer took place in October 2019 and is therefore not reflected in the 2018/2019 accounts.

**Table 4 Special Project Expenditure (£)**

Acoustic panels for walls	3,451
Acoustic panels for ceilings	8,880
Acoustic analysis after installation	1,680
Circuit Grant	(1,500)
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,511</b>

**Table 5 Charitable Donations (£)**

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Donations from General Fund	2,175	1,755
Donations from Benevolent Fund	1,700	1,100
Raised directly by envelopes, etc	9,734	7,601
Donations from other funds*	2,138	4,446
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15,747</b>	<b>14,902</b>

\* Friday lunches and Wednesday Fellowship,

## Property

*Rob Charles*

**Peter Preston** has stepped away from the chair of Property and Finance some 27 years after he joined the committee. His dedication and application to the work has been highly valued and he has made a significant contribution to the continuing good state of the buildings. We thank him for his service, knowing he will continue to assist when he can.

## Methodist Insurance

We were required by the insurers to take a few actions. The work to satisfy these requirements is complete.

Some advisory recommendations have been addressed regarding Lone Working and Finger Guards (to address the risks associated with trapping between the hinge side of the door and the door frame).

## Hall Refurbishment

The hall building is now 27 years old and some refurbishment is needed to improve the energy efficiency of the building and renew aging services.

Renew the ceiling tiles in the Hall and corridors and meeting rooms.

Replace the lighting in the hall, corridors and meeting rooms with LED panels to give better maximum light levels, more flexibility and lower energy and maintenance requirements.

Replace the radiators in the Hall with modern equivalents to give better control and quieter operation, replace the boiler and control system.

Replace the hall chairs.

A budget of £25,000 has been approved and support from the Circuit is promised. We shall need to do some fundraising to cover the costs of this work.

### **Kitchen**

We continue to try to maintain and improve our disciplines in the kitchen. An external inspection during the year criticised some aspects of our behaviour. The need for strict discipline is being emphasised with the issue of Coronavirus, but is essential at all times. Hand washing and keeping surfaces clean are key things we can do. Please do not take bags into the kitchen.

A new dishwasher has been installed after the old machine was unable to be repaired.

### **Hall Chairs**

Two samples have been on site. They have been looked at after a Sunday service and at the meeting of Church Council. There are benefits and snags to both of them and we are evaluating peoples' responses.

### **Signage**

"No Public Right of Way" signs have been obtained and are being erected in the Yard and the Church Street Passage. To protect our ability to shut the passage when needed and prevent the yard becoming an official right of way, we also need to close the gates at the Church Street arch for 24 hours once each year. We have done this in the past on a Boxing Day. This was not possible this winter and it will be arranged in the near future.

"EXIT" signs have been put in the Ladies' and Gents' washroom doors as part of our "Dementia Friendly" premises policy.

A "Gender Neutral" sign has been fitted to the "disabled" toilet door.

### **Routine work**

The Health and Safety Assessment has been completed.

The kitchen boiler servicing included the replacement of some parts and it is now in good health.

One of the invisible jobs is the maintenance of the water softener for the dishwasher and we must thank Rodney Tillotson for his commitment to this task.

Portable appliance testing of electrical appliances is being carried out by PK Electric.

The fire alarm servicing is up to date.

The Hall floor has been treated.

### **Other Work**

We are grateful to Doug Hatto for many jobs he has done this year including :

repairs to the brick wall adjacent to Spackman Court.

repairs to hall building window fixings and other hall woodwork.

A storage rack has been installed in the Hall store to try to make it easier to keep the place tidy. Two more helped support Little People and Food Bank in the Godfrey room during November and December.

Having had two of the **curtain tracks** in the Hall jammed and damaged, we have felt it wise to renew all the tracks. This has the added advantage that the draw cords will conform to modern safety standards.

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.

## Copyright

*John Leake*

Copyright reporting has continued smoothly throughout the year.

For the year 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019 to 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2020 the most frequent hymns were:

- SF 409 Let us build a house – sung 8 times
- SF 317 At the name of Jesus – sung 6 times
- And 6 hymns all sung 4 times:
- SF 186 Tell out, my soul
- SF 598 Shout for joy!
- SF 662 Have you heard God's voice
- SF 728 O God, you search me and you know me
- SoF 2249 Come, people of the risen king
- SoF 2306 Go peaceful

I thank the stewards for feeding the hymn numbers to me and Rodney for his continuing 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*

The buildings are in great demand and our users are very happy with the support they get. Our bookings are printed in the monthly newsletter and weekly notices.

There have been a few issues of discipline which have been documented in the monthly newsletter and in communication with external users.

It remains essential that the Bookings Secretary is notified promptly of changes in plans or proposed events.

The bookings mailbox is: [wntgmethodistbookings@gmail.com](mailto:wntgmethodistbookings@gmail.com)

## Communications

### New Church Logo

We have a new logo for use on publicity, publications and the internet. It can be seen on the front cover of this report.

### Wantage Methodist Website

*Gordon Skidmore*

<https://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 Zack Smith for taking on the job of setting up and maintaining our presence on **Facebook**.

### Notices

*Gordon Skidmore*

These are now available on the Wantage Methodist Church web site. This version is always the most up to date version as errors and omissions in the printed copy are corrected and a new copy posted.

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](mailto:wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com)

### Sector Newsletter

*Gill & Gordon Skidmore*

In 2019 we issued 10 editions. We have now been able to use colour and it is, of course, now available on the website. We try to include items from a wider world and deliver something which is more than a diary of events. Any offers of content are gratefully received. Please let us know of any ideas to improve what we publish.

The sector newsletter mailbox is:

[wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:wntgmethodistbookings@gmail.com)

**Notices :** [wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com](mailto:wntgmethodistnotices@gmail.com)

**Newsletter (monthly) :** [wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wantage.sector.newsletter@gmail.com)

**Annual Report :** [wmcannualreport@gmail.com](mailto:wmcannualreport@gmail.com)

## **Circuit Matters**

*Carolyn Roche*

This is a great Circuit to be part of with hardworking and supportive ministers, deacon, chaplains, local preachers and circuit stewards. There have been plenty of opportunities to get together as a Circuit during the past year and that continues during 2020.

Sadly Rev Jocelyn Bennett has been unwell during the past couple of months and is currently on sick leave. This has meant an increased workload for the rest of the staff and for Keith in particular. The Circuit is very grateful for all that they do. The Circuit would also like to thank everyone, especially those at Didcot, Milton and Wallingford, who are helping to keep everything running smoothly during Jocelyn's absence.

We are very pleased that Deacon Selina Nisbett, who is in her fifth year in the Circuit, has been invited to stay for a further three years. She does invaluable work in the church and community of Abingdon.

We now hold Keith and Ian in our prayers as they go into the re-invitation/stationing process in May.

As ever, we are indebted to the dedicated team of Local Preachers, who lead services in the Circuit every Sunday. Once again they helped to provide the Advent devotional booklet.

The Circuit now has a new Safeguarding Officer, Debbie Adams and a new Circuit Meeting Secretary, Liz Wood. We are pleased that they have felt called to fulfil these roles. We continue to look for a new Circuit Treasurer and also more Circuit Stewards. Please speak to Keith or myself if you are interested and wish to know more about these positions. It is great to be part of the Circuit Leadership Team.

Our thanks to Mary Hancock, who amongst her duties as Circuit Property Steward, ensures that our Circuit staff have safe and suitable manses in which to live and work.

It is always good to attend Circuit services and events as it gives the opportunity to meet other Methodists in the area. There have been several Circuit services in the past year including the Easter Offering Service held at Didcot and a service at Trinity in July when we celebrated with Ruth Dams as she received her long service award for 60 years as a local preacher.

Everyone in the Circuit was invited to hear Clive Marsh, the Vice President of the Conference speak at the special Circuit meeting held at Didcot on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

The Circuit initiative on mental health began on 15<sup>th</sup> March at Wantage with 'Breaking the Taboo'. Rev Stephen Normanton of Peer Talk came to provide some input and to facilitate discussion and this was followed by an act of worship.

In the coming months we have a Circuit celebration at Milton on 26<sup>th</sup> April at 3 pm, when Val Grist will be receiving her long service award, and the 2020 Easter Offering service at Grove on 17<sup>th</sup> May at 3 pm. Looking further ahead we have the celebration on White Horse Hill on 21<sup>st</sup> June at 3 pm, when our Circuit will be celebrating 200 years of Methodism in the Vale with the Witney and Faringdon Circuit.

This year the Circuit was able to help 13 young people go to 3Generate in Southport. It is very inspirational to go to this Methodist youth event. Thanks to all those who went with them. Next year they only have to get to the NEC – a bigger venue is needed - Hallelujah!

The Chaplaincy project on Great Western Park continues to flourish and grow. We are very grateful to the hard work of the lead Chaplains, Sarah and Libby. They are now beginning to explore ways to work on the new Wantage and Grove housing estates. The Project is looking to recruit a third Lead Chaplain. A volunteer chaplain has joined the team and goes into one of the retirement homes on GWP on a regular basis.

Finally thank you to Keith for all the hard work he does in leading, encouraging and inspiring our Circuit. As he takes his Sabbatical later in the year, we pray that it will be a time of refreshment, rest and inspiration for him.



## **Wantage and Grove Church Partnership**

*Ann Barber*

During the past year there have been further clergy changes within some of the churches in the Partnership. Rev John Green has become Pastor of Wantage Christian Fellowship, who had been without a leader since the departure of Glyn Oliver in 2016. As well as being an ordained Minister, John is also a Chaplain and a Bereavement Counsellor. He will continue to offer those services to the local community as part of his ministry in Wantage. Last September Canon Peter Turbitt, a longstanding member of the Partnership, going back to its establishment as Wantage Christian Council, retired. A greeting to wish him a happy retirement was sent from our church, and a greeting also went to his successor, Fr David O'Sullivan. He has become the new priest-in-charge at St John Vianney, and we look forward to working with him and have welcomed him to the Partnership. More recently two new members have been welcomed to the Action Group: Revd Chris Ashton is the Curate at St John's Church in Grove, and Andy Bruce is Assistant Pastor at Wantage Community Church.

The Anglican churches in Grove and Wantage set up a Church Welcoming Group with an objective of visiting all of the newly built and occupied houses. The visits are undertaken in pairs. All of the volunteers are trained beforehand and supported in their visiting work. Information leaflets from non-Anglican churches can be included in the welcome packs, but conditionally upon those churches providing volunteers to join the team of visitors. Mike and Judith Skinner have volunteered on behalf of our church.

The 'Open the Book' and 'Prayer Spaces' projects operating in local Primary and Secondary Schools are keen to sustain these initiatives, and they would welcome volunteers from any of the Partnership's member churches.

The AGM took place on 26<sup>th</sup> September in our church, and was well attended. A local representative from CAPUK, [Christians against Poverty], was the guest speaker. She spoke about her involvement with the organisation in relation to her personal experience of debt problems, as well as describing the work she does voluntarily as a CAPUK debt counsellor in the Wantage and Abingdon area.

For the first time in many years no Christmas greetings card from the churches in Wantage and Grove was received last year. An error with the printing was insuperable, and replacement cards could not be guaranteed to arrive in time for Partnership volunteers to sort and prepare them by the deadline set by the Scouts. This was a double blow, as not only did no greeting or details of Christmas services in all of the churches reach any residents, but the Scouts only received half of the usual income earned from delivering the cards.

On 19<sup>th</sup> January the annual Service celebrating the beginning of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity took place at St John's. The service was preceded by afternoon tea, creating a pleasant opportunity for socialising between people from all of the participating churches. The uplifting service which followed included a talk by Libby, one of the Methodist Community Chaplains currently working on Great Western Park in Didcot, and soon to be working as a Chaplain in this part of the Circuit.

## Wantage and Grove Food Bank

Helen Carter

Firstly, a huge 'thank you' for the support with both goods and money being donated on a continuous basis throughout the year. That is much appreciated.

2019 was sadly a record year for requests for food parcels, and 2020 has continued the trend with more requests for January and February than last year for the first two months of the year.

The statistics for 2019 are as below:-

### Food Bank Distribution 2019

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jly*	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec**	Total	2019
<b>Parcels</b>	31	27	28	37	54	34	16	35	24	28	43	49	Parcels	406
<b>Adults</b>	49	46	35	60	74	51	27	48	32	39	58	72	Adults	591
<b>Children</b>	39	22	22	32	59	48	24	41	24	36	65	84	Children	496

and

and

\* 23 (x2)  
summer  
parcels

\*\*110 Christmas  
parcels

The reasons for individuals and families needing to seek help by way of having food parcels delivered are very varied. Family breakdown with the wage earner leaving home, low pay, redundancy, illness and problems with benefits (especially Universal Credit) are the main ones. It is humbling and also saddening to see how grateful people are in receiving the essentials for life.

If you know anyone who is struggling to make ends meet, please ask them to go to the Independent Advice Centre or talk to their health providers so that they can receive some help with food. Food for cats and dogs is also usually available. Whilst talking of help with food, please also tell folk about the Community fridge at the Mix. All the fresh food picked up from there (6 days a week, either morning or afternoon) is free. There is always bread and then other items of vegetables, dairy products etc as and when donated by supermarkets and individuals.

The Foodbank is run entirely on a voluntary basis and addition volunteers are always welcomed. There are a number of different roles with the organisation.

## **Wantage and Grove Street Pastors**

*Helen Carter*

This year has once again been a busy but fruitful year for Wantage and Grove Street Pastors. The celebration for 10 years of Street Pastors in Wantage was very special. Another wonderful piece of news is that our Town Mayor, having been out with the Street Pastors, has nominated the Wantage and Grove Street Pastors for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

At the time of writing there are 16 active Street Pastors and 13 active Prayer Support Volunteers. Within our church family we have one Street Pastor in training, and we are delighted about that. We have a number of Prayer Support Volunteers including those who are at the centre when patrols are out and some people who pray at home. Prayer is vital to the work and is much appreciated by those out on the streets. At the time of writing, there are 148 people from different churches who support Wantage and Grove Street Pastors in one way or another. There are those who regularly donate money, those who support fund-raising events and those who generally take an interest in the work of the Street Pastors. All support is much appreciated.

In last year's report, Rodney anticipated a daytime patrol as requested by King Alfred's Academy. As yet that has not been possible. However, it is looking hopeful for a patrol to be happening before too long. There is a minimum number for a team and that might now have been reached so it is possible that training may commence soon. Please pray for this to be the case.

The financial position of the charity is quite healthy at the moment thanks to some generous donations and grants. Once again there have been some fund-raising events during the year. Notably, the performance in April by Mark Topping of "An Impossible God" was much appreciated, as was the "Curry and Quiz Night" in the autumn. The proceeds from our Christmas Tree Festival were donated to the Street Pastors, and that was much appreciated. Carol singing added to the donations.

Rodney Tillotson was involved with the Street Pastors from the very start. He had a number of roles over the years and his contribution in one way or another has been outstanding. He stepped down from active involvement, but his expertise is still being called on occasionally when some background information is needed to clarify the situation concerning some issue. Huge thanks are due and are given. Zack Smith has not only started training as a Street Pastor, but he has also taken on the role of Church Representative for our church from Rodney. That means that he is one of the people to ask about the work of the Street Pastors, the other one being me (I am currently still a trustee). Please ask one of us for the latest quarterly newsletter, and please pick up a prayer card designed to help you know what is being asked for by way of prayer. Also, if you wish to become a member in order to actively support the Street Pastors and receive regular monthly reports about the work being undertaken, do speak to Zack or me.

## Church Council 2019/20

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

Margaret Fordham	Due to retire in 2021 (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Rita Lawrence	Due to retire in 2021 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Mike Skinner	Due to retire in 2021 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Helen Carter	Due to retire in 2022 (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Rodney Tillotson	Due to retire in 2022 (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Alison Brown	Due to retire in 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Julie Horton	Due to retire in 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)
Kelvin Rose	Due to retire in 2022 (1 <sup>st</sup> term)

*Eligible for re-election if willing to stand*

Diana Gawlas	Due to retire in 2020 (1 <sup>st</sup> 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 Gordon Skidmore (acting)  
Secretary Rotating  
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 Rotating

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 2019, held during the 10.30 MORNING SERVICE

#### **Present**

Keith Underhill, Minister, led the service of worship and the business for the General Church Meeting.

70 people were in the congregation for the morning service.

Apologies were received from Helen Carter and John Carter

#### **Opening Devotions**

The service opened with a welcome and introduction to the ACM which was to be incorporated as part of the Sunday morning worship.

“Everything we do as a church comes from our worship: reaffirm, proclaim and declare what we believe to be true”

#### **Worship**

Keith offered **Worship** to the congregation and asked if they would receive the report to which the congregation replied yes.

#### **Learning and Caring**

Keith offered the reports for **Learning and Caring** to the congregation and asked if they would receive the reports to which the congregation replied yes.

The Pastoral Visitors were thanked for their dedication in caring for those connected to the church.

The Methodist Church Youth President will be visiting Wantage June 25<sup>th</sup>

Wantage Methodist Church continues to reach out to the wider community with Friday and Sunday lunches.

#### **Service**

Keith offered the reports for **Service** to the congregation and asked if they would receive the reports to which the congregation replied yes.

Service as part of calling:

Action for Children, Street Pastors, Holocaust, All We Can, Toilet Twinning and much more

A drop in café starts in the church hall tomorrow on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

#### **Stewards**

Heather Wells is stepping down

June Grunwald, Alison Phillips, Gordon Skidmore are reappointed and Sue Haithwaite will join the team

The elected representatives to Church Council are:

Alison Brown, Helen Carter, Margaret Fordham, Diana Gawlas, Julie Horton, Rita Lawrence, Kelvin Rose, Mike Skinner, Rodney Tillotson

Keith invited the congregation to think whether God is calling them to anything new?

### **Evangelisim**

Mark Sandals will be visiting new housing developments in the Grove area and is inviting others to join this Grove initiative.

It is hoped to have a Christian presence in local housing developments as they are being built and when the houses are just occupied.

### **Offering**

Is an opportunity to respond to God's word heard during the service and when we offer something back to God and our lives for his use.

### **Finance and Property**

Keith offered the reports for **Finance and Property** to the congregation and asked if they would receive the reports to which the congregation replied yes.

This Church is fortunate with good stewardship and response from the people of the church.

### **Thanksgiving**

Keith asked the congregation to offer thanks for each other as together we are the body of Christ, the Church

Keith asked the congregation to reflect on the last year and give thanks for those who have died: Dot Fern, Lois Knighton, Joyce Sharp, Robin Trotter, John Fordham

Keith opened the service to the congregation for questions or comments

Diana said she was grateful to Margaret and Francis McAlpin for helping with technology at Wednesday Fellowship.

### **The service closed with a blessing**