



# Annual Report 2015 -2016

Including Trustees Report for  
Charities Commission

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

## Church Accounting Regulations 2006 & SORP 2005

### Trustees Annual Report 2015 - 2016

#### *Castle Church, Stafford*

To comply with the reporting procedures with regards to producing a Trustees Annual Report (TAR), this has been put together from various sources including our, Mission Action Plan, Accounts and other references such as our web site, and must be read in conjunction with our Annual Parish Report, attached.

#### *Reference and Administration details*

Our charity name is *Castle Church Stafford*

Report compiled by: David Boote

#### *PCC Members 2014-2015*

<i>Ex officio members</i>	<i>Philip Sowerbutts</i>	<i>Incumbent</i>
	<i>Christine Sykes</i>	<i>Assistant Minister</i>
	<i>Phillip Mullins</i>	<i>Curate</i>
	<i>Colin Price</i>	<i>Church Warden</i>
	<i>Barbara Boote</i>	<i>Church Warden</i>
	<i>Colin Price</i>	<i>Church Warden</i>
	<i>Claire Jarvie</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
	<i>Vera Davis</i>	<i>Deanery Synod Representative</i>
	<i>Rosemary Cage</i>	<i>Deanery Synod Representative</i>
<i>Serving members</i>	<i>Neil Ashton</i>	<i>Deputy Warden</i>
	<i>Dalena Deall</i>	<i>PCC Secretary</i>
	<i>Les Neil</i>	
	<i>Steve Glover</i>	<i>2 years served</i>
	<i>Mary Yates</i>	<i>1 year served</i>
	<i>Dawn Louis</i>	<i>1 year served</i>
	<i>David Boote</i>	<i>Former Treasurer</i>

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Banking details	<i>Co-operative Bank 1 Balloon Street Manchester M60 5EP</i>
Independent Examiner	<i>Mr. Jonathon Hill Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance St Mary's House The Close Lichfield WS13 7LD</i>
Priest in Charge	<i>Phillip Sowerbutts</i>

## ***Structure, Governance and Management***

**PCC constitution:** The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Measure. The PCC is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission.

Currently PCC members and Churchwardens are elected in line with the Parochial Church Council Measure, each member being a full member of the Church Family and on the nominal role, at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Currently we do not have a formal induction procedure in place for new trustees and as we have just finalised our extensive building work renovating our Church Building, we will endeavour to facilitate a training package as a priority in the next sitting of the PCC.

We have a number of sub committees as follows

### **Finance Committee:**

A new committee set up for 2015 - 2016 with the intention of assisting in the duties of the treasurer and also to complete a comprehensive review of the finance policies and procedures, it will be chaired by a Church Warden.

### **Fabric Committee:**

No committee appointed

### **Social Committee:**

Not active at present

### **Church Hall Committee:**

Responsible for the letting of the Church Halls.

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Church Building Committee:

Responsible for assisting in the instruction and refurbishment Steering Committee management of the building refurbishment, which is currently under review pending a decision regarding phase 2 of the reordering.

A comprehensive set of risk management documents have been prepared for all four Church Buildings, and has been discussed by the PCC and are at this time under review with a watching brief and will be implemented when we are legally required to do so. (Pending the number of staff employed by the PCC)

## ***Objectives and Activities***

At Castle Church we have a Mission Action Plan (MAP) in which we have detailed our plans for the short, medium and long term with regards to continuing the growth in our church family and making a difference in the local community.

Our main objective is 'to make the love of God known to everyone' to help do so we intend to make the Castle Church main building, which is Grade 2\* listed, fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has been encouraging to report that we were able to raise the necessary funds and have completed the major building work, which was required on the Church building.

We are still in dire need of new lighting and heating within the old Church building and will be addressed as a priority over the coming life of the next PCC.

Due to the issues with the Building and its unsuitability, only one Sunday service is conducted within the building, and notwithstanding a bi weekly midweek communion. The Church congregation at large very rarely uses the building, our other services having moved to the Church Hall and the Barn.

Due to the growth in the Church Family, the PCC has been in discussion with the local council, MP, other Churches and the diocese to beginning exploration into either a Church Plant or the possibility of the rationalisation of our assets and the purchasing of another more suitable building.

## ***Achievements and Performance***

We have the following services:

10:15am Family Service (meeting in the Church Hall - Newport Road)

This is a modern and informal service using power point technology and with music led by a band. It attracts people aged 0-100, though is predominantly made up of young families. After around 20 minutes the children leave us for their own activities in The Barn. They usually look at the same passage of the bible as the adults in the main service.

Attendance: 50-60 Adults 20-30 Children

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9am Traditional Sunday Service with choir:

For those who find the modern style of worship uncomfortable, we have a traditional sung morning service. This is led by our church choir and attracts mainly, though not exclusively older people.

Attendance: 10-20 Adults 1-2 Children

9:45am Sunday Service at Lovelace Close Highfields

An informal setting for this warm and friendly service in the church hall on Highfields. The service is usually lay led and has a team of people who undertake this ministry. This service attracts more elderly people.

Attendance: 15-20 Adults

6pm Sunday Service (currently meeting in The Barn behind the Church Hall - Newport Road)

The last service of the day combines modern and traditional music as we come together in this quieter more reflective time together, with an opportunity to spend more time in God's word. There is a mixture of ages and a significant number attending for the second time on a Sunday.

Attendance: 20-30 Adults

10am Midweek Communion

A new midweek Communion service twice each month (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays) followed by a coffee morning.

Attendance: 15-20 Adults (more attend the coffee morning afterwards.)

We have policies on Baptism, Weddings and Funerals which are published on our website, [www.castlechurch.org.uk](http://www.castlechurch.org.uk)

We are blessed at Castle Church and have a large number of volunteers giving up both their time and expertise; we have a thriving Sunday school, a small youth group, a choir, a drama group and a craft group.

We also have a Mother and Toddler group, which is very successful and has grown significantly since its inception some 18 months ago.

This is in addition to a small army of volunteers who staff a coffee morning on a bi weekly basis and provide tea and coffee after each service.

As a church family we have run a number of successful 'Christianity Explored' courses over the last year, together with a Lent series in which Dr Ros Clarke expounded on a number of Christian Doctrinal Issues and was aimed at both working and retired parishioners helping them to understand the role work plays in God plan.

We have a number of midweek Bible study groups, both in the day and in the evening.

## **Fabric Committee Report:**

None

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## *Policies*

Reserves:

Appointment of Independent Examiner:

## *Financial Review*

A full copy of our audited year-end accounts, together with our Independent Examiners Report is attached.

**Barbara Boote**  
**Church Warden**

**Colin Price**  
**Church Warden**

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## Annual Parishioners' Meeting Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Present: Rev. Philip Sowerbutts, Rev. Chris Sykes, Rev. Phil Mullins, Ian Sykes, Peter Maslen, Steve Deall, Mavis Bryant, Les Neil, Mary Yates, Colin Price, Stuart Kelsall, Rosemary Cage, David Boote, Barbara Boote, Stephen Glover, Ros Clarke, Pauline Howard, Vera Davis, Dalena Deall.

Apologies: Terry Davis Les Deall

1. The meeting opened in prayer at 1.15pm
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014
3. Election of Churchwardens

There were two nominations:

Barbara Boote

Nominated: Steve Deall

Seconded: Mary Yates

Colin Price

Nominated: Steve Deall

Seconded: Barbara Boote

There were no other nominations, so Colin and Barbara were duly elected for another 12 months. Philip prayed for the churchwardens for the next twelve months  
The next PCC will appoint at least one Deputy Churchwarden

#### 4. Close of Meeting

The meeting was then closed at 1.25pm.

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## Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015

### 1. Welcome

The meeting was opened at 1.25pm.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014:

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed: Ros Clarke

Seconded : May Bee

### 3. Matters Arising

None

### 4. Election of Deanery Synod Members:

The Vicar said that we could have two more members on the Deanery Synod if we wished and asked for the family to think on this issue, as they could be co-opted at a later date. There were two nominations.

Vera Davis

Nominated: Barbara

Seconded: Steve Deall

Rosemary Cage

Nominated Steve Deall

Seconded: Ros Clarke

Vera and Rosemary were duly elected as Deanery Synod representatives.

### 5. Election of new PCC Members

We are allowed up to 3 new members every 3 years on rotation. We have only filled 3 spaces over the last few years, so we only have a small PCC.

There were 2 nominations.

1. Mary Yates

Nominated: Vera Davis

Seconded: Ros Clarke

2. Dawn Louis

Nominated: Ros Clarke

Seconded: Pauline Howard

Mary and Dawn were duly elected, the dates of the next meetings were attached to the agenda. Phil prayed for the new PCC and their work over the next twelve months

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## 6. Any Other General Business

Mavis asked if the Christmas decorations could be removed. Also could the top of the piano be brought back onto its base.

Steve Deall said that the two church wardens will do the above on Monday 17<sup>th</sup>.

How is the lighting going?

Barbara Boote stated that the quote we have had is for around 20K. We need another quote to look at this. Then the money will need to be collected together. The problem is not only the lighting but almost all the electricians have been condemned. The cost could be less if we stripped the church. We do have to use a company that is approved by the DAC. Until we have another quote we cannot give the church family an idea of the cost. Chris asked if a note could be put into Crosswords about the quote. Because we do not have a definite amount we cannot give people any idea of the cost and what is happening. May asked if the PCC could look at putting in place a fund to help raise funding for this project. We are only at a feasibility study which makes it very difficult to advise. Steve Deall reiterated that this is a high priority on the PCC and Neil Ashton is in that field and we take a lot of advice from him. Neil has suggested that we could put in temporary lighting, which we could only do that for six months. Please put this item on the first PCC agenda for discussion. It is a very complicated matter.

Anita Brown asked if the powers that be state what we can and cannot do with any money that is raised. Very little is the answer. Barbara said that a lot of the time the people who are these positions are not Christian.

John Kirkham asked if the temporary lighting could be run from sockets. There are some sockets that are usable for this. It is when we have a large number in such as Castlechurch School with 400 children that any problems may arise with trailing cables.

Phil Mullins asked if there is a summary on the progress of new buildings. We had money given us to enable us to bid for the Westway (80K-100K) we offered 100K. That was rejected as the Brewery want to sell to Stafford and Rural Homes for new homes, a larger amount was offered for this. We put an injunction on this for a community use and our injunction was upheld. Stafford and Rural homes want to knock it down and build homes. We are backed by our conservative Candidate for this measure who will oppose it. Local councillors still feel it should be used for Community Use. When this planning application goes in we as a church family need to oppose for the reason that Highfields will lose the last community space. King Edwards want to use it for a Sixth Form College. Philip has had several meetings with them, It was suggested that the school, Westway, Signposts, Lovelace Close, could look at these areas to assess that everybody has what they need, the school and church building could have overlapping uses. The Spirit Brewery has now been bought out by The Greene King Brewery, we will write to them shortly and state our offer is still open. The PCC has an open mind to what God has for us in the future, there may be doors that yet may open for us. Philip checks the planning applications regularly. Peter Hill asked if we could co-operate with the school to share any building. This could be a possibility. John Kirkham also asked about the Lovelace land used as a bargaining tool. This is already in the loop, as we have the access for the land behind.

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## 7. Moving forward..... Challenges

Philip said that we as a family at Castle Church are in a good position. We have now moved into the large church category, we have prayed about our finances and we are now in a better position, but we now need to look at the future, we cannot afford to stand still.

People: Leaders and staff at Castle Church commented that at chapter meetings it is often stated that the church has leaders that are now mainly in their later years, we need to be a sending out a younger church. We are very fortunate to have Ros with us but we are now sending out people to grow the kingdom. Steve D is leaving this year and is a different person to what he was eight years ago, Barbara has served as church warden for nine years, David has served as Treasurer for three years and is still looking after the finances after he said he was going to retire and Phil who is only going to be with us for the next two years, we need to look at who will take over these positions.

The numbers who come to 10.30a service are now almost to capacity, statistics say once a church is 80% full it will stop growing, we are above that figure, so we need to look at where we go from here.

There is the new building project in Burleyfields , 20,000 more people, would we be able to accommodate an influx from them.

Pastoral Care, we need to think about this, how do we care for each other, it is not just about the emergency incidents, but we need to look after each other all the time. Barbara gave an overview of the Pastoral Care that she is putting in place, giving an idea of the different types of visits, a social visit to help and shopping, a visit to pray and talk to them, then a communion visit. All people who take part in this everyone would need to be DBS registered. It is hoop that we need to jump through, it is hoped that this will not put people off joining this scheme. Hopefully Christine will take the lead giving the visit to the person best suited to the visit needs. We are trying to make sure that we do not miss people out who are in need of some support. Steve Glover will do the DBS, please see Barbara Boote if you feel that you are able to take part in this scheme.

Growing the Kingdom of God: that is what we are about, we are hoping to be able to announce a new Ministry Apprentice, an exciting opportunity. Owen's work with our young people is good and we need to be able to keep him. Be encouraged with all the work that God has us to do, work that He has called us to do.

Philip thanked all the staff team, for their help and encouragement week by week. Also to have Claire alongside, a round of applause marked our appreciation for her. Roy had remarked how much he appreciated the Staff team for their support. Philip thanked all the family for their love and support. Philip feels that God is calling him and Claire to stay put here in Stafford to grow His kingdom.

## Closing Prayer

The meeting closed in prayer at 2.20pm

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## Vicar's Report 2015-16:

I have been at Castle Church a little over 9 years now and we have seen God do some great things amongst us. We have grown numerically, but most important we have grown spiritually. I continue to delight in leading the church family here in Stafford and feel called to stay here for the foreseeable future.

Our Church Mission Action Plan contains three areas of development: Mission, Discipleship and Buildings. It currently seems to be the third of those which is causing us the most concern. As a church we must pray that God will clearly reveal his plans for us as a church family. I will be verbally updating the church family about where the PCC are up to with regard to buildings at the APCM and there will be an opportunity to ask ANY questions to myself and the churchwardens, but in preparation I thought it worth using this report to draw attention to the issues.

### Church Building

The essential work on the tower was generously supported by English Heritage however this was only 'match funding' and it has virtually wiped out the reserves we held for building work that had previously been left as legacy. Whilst the church building is now structurally sound, the lighting and electrics are a serious concern. Much of the electrical installation is beyond repair and needs replacing. The lighting continues to deteriorate. As you know we have worked with lighting designers and the diocese to ascertain an estimate for the work which is around £15,000. The PCC have no spare money at all to spend on the project with us only just able to balance the week to week operating costs of the church family. We have made an appeal to the church family which has brought in pledges of support that amount to just over half of the cost of the project.

### The Church Hall Complex

The Hall and Barn continue to be the hub of Midweek and Sunday activity. The simple truth is, that whilst they are excellent facilities for Midweek ministry and community use, Sundays are far more problematic. The 10.30 service is now at capacity and in the last year we have needed to break advisory fire regulations advice. We have done work on moving equipment around to create more space but this is only tinkering with the problem. It also makes parking extremely difficult. Church Growth study says that churches stop growing when the building is 80% full. We are over that figure now and we have no space to grow. This is a serious problem and one the PCC have spent considerable time discussing with various projects hitting the buffers.

### Highfields Hall

Highfields Hall soldiers on and meets our current needs each Sunday. In terms of buildings development our land at Highfields maybe, in due course, become important. There are several developers who would take the land off our hands for cash tomorrow, however before we do anything, we need to know where God is taking us together, and we need to keep a witness on the estate and provide for the faithful members of our church family there.

I believe that our number one priority as a church should be to pray that God would reveal His plans to us and open the doors at the right time and in the right way.

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Other matters...

## Preaching & Teaching...

Teaching the bible still lies at the heart of all our meetings and we are grateful to God for the ways he has challenged us through his word this year. We have also welcomed Owen and Neil Jarvie onto our preaching team which is a good thing. Please pray that God will use them and all preachers at Castle Church to show us more of Jesus. I would still like more of the church family in small groups. They are wonderful places of learning from God's word, but also for mutual care and support. Please speak with Phil, Christine or myself if you would like to know more.

## Events....

We had a wonderfully moving Confirmation Service in January with the Bishop. We heard some amazing testimonies and were glad that a good number of the church family declared their own faith in front of the church family. This year saw the first Church Family Weekend Away for many years. We had a fantastic time at Shallowford and are grateful to Simon and his team for making it such a great time of fun and fellowship where relationships amongst us grew over the weekend. We have planned another for July 2017. Again, our Midweek Break in September was a wonderful warm time of fellowship together and we look forward to another this September!

It has been terrific to see our new groups LIFT and Men's Shed take off and we've enjoyed some fun times together at socials and family events like the Beetle Drive.

## Staffing...

This year, after many years of faithful service Mavis stepped down as leader of our Church Choir. She has served God and the Castle Church family well over the last 30 years and the Choral Evensong we had in February was a very moving service. I, personally, have enjoyed singing with the choir on many occasions and Mavis even let me loose on a few solos. The reason Mavis has been such a blessing to us all in this role is not because of her undoubted musical brilliance, but because her only desire has been to see her own Saviour Jesus glorified through her ministry. She has only ever wanted the choir to point people to Jesus. Of course Mavis continues to serve as organist and pianist and as leader of the Treble Makers, but we must not forget to thank God for her ministry.

We are grateful to God for blessing Castle Church with a terrific staff team. We continue to be blessed by our three associate ministers, Chris, Roy and Alan their ministry amongst us. Their service and ministry in obvious and less obvious ways is so encouraging to me. Owen continues to lead our youth work alongside his study at Oak Hill. His ministry has been a huge boon to our teenagers and he is ably assisted by Dani who does a significant amount of work alongside him.

Anna has spent the year as our Lay Ministry Assistant and has had a profound effect on our children's work in one to one bible studies, after school craft club and, of course the hugely successful Holiday Club which she planned and led. In September she moves onto the Staff Team of Dundonald Church in South London. We are pleased that we have been able to appoint another Lay Ministry Assistant in Michael Hayden. Michael will join the staff team in

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September after finishing University in Nottingham. Michael is from Northern Ireland and is currently going through the selection process for ordained ministry in the Southwell Diocese.

Emma continues to lead our pre-school ministry each Friday and we are beginning to see shoots of real evangelistic fruit through that ministry. Dalena continues to keep us all in order taking huge swathes of work from the desks of the staff team. We thank her for this work and ministry. Pauline and Roy continue to do a sterling job looking after our buildings on Newport Road and Les uses his considerable skills keeping Highfields watertight!

We remain indebted to Ros for the work she does amongst the women of the church alongside her role working for Lichfield Diocese. I know just how much many of our women enjoy bible study with her.

Of course, I would like to pay tribute to Phil & Chloe who are approaching the end of their ministry at Castle Church. They have been such a blessing to us and we've seen all kinds of ministry spring up and flourish under their leadership. We will miss them hugely but are sure that our loss will be another church's gain and we release them with joy knowing that God's wider Kingdom will grow as God uses them in His work.

## Sending Church...

The sign of a healthy church is one that sends people into Ministry. Please do not stop praying for David Hazell coming to the end of his time at Wycliffe Hall and looking for a Curacy, Steve and Sara at Oak Hill, again beginning to look for a curacy and of course Owen as he continues to train at Oak Hill.

## The Missus...

Finally, once again, I thank Claire who is my co-worker in ministry. I could not operate without her constant support, encouragement and, at times, correction! As well as running the Sunday School, she does so many other unseen things, entertaining guests, counselling, dealing with phone calls and keeping me going after 'bad days at the office' I am grateful to God for her.

Philip April 2016

## **NSM Associate Minister's Report 2015-16:**

Over the last year I have gradually returned to full duties and am now regularly leading services and preaching again.

Holy Communion services at Maple Court and Maple Lodge have continued with Phil and myself alternating as other duties have allowed.

The Tuesday morning Bible study group continues to meet twice a month for fellowship and learning together. There is often much fun and laughter but as we listen to one another and to God we never cease to be amazed at how even the most familiar Bible passages can still be seen as if through fresh eyes as the Holy Spirit draws to our attention something previously unnoticed.

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Visiting the sick and those whose frailty keeps them housebound or has led to residential care continues to be both a privilege and a blessing. Offering opportunities to open the Scriptures and celebrate Holy Communion together, such times are one of the ways of enabling individuals to maintain links with the Church family, continue to grow spiritually and receive pastoral care. As the numbers requiring such visits continues to grow we are once more considering how to expand this ministry so that people are contacted more frequently and to ensure that no one is inadvertently left out. Telephone contact is also proving to be a useful means of support and keeping in touch.

It has been an eventful year at Castle Church during which we have seen Ros Clarke commissioned as Lichfield Diocese Online Pastor, enjoyed our first Church Family Weekend Away at Shallowford, seen the recording of two 10.30 services for broadcast, the Treble Makers release a CD and Steve and Owen begin studying at Oak Hill. We have rejoiced as ten of our Church Family were presented for Confirmation and celebrated Mavis' 30 years as Choir director, as she retired from that role, with a special Choral Evensong for which I was privileged, as a former choir member, to be invited to join the choir.

The Shallowford Midweek Break in September was a great time of fellowship and learning, made even more memorable as I celebrated a special birthday among my Church family. Thank you.

Sunday School Prize Giving is always an encouragement as we see growing numbers of growing youngsters go up to receive their prizes. May God continue to bless Claire and her team of helpers and the work they do with our youngsters.

I was able to contribute in a small way in the Schools Christmas services and more fully in Church services for Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter.

Sadly once more we have said goodbye to several much-loved members of our church family as they have departed this life. We miss their presence among us but give thanks for the blessing of their friendship, their faithful witness and encouragement over many years and rejoice that they knew Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

In addition...

Along with Philip, Phil and our Churchwarden Colin Price I attended The Archdeacon's Visitation at Holy Trinity Church, Eccleshall.

During the year I have also attended a talk 'Sharing the Good News with the Over 55s' at St. Bertelin's Church, Stafford, the Annual Selwyn Lecture in Lichfield Cathedral and a morning of Diocesan Safeguarding Training.

In October I met with the Archdeacon of Stoke on Trent to discuss my ministry as part of the normal review and support process.

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I continue to enjoy serving as part of Staff Team at Castle Church and was pleased to welcome Anna Barratt to the team this year. As each person brings different gifts it is exciting to see how God uses them in His work in this parish. My grateful thanks to Philip and the team for their encouragement and support as we work together and of course to my husband Ian who does so much to facilitate my ministry.

Christine V Sykes, March 2016.

## Curate's Report 2015 - 2016:

Well, hasn't time flown? In all probability this is my last APCM report at Castle Church. By the end of next May I will need to be gone to pastures new. It's an unsettling time for us as a family; on the one hand it's exciting to see what God has in store for us next, but we find ourselves living like the Israelites as they get ready to depart from Egypt, eating the Passover "with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand." (Exodus 12:11). The Lord may lead us to a new church next month, or next year. Or he may have something completely unexpected in store for us. (Of course this is always true for all of us, and I am sure God uses these times of transition to teach us to rest on his sovereignty and not our own superficial sense of security, a lesson I continue to need to learn.)

The prospect of moving on is made all the harder by the presence of so many spiritual encouragements within our beloved church family here in Stafford. In this last year we shared our first church family weekend away together, a time which clearly strengthened our community and even saw one individual come to faith! The Men's Shed has been quietly going from strength to strength, with a committed core who have made a succession of socials a lot of fun, and which again has played its part in forming friendships that have helped others find faith or grow in faith. Now that we've finally got those airplanes finished, I'm eager to see what we attempt next together. The younger men's bible study that I lead has also developed well, with the teaching duties gradually becoming shared amongst us, and again welcoming a new member into our midst in the last year. I would very much love your prayers to join with mine that God would sustain these relatively fragile new initiatives by providing numerical growth and a strengthening and expanding leadership, particularly as I prepare to move on.

For myself, I have been spending the last few months focussing on ways I can help to leave the ministries I have been particularly involved with going strong once I'm gone. I have been very grateful for Colin's willingness and capability in taking the Men's Shed idea and running with it, and pleased to have been able to spend much of my time recently mentoring or otherwise encouraging various budding leaders. Of course, whilst curates come and go, the Lord is always with us, and he has demonstrated his ongoing provision of leadership in this church by leading a new ministry apprentice to us, and by overseeing the Diocese's plans and ensuring us the opportunity to select a new curate to replace me. I pray that the ministries that God has entrusted to me in my time at Castle Church he would soon entrust to other capable leaders who will grow and develop them into fruitful ministries for many years to come.

Phil Mullins April 2016

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## Church Wardens Reports 2015-16:

I was pleased that we started the year with our finances and church fabric in good shape, which has enabled us to turn our attention to the next step in renovating the church building i.e. the lighting. There has also been a welcome increase in our Sunday attendance figures, shown by the annual stats. During the year, the main areas I have been associated with, apart from day-to-day happenings, are as follows :

- Organising repairs to lychgate roof, eventually done as a favour to the Vicar, for £75 with a saving of approx £650 over the cheapest suitable quote!
- Helping choose the current Ministry Assistant and her successor.
- Pressing for the introduction of the pastoral care package which, beyond my control, is to be much reduced in impact.
- Coordinating Streetscene help for the churchyard maintenance and currently trying for better control of dog walkers in the churchyard.
- Hall Committee and raising of hire charges and refusal of parties on Saturday nights.
- Encouraging younger people to take the lead on social events.
- obtaining quotes for lighting installation in church and liaison with DAC Sec., PCC and our lighting expert, Neil Ashton.
- Participating in continued discussions between Vicar, wardens and outside agencies re. how to cope with increasing church attendance in the long term, especially following the allocation of new homes to be built in our parish.

Please ask if you would like more information on the above list.

I was very pleased to support Steve Deall in his decision to go for ordinand training and grateful that Colin has taken his place as warden. He has picked up Steve's share of warden duties and I'm thankful that, despite a full-time job, he has been able to carry that on.

My thanks are in the following :

- Castle Church would not be moving forward without the Vicar and Ministry team whose input enables us to grow as Christians and encourages us in Mission.
- Ros may now have a full-time job but she thankfully has been able to continue with her Bible study group.
- Claire Jarvie has kindly offered to be treasurer, much to David's relief! Helen has also kindly agreed to head up the Church Trust on Sara's departure with Steve.
- David completed 4 years as Treasurer and left the church finances in the black.
- Anna, as Min. Asst since Sept., has been proactive and productive in particular in reaching out to our children.
- Mavis agreed to have Anna to stay for 12 months and also reached 30 years as Choir Director. We are grateful that she has agreed to continue her work with children, helping them to worship through music.
- Our children continue to be well cared for by Claire Sowerbutts and team, Emma, Owen, Dani and other volunteer help. thank you all for caring for their spiritual help.

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- 2 Social groups have been set up. ( No doubt Colin will mention Mens' Shed ). The ladies LIFT group came about after I thought a younger team should be encouraged to lead on church social events. I am forever grateful to Julie Castree-Denton that she agreed to take responsibility for this. She firstly helped me run a Bake-Off competition and has then gathered momentum and, with volunteers, has organised further successful events both for women and the whole church. It is right that we can now provide entertainment for all age groups.
- Dalena faithfully carries out more administration than she is paid for.
- Pauline and family do so much to keep everywhere in working order.
- May and the team cover much of the ministry at Highfields.
- Les Deall is always willing to carry out sundry jobs.
- Mike and David, aka Bodge-It Brothers, have been active at church and further afield and have even been asked back!

All volunteers are much appreciated. There is always room for more! Have a word if you can help in any way.

I enjoy the " not knowing what's coming next ". It's once again been a pleasure spending another year as warden.

Barbara Boote Church Warden

What an exciting and busy first year it has been for me as Churchwarden. I have had very big shoes to fill taking over from Steve Deall and very quickly appreciated how much he did behind the scenes to make things run smoothly, especially around times of the larger services such as at Christmas. Barbara has also been a great encouragement with advice on the day to day aspects of church management. I would also like to thank Philip and the rest of the staff team for the ministry they have given and the real difference it has made to all our spiritual growth

From a practical side we have seen some improvements to the fabric of the buildings such as the painting work in the hall and installing new shelving units and I would like to thank the band of willing helpers that have helped in the activities. I would also to thank Pauline Howard in all the work she has done making our buildings look as good as they do. I have also been able to review some of our contracts for services to get more suitable and cost effective solutions such as with the replacement of the fire extinguishers in all 3 buildings. As a warden I have had the privilege of being involved in some of the future ways we could grow our ministry especially looking at how our buildings can best support our current and growth needs.

Back in April last year Phil and I came up with the idea of Men's Shed as a way of supporting and growing the fellowship of men attending Castle Church and hopefully encouraging a few more to church. We held lots of different events over the year including barbecues, a scalextric night, movie trips, pub quizzes, meals plus plane building through the expert tuition of David Boote. In total 26 different men attended these events throughout the year. We were also able to join up with the women's group for a beetle drive and hopefully this is something we can do more of in the next 12 months. A spin off from Men's Shed was a

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

men's Saturday morning bible study group that now meets regularly every fortnight and has proved popular despite the 8.30am start on a weekend morning. Emma and I also hosted a Christianity Explored course last year. Hopefully the second year will prove as interesting as the first.

Colin Price - Church Warden

## **Treasurer's Report 2015-16:**

Firstly I'd like to take this opportunity to thank David Boote, who has now stepped down as treasurer, for his dedication, hard work, time and effort over the past years, and on a personal note, for his timely training and handover.

After years of austerity and reconciliation the Parish finances have now settled down and flattened out.

Parish giving has seen no major fluctuation either favourably nor adversely which after the down turn in 2014 is a positive step. From last year the aim of being able to hold our own paying off the parish share as the dioceses intends is on track, and at present I can see no reason why this shouldn't continue.

It is my aim going forward as a new treasurer to simplify processes, create better decision making tools and aid decision making processes. This is starting with a move to Barclay's Bank and a review of digital aids, along with the implementation of financial reviews and management account information.

The over-riding good news from 2015 is that we were able to top up our reserves in accordance with the PCC policy by the target £3000.

Claire Jarvie - Treasurer April 2016

## **Deanery Synod Report 2015-2016:**

Report of the meetings of Stafford Deanery Synod 2015-16

The June meeting was held at Milwich

After the opening worship, a presentation was made to the retiring Rural Dean, Rev John Davies. John Clark reported on the latest meeting of the Diocesan Synod and then there was a vote for members of the new Synod.

The main subject for the evening was Church Schools and Academies. As God's people we are challenged to live in the present and must be relevant to today. We have to recognise what is going on now in changing times. With regard to education, as in so many other areas, there is increasing privatisation. Schools are becoming businesses, with a great deal of money involved. Inevitably, small schools, particularly in villages, are disappearing. Instead, consortia, federations, collaborations etc have been created.

Lichfield diocese has had to make changes with how its schools are organised and run. For example it has involvement with Birmingham diocese and Wolverhampton University. The education of our children is vital and we should not neglect praying for our schools,

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especially those within our parishes.

The September meeting was at St Mary's Stafford.

The opening worship was led by the Rector, Rev. Preb. Richard Gregson.

John Clark reported on the Diocesan and General Synods.

The Koinonia Fund, set up to encourage mission in the deanery, is running out of money. Its future must be decided.

Three people from AA gave their stories. They were very moving and highlighted the importance of ensuring that our congregations are welcoming.

The November meeting was at St Thomas and St Andrew, Doxey.

After a short act of worship members broke into small groups to be with people not known to them. The question to answer was 'What's your story?' ie how we got to where we are now.

It was a surprisingly effective low key way of giving a testimony.

The March meeting was at St Peter's, Rickerscote.

It began with an act of worship.

The speaker was Rev George Fisher and his subject, 'Making disciples'. He broke this down into two parts, the journey to Jesus (evangelism) and the journey in Jesus (discipleship).

This, he said, is the greatest challenge and the greatest opportunity. If churches can get this right many other problems will fall into place. The challenge is, how many are true disciples? On the whole churches don't think much about discipleship, or take it seriously.

The ABC of church life tends to be:

Attendance

Buildings

Cash

Discipleship

Evangelism

The essence of discipleship is that we have chosen to follow Jesus. It's important that a disciple is one who learns and it should be as an apprentice rather than an academic.

Christians must be FAT. ie Faithful. Available. Teachable

'The plural of disciple is church'.

Church is not a volunteer organisation. We are ruled by God and need to be 'whole life' disciples.

What do churches offer after confirmation to help people live committed Christian lives?

There are lots of resources available for a spiritual fitness programme and in the modern age digital as well as traditional paper format. Fellowship and studying in groups is also valuable.

Finally, a reminder that increased involvement in activities does not of itself mean spiritual growth.

Vera Davis - Deanery Synod Representative

## Sunday School Report 2015-16:

It has been wonderful, since September, to have Anna's input into Sunday School and I am sure the children have appreciated, and benefitted from, her clear teaching. I am also so grateful to all the other ladies who help out, who are always faithful and committed, and model to the children so well a servant heart. Emma Price has also worked very hard and

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willingly taken on more leading, which gives me more opportunity to stay in for services. Thank you to everyone.

Numbers on the register remain good, with a few toddlers coming up and a few extras joining us through the year. The children are gradually learning how to find their way round the Bible, and have a good basic understanding of the gospel.

Please keep praying for hearts and minds to be permanently changed, and for the older children to be good role models for the younger children.

Thank you.

Claire Sowerbutts

## **Youth Group Report 2015 -2016:**

### **Youth Work (11-18 years old)**

This past year has seen many new situations arise but again the Lord has sustained us and provided for all our needs in only our second full year of Fuse' Youth Group for high school aged children on Friday evenings. The addition of help from our Ministry Apprentice Anna Barratt, for example, came just at the right time as I (Owen Cornford) began studying at Oak Hill College.

We began the new term in September 2015 by seeing Chris Deall move to London and we continue to pray for him and his family. We have been encouraged however that this hasn't had too much of a negative effect on Harvey Bowler, whose attendance has become more regular this past year and he has even invited various friends along with him. We pray that this will continue to be a way in which the Lord works. Many thanks must also go to Brandon (McEleny) and Jamie (Sowerbutts) for encouraging Harvey to continue coming to youth group.

Annie (Sowerbutts) being confirmed was also a highlight of the past year as she publicly proclaimed her faith. Over the next year we pray that further children will also be able to personally and confidently proclaim this for themselves.

One big change this year has seen the addition of extra Bible studies with our young people on top of our Friday night talks. I have continued meeting with Jamie and Brandon whilst Dani (Cornford) has begun meeting with three of our girls to cover Christianity Explored in addition to monthly meeting up with Chloe (Bowler) and Anna has begun meeting with Annie. We now pray for wisdom about how to continue the ground work set in place by Anna when she moves from us later this year.

Further new ventures have seen us inviting those in year 6 to attend youth group on the last Friday of each month. We now cater our talks specifically for these evenings as we aim to gradually integrate the children into youth group. We will continue to monitor this approach and will be better able to see if it is an effective tool when those in year 6 start attending on a regular basis.

We have also been thankfully supported by the PCC in various ways over the past year.

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The children were able to attend the Midlands Gospel Partnership 'Rooted' Conference in November 2015 which took place at Tamworth Snowdome thanks to the PCC's contribution to the cost of the event. The children had a great time but more importantly had good sound teaching and were able to meet and worship with others their own age, which was a first for some of them outside Friday youth group.

In addition, in March 2016 Anna, Dani and I attended the Good Book Company and Midlands Gospel Partnership Day Youth Conference in Nottingham. This one day conference was really beneficial in reminding us of the privilege it is to proclaim the good news to children, and we all came away after the seminars with a better understanding of how to appropriately deliver this message to our children of various ages. I would recommend that next year all those who play a major role in our children's and youth work across Castle Church try and attend.

As we look to the year ahead, we also pray about our youth and in particular about the potential of them attending Christian summer camps. Please pray that the opportunity would arise that will see them being able to attend and any barriers or concerns that parents have will be quelled, as the children would really benefit from hearing God's word that is spoken and applied at each camp.

Owen Cornford

## **Parent and Toddler's Group Report 2015-16:**

We have had an enjoyable third year running the Parent and Toddler group. Although we lost many of our original toddlers in July as they moved on to school or nursery, we have welcomed many others, and are building up new relationships; we average about 30 children and their parents (and grandparents) each week. We have continued our usual routine of tea, toast, craft, stories and singing, and have enjoyed special sessions at Christmas and Easter, when we made sure that amongst all the fun, we also taught the importance of Jesus in these celebrations, and were able to give the children Christian books as gifts thanks to the generosity of the Growth Trust.

In September we welcomed Anna Barrett to the team, and she has made a huge difference, both in the practicalities of setting up the Hall on a Friday morning and as a Christian witness to our families through specific activities such as leading our Christmas talk and also by engaging the parents in conversation week by week. She has been an incredible blessing to us this year and we do not know how we will manage when she leaves us!

We must also thank the willing team of helpers who volunteer to make tea and toast for our families, which we know is much enjoyed by them. Special thanks must go to Marian Kirkham who 'pops in' to help on her non-rotas, and Anthea and Ian Turner whose faithful weekly commitment is so much appreciated.

Anita Brown and Emma Price April 2016

## **Ministry Assistant's Report 2015-2016:**

I have been warmly welcomed into the Castle church family since my arrival in September and have enjoyed getting to know everyone. Everyone has made me feel very welcome and for this,

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

thank you all. I arrived with an open mind in terms of ministry, excited at the prospect of where God would use me. During my time at Castle church it has become obvious that children's ministry may be my calling, and so I have enjoyed getting to know the children and putting on events to share the gospel.

## Jungle party

In October we hosted the first light party as an alternative for Halloween. The afternoon had a jungle theme and was a great success with nine of the church family's children attending, all dressed as their favorite animals. The time was spent playing games, making rain sticks, eating far too many sweets and learning how Jesus is the light of the world. A number of parents helped to set up 'the jungle' and to help in the smooth running of the party; some even got stuck in and tried the dried locusts as part of the bush tucker challenges.

## Craft Club

In January we started up a girls craft club for those aged 8-11. Each week we meet to cross stitch as well as looking at the bible. So far we've been looking at the Kingdom of Heaven and what it's like according to Jesus in a number of his parables. The girls have started to learn to handle the bible better, gained confidence in praying and show real signs of increased understanding of God's word. The girls have been very encouraging and God is clearly at work in their hearts revealing himself to them.

## Holiday club

April saw the first holiday club come to Castle church with a 'who dunnit' theme. Over three afternoons the children got to investigate who they think smashed the vase which closely followed the two ways to live gospel tract. Through the drama's discovery of the perpetrator, the children also saw how God's world was destroyed by our sin but restored by the death of Jesus. Games, crafts, songs, jokes and clues all had a part to play in revealing Jesus identity and revealing the two options we have in life: to accept Jesus as King and receive eternal life, or to ignore His rule. Supported by the memory verse, John 3:16, the kids, both church family children and those from the local primary school had a great time learning about Jesus. Club wouldn't have been able to run without the servant hearted members of Castle church giving up their afternoons to help lead songs, groups and craft. A big thank you to those people and to those who helped behind the scenes, helping to put together music, the staging and booklets.

I enjoy being a part of the staff team and look forward to the next couple of months ahead. It has been so encouraging seeing the children's faith growing and hearts softening to the gospel. And so look forward to the next couple of months and how God will continue to use me amongst his children.

Anna-Louise Barratt

## **Choir Report 2015-16:**

As I write this last report and think back over the years with the Choir, it is with grateful thanks to God, who has "led us all the way" as the old hymn says.

This year has been much the same as others in many ways. We have been 'on duty' at the 9 o'clock service almost every Sunday. When missing, you would find us visiting the Highfields Fellowship and worshipping with them.....always a great pleasure.

The "Sunday Morning Choir" is happy (and relieved!) to be joined by musicians from our other services and local churches for special events. Twice during the year we all

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

practised together for a joyful Choral Evensong in June and a really blessed and happy Carol Service.

It was after much thought and prayer that I decided that the time had come to retire from leading the Choir. This could have been a most upsetting time for all of us, but we decided to celebrate the years of faithful service that the Choir has given to Castle Church, rather than mourn its 'passing.' So, celebrate we did, with a Choral Evensong we shall never forget! Thirty-two choristers from far and near managed to squeeze into the chancel and, with the congregation, praised the Lord with "thanksgiving and song."

On a personal note, I should like to thank the Staff and the Castle Church Family for the thoughtful surprises and amazing generosity I experienced at that service.

Now, the "Sunday Morning Choir" has joined the 9.a.m. congregation, but is ready to don the blue robes and lead the worship if and when- ever they are needed. In fact we head for Highfields next Sunday and will enjoy getting together with our friends again to sing God's praise. You can't keep a good Choir down!

Mavis

## **Electoral Roll Report 2015-16 :**

We have lost some family members to glory over the past year, together with those who have moved away from the area.

Deletions: 6

Additions: 9

Total for 2016: 135

The overall total is up by 3 this year.

Dalena Deall - Electoral Roll Officer.

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

## ELECTROL ROLL 2016

### A

Ashton	Mrs Gillian
Ashton	Mrs Michelle Jayne
Ashton	Mr Neil

### B

Bagnall	Mr Peter
Bagnall	Mrs Jean
Ball	Mrs Joke
Ball	Mrs Elaine Joyce
Barrett	Miss Anna-Louise Rachael
Bates	Mrs Jean Frances
Bee	Mrs Edith May
Bennett	Mr Andrew
Bennett	Mrs Ruth Spencer
Boote	Mr David Stanley
Boote	Mrs Barbara Kay
Bowler	Miss Chloe
Brooks	Mr Michael Steven
Brooks	Mrs Mary
Brown	Mrs Anita Louise
Bryant	Mrs Mavis Margaret

### C

Cage	Miss Rosemary Ann
Castree	Miss Claire
Castree-Dent	Mr Angus
Castree-Dent	Mrs Julie
Clarke	Miss Rosalind
Cockayne	Mrs Jean
Cornford	Mr Owen Graham
Cornford	Mrs Danielle

### D

Davies	Mrs Rosemary Anne
Davis	Mrs Vera Mary
Davis	Mr Terence Norman Frank
Deall	Miss Charlotte Rose
Deall	Mr Stephen Charles
Deall	Mrs Dalena Ann
Deall	Mrs Sara Elizabeth
Deall	Mr Leslie
Drinkwater	Mr Mark
Drinkwater	Mrs Tammy

### E

Edwards	Mrs Janet
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### F

Freeman	Mrs Alwyn
Furber	Mr Mark John
Furber	Mrs Sarah

### G

Gardner	Mrs Amy Younghee Sin
Gardner	Mr Ronald
Glover	Mr Stephen Mark
Glover	Mrs Maria
Glover	Mrs Janet Agnes
Goode	Mrs Kathleen
Gray	Mr Peter M

### H

Hall	Mrs Margaret Ann
Hall	Mr David Alan
Hall	Mr Geoffrey
Hall	Miss Anita Elizabeth
Hall	Mrs Cynthia Iris
Hanlon	Mrs Sandra
Harper	Mrs Carol
Harper	Mr Michael William
Hill	Mr Peter John
Hine	Mrs Jennie Louise
Hine	Mr Mark Andrew
Hodson	Mrs Janet
Hodson	Rev Alan Keith
Hopkins	Mrs Wendy Margaret Anne
Howard	Mrs Pauline
Hudson	Mr Simon

### I

Inns	Mr William
------	------------

### J

Jarvie	Mrs Claire Louise
Jarvie	Mr Neil Edward
Jones	Mrs Barbara
Jordan	Mrs Marguerite Rose

### K

Kelsall	Mr George Stuart
Kelsall	Mrs Lilian
Kirkham	Mr John Richard
Kirkham	Mrs Barbara Ann
Kirkham	Mr Harry Tate
Kirkham	Mrs Marian

### L

Lakin	Mrs Muriel Winifred
Louis	Ms Dawn Elizabeth

### M

Mangall-Rice	Mrs Angela
Mannering	Mrs Sharon
Martin	Mrs Beryl
Maslen	Mrs Sylvia
Maslen	Mr Peter William
McDonald	Mrs Frances Margaret
McEleny	Miss Deana Anne Rose
McEleny	Mrs Andrea Clare
McEleny	Mr Brandon T
Miles	Miss Scarlett Daisy
Miles	Mr St Maur
Miles	Mrs Elizabeth Anne
Morrison	Mr John
Morrison	Mrs Gillian Helen
Mullins	Mrs Chloe

### N

Neil	Mr Leslie
Neil	Mrs Maureen
Noel	Mrs Pauline Ruth

### P

Patchett	Mrs Anne Margaret
Plimmer	Mr Darren
Poulson	Mrs Enid
Price	Mr Colin James
Price	Mrs Emma
Pugh	Mrs Helen Louise

### R

Roberts	Mrs Janet
Rutter	Mrs Mabel Hannah
Rutter	Mrs Marjorie

### S

Skellern	Miss Claire
Slaughter	Mr Robert
Smith	Mrs Margaret
Snap	Mr Nicholas
Sowerbutts	Mr Jamie Mark
Sowerbutts	Mrs Claire Helen
Stacey	Mrs Irene Patricia
Swannell	Mr David
Sykes	Mr Ian David

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Sykes	Miss Elizabeth
<b>T</b>	
Thomas	Mrs Claire Elizabeth
Till	Mrs Elizabeth Jane
Towers	Mr Dennis
Trumble	Mrs Stacey Leigh
Turner	Mrs Anthea Margaret
Turner	Mr Ian

<b>W</b>	
Weaver	Mr John James Lawrence
Weldon	Ms Kim
Wells	Mrs Audrey W
Wheatley	Miss Melanie Jayne
White	Mr Scott
Wilkes	Mrs Enid Irene
Wilson	Mr Lee Arnold James
Wilson	Mrs Karen Rhian
Wilson	Mrs Brenda
Wimbush	Mrs Barbara
Wood	Mrs Janet Mary
Wright	Mrs Margarita Winifred(Winn
Wright	Mr Paul James

<b>Y</b>	
Yates	Mr Craig Paul
Yates	Mrs Mary Emily

DATA PROTECTION. The above information has been provided for the purposes of maintaining the statutory church electoral roll. This is to be used only by parish officers representatives to assist them in contacting church members and enabling them to mail relevant material from the parish to the persons listed. This information must not be disclosed to any other person or organisation except in connection with these uses.

Total number on the 2016 Electrol Ro

135

Electoral Roll Officer:

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

## APPENDIX 1

Awaiting return of accounts.

# Annual Report 2015 - 2016

## Appendix 2:

### Castlechurch Drama Group; 2015 - 2016:

The Group has had one of its most exciting seasons in all its 50 years!! This was mainly due to the influx of many younger members, which has led to a much more varied programme. In the spring *Playboy of the Western World* gave the group new challenges dealing with an Irish play for the first time. In the Autumn followed Terence Rattigan's great play *The Winslow Boy*, with some terrific acting by the cast. Then came the new dramatisation of the well-loved *The Wind in the Willows*, where the major parts were played by the younger members who really rose to the occasion and gave some brilliant performances. Everyone who saw it was very enthusiastic.

As a result of these three shows, we were able to give to Church funds the sum of £700. With more support from the parish, we would be able to have more rehearsals at Highfields Hall and the Church would gain.

This year sees our 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday! We have some special events for your entertainment. Come and support the local talent.

Terry Davis

### Craft Group 2015 - 2016:

The past year has seen another enjoyable year for our small group. In January we decided to make a change to our meetings and now meet twice a month for lunch and an afternoon of crafting, this has seen a growth in our numbers which is very welcome. We are not only making cards but working towards an autumn event as yet to be confirmed, with lots of handmade items for sale. Our Strawberry Tea last July was a great success, and we are planning this years for 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Dalena Deall April 2016.

Signed:.....

Print Name:.....

Vicar.

Date: