

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 29th APRIL 2010 AT 8PM IN THE CHURCH ROOM, WEST WYCOMBE**

PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs J. Smith (Chairman), Mr R. Seymour, Mrs C. Dakin, Mr F. Downes, Mr D. Callaghan, Mr N. Timberlake. Mr N. Harris (National Trust), Mrs S. Henson, Clerk

Dist Cllrs Mrs J. Teesdale

18 members of the public including
Mr Jim Foy and Mr E. Norris - The National Trust,
Mrs M. Hilder – West Wycombe Estate,
Mrs Beverley Cope - Churchwarden West Wycombe PCC,
Mr D. Winterburn, Bucks Free Press local correspondent,
Mrs J Baker and Mrs J Chilton - West Wycombe Preschool,
Mrs C Burslem - Chair of Governors West Wycombe School

APOLOGIES: Cllr Mrs A. Harris, and Dist Cllr Mr I McEnnis

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

Chairman's Annual Report for 2009 - 2010

As usual it has been a busy year and we have been particularly pleased to bring about two of the requests our residents said they would like in the parish survey we conducted a little while ago.

The allotments in Chorley Road.

Last year we started to lease land in Chorley Road from West Wycombe Estate. This had been allotments some years ago but had not been used for a long time. We virtually had to start from scratch to get the land into working order but as we had a good few requests from residents for allotments we were pretty sure we would not be spending money unnecessarily. We were able to create 20 allotments which have all been taken and we are very pleased to see the way our allotment holders have worked on their plots. We plan to have an official opening this coming season. We offered an allotment to West Wycombe School so the children could get a feel for gardening and producing their own vegetables. We have had the hedges cut around the allotment field and some hard standing put inside the gate so that those bringing in fertiliser and tools by car can now get off the highway.

A notice board has been erected and all the allotment holders have a copy of the rules and regulations so that there can be no misunderstandings. We would like the residents to organise their own allotment committee.

The Pedestal Playing Field

We were very pleased to sign a lease from West Wycombe Estate for the Pedestal Playing Field when it became vacant. Because there are no other fields or open spaces for lease or sale in our parish and a large number of parents in West Wycombe said a children's play ground was the one thing missing in West Wycombe this helped solve a problem.

Hithercroft Football Club has played on the site for many years and we are very happy that they should continue playing there.

We have put in new fencing and gates, tidied up the hedges and had a survey carried out on the trees. We have obtained three quotes for children's play equipment and for grass cutting.

We have been saving for play equipment for the past two years and are working on a budget of £40,000 spread over three years. We hope to have some equipment on the playing field this Summer. Play equipment is costly and whilst, as I have said, we have put some money aside for this, it will not go very far and we do want to have good range of equipment for the children and so to this end we have decided to try and involve the whole community by organising a **West**

Wycombe Fete on September 11th this year to raise awareness of the playing field and to help us collectively raise money for it. We have had good support already from a few of our local organisations who want to come along and share the day with us to raise money for themselves as well as for the playground but we need more and lots of help on the day so please come along and support us in whatever way you can. Any of your Parish Councillors and Clerk will be pleased to hear from you and their details are at the end of this report.

We would like to thank Sir Edward Dashwood for leasing the land to us for these two projects and to Cllr Roger Seymour and our Clerk, Sharon Henson for all the hard work they have put in to get them up and running. Sir Edward also supplies us with two Christmas trees each year which makes the Village, the centre of our parish, look very festive. The Parish Council's blue Christmas tree lights always cause comment!

Talking of the Winter - our roads and pavements were very much affected by the weather this winter, as they were all over the High Wycombe area, so we have had talks with Bucks County Council (BCC) on managing the clearing of snow this year and in the future. Our Burial Ground grass is just one area that has suffered through the harsh winter and has needed some extra attention.

We have liaised with BCC and the National Trust to try and work out a way to stop serious accidents at the High St/Chorley Rd/Ness Cottage junction. There really is not an easy solution when in the end it comes down to bad driving.

Much of our time is taken up with planning applications and we look at them most carefully to make sure the new plans fit along side neighbouring properties well and keep within the law. We can only recommend our ideas to Wycombe District Council (WDC) and our local knowledge counts for a lot but sometimes the eventual decision is not what we hope for.

We have been asked to look into a pedestrian crossing on the Bradenham Road side of the Pedestal roundabout and whilst there seems to be no planning objections there is no money available for the £25,000 to £35,000 it will cost. It would put our precept up a huge amount if we were to pay for it ourselves.

The precept is the money we ask WDC for to run the Parish Council and comes out of the council tax charged to the residents of our parish.

Our precept for this year is £30,000. We have kept the same amount as for the previous two years because we do not want to add to the financial burdens our residents are facing in the current financial climate.

We keep up to date and on top of the constantly changing ideas in all aspects of our council work by attending regular training seminars and reading the many documents sent our way by the three tiers of government above us.

We attend all the meetings of the Wycombe Association of Local Councils (WDALC) where we can exchange views and ideas with councillors from other parish councils. This is always valuable.

We belong to WDC Rural Forum which gives us interesting and useful information about all aspects of our countryside.

We also belong to the Bucks Association of Local Councils (BALC). I sit on the executive of that association. BALC represents all the parish councils in Buckinghamshire.

I am also a member of WDC Standards Committee. All Parish Councillors have to sign a Code of Conduct and register interests.

I am also a member of the local Neighbourhood Action Group. (NAG), which includes members from Lane End, Piddington and Wheeler End, Stokenchurch, Radnage and our local police team.

We try and help each other sort out problems in our villages such as speeding and anti social behaviour.

We also attend BCC's Local Area Forums where there is small budget that Parish Councils can bid for help with their local projects. We have asked for money for 3 new street lights by West Wycombe School. If we fund some of the project ourselves we have been successful in getting two thirds of the money we need, which means the project can go ahead.

By attending and belonging to these associations we can see how other councils and councillors work which in turn helps us all to form ideas and make decisions based on knowledge we have picked up along the way.

We would like to thank the small group of residents who come to our meetings each month. We very much appreciate you coming out in all weathers. Our meetings are on the second Thursday of each month (except August) at 8 pm in the Church Room.

We would like to thank Mike Henson who looks after our website for us.
www.westwycombe.org.uk We have many compliments about our website and wish more residents and local businesses would use it to advertise their activities. We have well over 200 hits on our website each week.

We would also like to thank our two Wycombe District Councillors Jean Teesdale and Ian McEnnis for their support and hard work for our area.
Our thanks to, to Frank Downes, our County Councillor who is also one of our Parish Councillors and keeps us informed of BCC news, especially that relevant to us.

Surrounded as we are by West Wycombe Estate and National Trust land and houses it is good for us to have Neil Harris, the National Trust's Gardens and Countryside Manager as an affiliated, but non voting, non elected member, of our Parish Council and we are grateful for his support.

We always very much appreciate everything that Sharon Henson our Clerk does for this Parish Council, without her dedication to her job and this parish we would not have achieved Quality Status.

West Wycombe Parish Council was very proud to have been first awarded Quality Status in September 2005. This awarded lasted for a four year period. We applied for re-accreditation in 2009 and are pleased announce we have fulfilled the strict criteria needed to be recognised again as a Quality Parish Council. We are one of only two Parish Councils in the Wycombe District Council area to have gained Quality Status. There are only seventeen Parish Councils to have achieved this in the whole of Buckinghamshire.

Some of the things we had to provide in our portfolio for instance are: that our finances are accurate and transparent, that we have a qualified clerk, that our meetings are well run and that at least two thirds of our councillors have stood for election. In fact all our councillors stood for election last time round. We have adopted the Code of Conduct and The Standard Terms and Conditions of employment and we regularly attend training sessions. We have to produce an Annual report.

These are just a few of the things we had to prove to the judges at BCC and the Bucks Association of Local Councils to gain Quality Status.

Quality Councils have a greater say and control over their work and can take on some of the functions of the District and County Councils should they think it appropriate. Quality Status is a Government initiative.

The award was presented to us at our March Parish Council meeting by the Chairman of BALC, Mr Patrick Martin.

We are going to lose one of our councillors this coming month because Alisa Harris is moving away from West Wycombe. We would like to say thank you for the time you have given to West Wycombe Parish Council and wish her and her family many happy years in their new home.

Lastly, as Chairman I would like to thank all of West Wycombe Parish Councillors for their support.

Parish Councillors are unpaid and give up a great deal of their time to try and make the area we live in a safe, comfortable and clean environment. Our Parish Councillors and Clerk work extremely well together as a team. Each one bringing their expertise and local knowledge to help us form ideas and opinions which take us forward into the future. Whilst we all love the area in which we live we realise that we cannot let it stagnate. We strive to keep the best and improve where we can. We hope our residents feel confident knowing that their Parish Council is one of the best in the County.

**West Wycombe Parish Council
Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 31st March 2010**

Receipts	Year Ended 31.3.2010	Year ended 31.3.2009
Opening balance	16166.87	7002.81
Precept	30000.00	35000.00
Interest	1.16	312.27
HM Customs	2462.96	1557.29
Burials/Memorials	100.00	300.00
Refund towards tel line	605.03	354.22
WDC refund –air qlty elec	1180.79	1391.66
BCC Crossing refund	387.18	----
Allotments	204.00	----
BCC Grant for allotment	1500.00	----
WDC Comm Leader donate	260.00	----
BCC Community Leader	1500.00	----
Bank adjustment	---	0.05
Total income	54367.99	45918.30
Payments		
Administration	14377.55(incl 2 years website)	11737.46
S137 payments	100.00	1301.01(incl £1000 donation to WW Community Library)
Operational costs:		
Street lighting & air quality	6313.38	5053.57
Burial ground	3023.81	4191.08
School crossing	774.36	1548.72
Training	108.00	36.35
West Wyc Comm Assoc	----	2000.00
Subs	307.78	214.85
VAT on purchases	2462.96	1748.74
Room hire	120.00	20.00
Allotments	1121.30	---
Pedestal Playing Field	4303.00	----
Park Farm Road trees	500.00	----
Printer (1/3 of cost)	---	109.27
Air Ambulance donation	---	100.00
Highways - cleaning/salt	449.29	1505.38
Bradenham Rd bus shelter	35.00	150.00
Miscellaneous	---	35.00
Total Expenditure	33996.43	29751.43

Cumulative Balance

Opening Balance	16166.87	7002.81
Income	36701.09	38915.49
	54367.99	45918.30
Expenditure	33996.43	29751.43
Balance	20371.56	16166.87

Represented by:

Current account	3598.23	2394.70
Deposit account	3131.47	131.36
Bank of Ireland	13641.86	13640.81

We have finished our financial year with a higher than normal balance as we are building up funds to allow for expenditure on The Pedestal Playing Field. We signed the lease and have spent money on erecting fences, making the trees safe and getting the grass and hedges cut. It is planned that by Summer 2010 we will have some equipment installed.

The administrative costs are higher as it includes two years worth of website annual fees as last year's annual fee was invoiced later than normal , it also now includes contributions to the Bucks County Council pension scheme for the Clerk.

We continued to pay for the School Crossing Patrol at the Garden Centre until the summer and then we were advised that the usage of the crossing is so high that Bucks County Council fully fund it.

The air pollution monitor, installed in the Village Hall Car Park by Wycombe District, continued to function until February 2010 and WDC refunded all the costs of the energy used.

Insurance cost £1107.72

We had to spend more money on salt/grit for the salt bin at the Garden Centre and we contributed to the cost of replanting the trees in Park Farm Road.

We have received a grant from Bucks County Council towards the cost of creating a car parking area at the allotments and donations from our District and County Councillors towards a piece of play equipment.

District Cllr Mrs Teesdale gave a short report on her work at the District Council in relation to our parish. She is always very supportive on planning matters and gave an update on the situation on the car sales and storage at 316 West Wycombe Road. Enforcement will take place but it is a very lengthy process and could take a year or more to achieve a good final result. She has been working with BCC on highways issues, in particular the A4010 and the implications of greater development in the Aylesbury direction with much of traffic coming along the A4010 and through our parish.

Mr Elton Norris – The National Trust - properties

Mr Norris explained the programme for the decoration of houses in the village and explained that the current work had taken longer than expected as the builders uncovered some 16th Century wall paintings underneath the lime wash. This had to be investigated by archaeologists, curators and conservators before work could continue. Only two other properties nationally – Hampton Court and Stuart House are known to have similar paintings. We are currently on stage 2 and there are stages 3,4,5 to complete the work in the village. In June Mr & Mrs Plumridge's house and the properties from the Apple Orchard to The Plough will be painted. Negotiations will then take place with residents and traders for the next stage of the work Repair specifications have been carried out on all properties but there is more work than can be carried out in one year. All properties owned by The National Trust regardless of the term so the lease will have all the gutters and drain pipes cleared (this is ongoing) and the cleaning and sweeping of all flues. Funds allocated to the repair of Meads Yard have been re-allocated to provide more efficient heating and insulation of properties.

Tenants have frequently stated that they have been 'surveyed to death' however this has now allowed a complete programme of work to be developed to ensure that Health and SAFETY, Risk to Life and Environmental Compliance i.e. Warmth and weather tightness of the properties will be the priority for maintenance work but all based on sound conservation principles.

Mr Neil Harris – The National Trust – open spaces and gardens

Mr Harris reported that work on clearing West Wycombe Hill of scrub is ongoing and a great deal has been achieved towards re-establishing the open chalk grassland area as well as improved views of the Mausoleum. The work has made it possible for the greater use of tractors for grass cutting and removal, particularly on the area near the school. Some orchids will be lost in the cut but there are many more growing in other areas on the hill. He was pleased to report that the sole juniper bush found on the hill is a female of the species and they have been able to take seeds and cuttings in order that more can be planted on the hill – junipers are very area/site specific to the area where they grow.

Mr Harris reported on the recent filming on top of the hill – Burke and Hare which starred Ronnie Corbett – they were not the tidiest of film crews. All the money given to the National Trust for the use of the hill will be used to improve the car park.

Mr Neil Timberlake – West Wycombe Community Library

West Wycombe Community Library continues to go from strength to strength.

It is almost astonishing to note that we have now been open as a community library, run by volunteers, and funded from within the community, for over three years. When we opened in February 2007 those of us involved in the Library group did so with a mixture of pride at what we had achieved in raising money and garnering support to rescue the library from closure, and trepidation at the scale of what we had taken on, and the continuing challenges of keeping going.

Now, three years on, we can report a healthy bank balance, a varied programme of fund-raising events to keep it that way, a committed stock of volunteers, and an excellent stock of books.

We have the security of a five year lease from Buckinghamshire County Council. We have already held preliminary talks with Bucks County Council officers with a view to securing a new lease when the present one expires. These negotiations will ratchet up towards the end of this year.

The Library continues to be open for six days a week, (9am to 12.30pm each weekday morning, with afternoon opening 2pm to 5pm on Mondays and Thursdays, and from 10am to 1pm on Saturdays) and with Sunday opening in the summer months once again planned from June to the end of August.

Our book borrowings continue to hold up well, but we always welcome more people! It is good to have a good-news story to report, and we want to share it with more members of the community. The more people use the library, and the more books that are borrowed, the more we are vindicated in our central aim of keeping this valued facility in the heart of the community. Please visit us soon, and tell your friends and neighbours too!

Mornings also feature a tea shop with tea, coffee and cakes. Bacon rolls are served on Friday mornings. On Mondays from 3pm to 5pm we have a Seniors Drop-in, which includes tea and biscuits.

To support our fundraising we also sell a number of small items, such as bags, potted plants, jewellery, chocolates, and surplus books.

Our website – www.westwycombelibrary.org.uk – continues to provide a source of regularly-updated information on the library's programme of activities, and we are grateful too, for the support and co-operation of the parish magazine "Contact" and of David Winterburn and the Bucks Free Press for all they do to publicise our activities and raise awareness of the library.

No report of our activities can pass without a huge vote of thanks to the many people who have generously donated books. Almost every book in the library has been donated, and those that were not have been purchased with grants from such as the Gannett Foundation. We are blessed with a number of cash donations, including those from the Parish Council, Sir Edward Dashwood, Christine Barry, and many others who have made donations large and small; we thank also the efforts of our diverse band of volunteers – some librarians, and others working on fundraising events or other 'behind-the-scenes' activities.

At our recent AGM we were pleased to re-elect Rev Nigel Lacey as Chairman.

We have a healthy programme of fundraising events planned for the next few months:

Our next big event, on Saturday 8th May, commemorates the 65th anniversary of VE-Day, and is a 1940s-themed dance. This is essentially a repeat of our D-Day Dance last June which, by most people's reckoning, was the best fundraising event we had ever put on. We hope to repeat the success of last year on 8th May! To that end, we hope that people will once again dress up in 1940s costume. I have been persuaded to dress up again, probably to reprise my role as a spiv, and will be trying to sell the womenfolk such forbidden luxuries as nylon stockings and Hershey chocolate bars! We will be dancing to 40s music and the food will have a 40s theme too, so I hope you like spam! Tickets are available from the usual outlets.

Our fundraising events thus also contribute to the variety and to the jollity of the village social life, and we hope have a value far beyond their importance to us.

Finally – although we are an independent, volunteer-run and volunteer-financed library, we are nevertheless part of the County Council library network. As such, if you have a Bucks County Library card then you are automatically a member of our library, and can borrow items on the same terms as from other libraries. You can borrow books from West Wycombe and return them to other libraries in the county – and vice versa.

Cllr Roger Seymour – West Wycombe Community Association

It has been a busy year for the Village Hall again.

We continue to have our regular week day, term time, Pre School here every morning and they now have two afternoon sessions too and our regular Monday to Thursday evening bookings, plus The WI meetings, Pilates classes, children's parties, Christening parties, quizzes, coffee mornings, whist drives, amateur dramatic shows and numerous sales during the year.

It is important that the Hall is kept in a good, clean condition and that our hirers can park safely in our car park.

Firstly, Jane Temple and Eric, our Letting Sec and our cleaners have moved away from the Village and could not work for us anymore. Tracey and Mark Curran, who live in West Wycombe High Street, have taken over both these jobs and they are doing them very well.

Initially there was a lot of bad feeling in the Village because the Village Hall Committee decided to engage a "clamping company" to monitor the Village Hall car park but it has settled down and our hirers can at last know that they are able to park at the Hall.

It has been financially worrying year.

The Village Hall's electricity bills have been the largest we have ever known, over £7,200 for this year, which has taken a good deal of our reserves.

Mel Webster managed to secure a lower cost of electricity with our electricity supplier and also devised a timed ceiling heating system which can give instant heat but will turn off after a set time.

We are also planning to put in a system, when our finances improve, which will switch the heating on and off when people enter and leave the Hall.

Mel Webster and Vicki Smith spent a lot of time this year filling in grant application forms again but with very little success. We feel we must do all we can to try and find ways to improve the Hall for the 21st Century. The people who hire the Hall these days expect good facilities and we have to make sure the Hall is a viable local amenity.

The kitchen which was renovated over Christmas last year now has an independent boiling water unit for hot drinks and an electric cooker.

The warming cupboard has been placed in the electric cupboard for now until the ladies toilet eventually planned for the cupboard can be started.

Unfortunately we have had to put most of the painting and decorating on hold this year because of the lack of money but we are aware that these jobs will have to be a priority in the coming years.

Our thanks to Sir Edward Dashwood for the Christmas tree and to the Parish Council for the Christmas tree lights for which they pay the cost. The tree looks very good standing in the grounds of the Village Hall and is a welcoming sight on entering the Village. The Air Quality Recording Unit has come to the end of its working life and hopefully will be removed from our car park very soon.

Vicki Smith and I have attended a meeting about fire and safety precautions and we will be making a few changes to our hiring agreement and the Hall's fire signs etc.

Our future plans are to modify the electrics and the re seal/polish the floor.

Roger Seymour and Mel Webster have worked hard again this year to keep the Hall in a good workable condition as have the rest of the Committee and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their time and effort in supporting the Village Hall.

We could not work without the commitment of our Hon Treasure, Graham Wood and our Hon Secretary, Marion Brown, who do sterling jobs keeping our finances and paper work in order.

Our aim is to keep the Village Hall in good condition, financial sound and a safe venue for all to use.

Mrs Carol Burslem, Chair of Governors- West Wycombe County Combined School

Pupil numbers. The school remains oversubscribed and once again parents are going to County for appeals to get their children into the school. There is currently a waiting list for the younger classes.

Staffing and governors. The school remains fully staffed and any vacancies always attract lots of interest. There is a very strong team of staff in the school and visitors always comment on the welcome they receive from the whole team. We have some new governors on the governing body and they continue to support the work of the school. Staff and governors continue to receive training to build on their existing practices.

Success of Creative Curriculum. The creative Curriculum is still being developed and has proved popular with children, parents and staff. We are still developing it and would like to personalise it to make it even better - by including some more local themes. Further development will take place over the next year.

Healthy Schools. The school was recently awarded healthy Schools status. A team of staff worked on achieving this status and we will continue to build on this over the next year.

Questionnaires. Recent parent and pupil questionnaires have given us valuable feedback. The majority of feedback has been positive and we will be reporting the results back to parents once the governors have collated it.

Clubs. We continue to run a range of sporting clubs and these are always very popular. Wycombe Wanderers will return at the request of the parents and children. The choir once again sang at Christmas with the Chamber choir and we were pleased to receive £700 from their ticket sales which will go to support the library and ICT.

Introduction of Friends Association. The newly formed Friends association will be a real benefit to the school in terms of support as well as social and fundraising activities. We would welcome any support from other community organisations.

Parish Council links. The parish council have provided an allotment for the school and some volunteer parents will maintain it. We hope to be involved in the Parish Council's playground/ area scheme and join the September event.

Mrs J Baker and Mrs J Chilton – West Wycombe Pre-School

The pre-school currently has 30 children per day on its books. They have recently installed a new outside area with safety fencing which has greatly tidied up the side of the Village hall. New hand basins with sensors have been installed to reduce the amount of 'run away' water. 27 children will be going up to primary school in September. There is currently a waiting list and they will be allocating spaces for September. The previous government increased funds to all 3- 4 year olds allowing them to have up to 15 hours pre-school per week. The Pre-school is a charity and relies on fund raising events. The recent Hollywood Nights raised £100 and £500 from a sponsored obstacle race. They have a music quiz on July 18th and will be involved in the West Wycombe Fete.

Mrs M Hilder – West Wycombe Estate

Mrs Hilder reported that there would not be the usual annual concert as the company who organised it for the last 12 years had ceased trading. It is hoped that it will resume in 2011 at the end of June. Ian Rennie hospice movement will be running a live music/firework event at the beginning of September this year.

The National Trust has undertaken a large amount of work on the house during this year. The Estate is aware of the traffic caused by the car boot sales and are constantly talking to the organisers to ensure that traffic flows. Some members of the audience reported that there was still a large amount of back up and standing traffic.

They were the venue for the successful Easter Sponsored Ride and have been used for filming Foyles War and the Antiques Roadshow. There are less weddings booked for this year.

Mrs Hilder advised everyone present that the party at The Caves on the 1st May was for 30 -40 year olds and was an all ticket event and Estate staff would be present to ensure that local people were not disturbed.

Mrs B. Cope – Church Warden, - Report on the Parish Church of West Wycombe 2010.

The full PCC met at regular intervals during the year under the chairmanship of the Rev. Nigel Lacey.

On 24th May last year Nigel was installed as Rector of the Benefice. This title was revived following the petition of the PCC for the reinstatement of the office, which had been removed following the resignation of the previous incumbent. This installation was carried out by the Area Dean, the Rev. David Picken, in St. Lawrence Church. Although Nigel's ministry is not affected by the change of status, there is a feeling of greater security, and there seems to be much to be encouraged about. We are showing signs of growth. Thanks to Carole Chambers, the children's work is gradually building, and has become an important part of our church life. The displays on the walls bear witness to this. Although there are 82 people on the Electoral Roll, attendance at morning service is around 35, increased when there are baptisms. We enjoy the company of couples preparing for weddings, who are on the Electoral Roll but, as many of these are from outside the parish, they do not necessarily keep up attendance once married. Third Sunday Family Services in St. Pails are enjoyed for their light-heartedness, which does not lessen the depth of praise and worship, nor the sincere fellowship that we experience at the more formal Eucharist Services.

Our finances are in a healthier position than last year, although we have building maintenance to contend with, following the long awaited Quinquennial Inspection, and it is a constant struggle to try to pay our Parish Share, which is about £21,000 per annum.

On the subject of money we were absolutely delighted to be enabled, by the generosity of the late Don Varney, to buy a wonderful new baby grand piano which, incidentally, was through the help of Garrick Steventon who, together with his family, were regular worshippers at St. Lawrence when they lived locally. The piano will allow for recitals to be held at the church as well as enhancing the concerts that we enjoy there. On a more prosaic level we were also able to use some of Don's legacy to replace the oil tank at St. Lawrence's, as the previous one did not meet with health and safety requirements. The new tank is an improved model.

Richard Sugg and Simon Cope once again raised money for the Bucks Historic Churches Fund, to be shared equally with our parish church and, if anyone else is a keen cyclist or walker please see me for details of 'Stride and Ride' to be held again in September.

Opening the tower between Easter and late September continues to be our main fund raiser, and we are always delighted to accept offers of help in this respect, however limited. The tea ladies also do sterling work which generates further income, as well as offering a warm welcome to visitors.

The Christian Aid coffee morning last May was well supported and enjoyed, thanks to the efforts of those who organised the event.

The severe weather precluded us from using St. Lawrence church over Christmas, which was a shame after the efforts made by the flower arrangers, but we were cosy in St. Paul's instead.

On 21st March a Civic Service was held in St. Lawrence's, in the form of a traditional evensong, with Bishop Alan preaching an inspiring sermon.

Rev. Nigel Lacey once again led a Lent course in St. Paul's which deepened a sense of understanding as we reflected on passages in St. Luke's gospel.

Despite numbers dwindling, the bell ringers are delighted to have a new trainee ringer, Lucy Lee aged 11, keeping up the family tradition. It is always a joy to hear the bells and Roger Hagon would welcome enquiries from potential ringers.

The Serbian Orthodox congregation, who worship in St. Paul's Church each month, are planning to renew the floor under the altar, and replace the present iconostasis, subject to our approval.

There is even talk of installing toilets. (What a relief!)

To sum up, in Nigel's words,

" We are all walking the pilgrimage of faith together as fellow travellers, able to share with one another.

My hope and prayer would be that this would deepen and grow. A vibrant spirituality is an attractive one and will encourage and draw others in."

The Chairman invited everyone to stay and look at the plans for the Pedestal Pay Area and join in with the light refreshments.