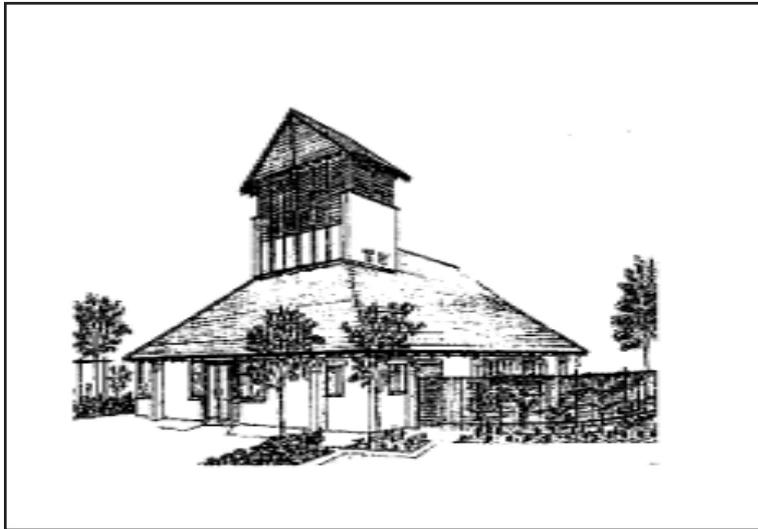
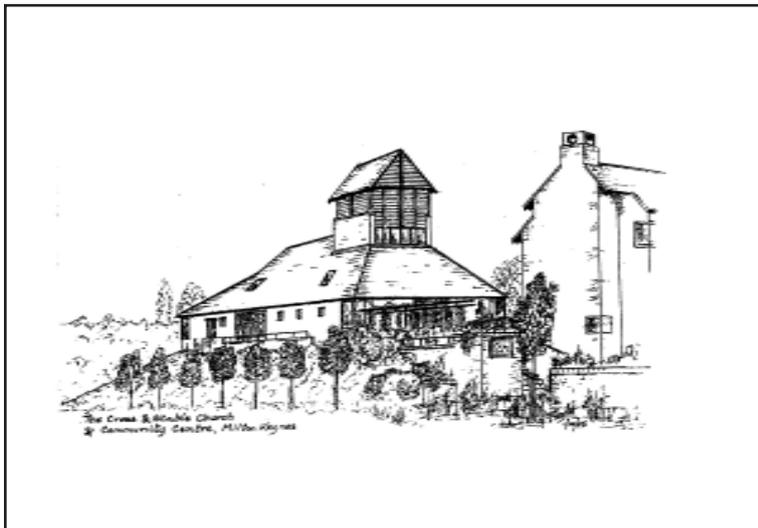




The Ecumenical Parish
of Stantonbury



Annual Report
2008



Cross and Stable
Church
Downs Barn Milton Keynes

Serving Conniburrow
Downs Barn Downhead Park
Neath Hill Pennyland

*The Cross and Stable Church and Community Centre Milton Keynes
from line drawings by John Fowler, 1987*

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Cross and Stable Church Held on Sunday 6th April 2008

Present:

The Reverend Paul Smith (in the chair) together with 18 members.

1. Apologies for Absence

Win Christie, Anabella De Paiva, Joan Wilson, Rob Smith, Paul and Amy Bright, Stephanie Tucker.

2. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 25th March, 2007, were accepted as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

3. Matters Arising

Amy Head highlighted the fact that section five of financial statement had changed. The Gift Aid tax has been reprieved for three years, and is not the 20% reduction that was first thought it was going to be. Paul Smith asked that we should save this extra money for gift aid amounts in the future. Gill Grant asked that item nine be mentioned that since last Annual General Meeting no one had approached the officers with a wish to join the officers meeting as a non team leader. Paul Smith said that anyone wishing to go to an officers meeting as a non team leader were more than welcome. Since Item 7e the senior steward role had been passed from Ken Brine to Bob Cross. Thanks were given to Bob Cross for taking on this role over the year at a difficult time for Ken Brine and his family.

4. Annual Reports.

All reports had been circulated beforehand. The Chairman thanked those who had written and submitted reports for the AGM. No matters arising from the reports.

5. Financial Statements 2007/2008

Amy Head pointed out that with a deficit of £1223.00; we cannot carry on this way from year to year. Gill Grant asked that the officers stay behind for a few minutes after the meeting to discuss about transferring some money from our reserves. We thanked Gill Grant for all her hard work over the year as treasurer. The Financial Statement was proposed by Bob Cross and seconded by Olukemi Aderami all in favour that the accounts and reports be approved.

6. Membership List

There were three new additions to the membership list. Stephen Tucker asked why there were addresses missing from the list. There was some general discussion on having the list update and Paul Smith brought up issues of confidentiality and making our new members feel welcomed. Peter and Gwen Green assured the Chairman that the list will be corrected with the numbers and updated. It was proposed by Peter Green, seconded by Gill Grant and agreed with the improvements above.

7. Appointment of Church Officers

a) Wardens: Gwen Green and John Wheaver. Paul Smith asked how long the wardens have left serving. Gwen has done two of the three years. John has done one of the three years.

b) Secretary: Katie Casey is stepping down. Paul Smith thanked her for four years service. The position was now vacant.

c) Treasurer: Gill Grant

d) Minutes Secretary: vacancy

e) Team Leaders

- 1) Senior Steward Ken Brine
- 2) Worship Bob Cross, Rebecca Esmile
- 3) Junior Church Lorna Smulders
- 4) Pastoral Group Joan Wilson
- 5) Furnishings and Flowers Edith Cross
- 6) Christian Aid Gill Grant
- 7) Social Team Stephen Tucker and Jeanette Smith, a Leader to still be appointed.

It was proposed by Olukemi Aderami, seconded by Jeanette Smith and agreed that these appointments be approved. Duly elected.

8. Election of Representatives

a) SEC: Bob Cross and Gill Grant

b) Mission Partnership: Gwen Green and Paul Bright

c) Management Committee: Paul Smith, Bob Cross, Amy Bright, Peter Green, Ken Brine, Beverley Labbett and two councillors.

It was proposed by Peter Green, seconded by John Wheaver that the above representatives be approved. Duly elected.

9. Any Other Business

Amy Head pointed out that there had been a change in the Charities Act. It is a requirement of law that we display our charity number in all paperwork and on a plaque outside the church building. Paul Smith thanked Amy for raising this issue. Paul pointed out that it is the responsibility of the trustees who look after the building to clarify that we are complying with the law. Alan Argue mentioned his sponsored swim which raised £107 for various charities. Gill Grant said that there were some thank you cards for us all to sign for the organists who play on Sundays for us.

10. Date of next AGM Sunday 29th March 2009

The meeting closed with the blessing and dismissal.

Signed: Chairman

Date

Willen and Downs Barn Team Vicar's Report 2008 - 2009

Over the last year I have continued to try and develop the joint role of being Minister with pastoral charge of both churches within the Stantonbury Team. The two most significant developments in the life of the two churches have been, at Cross & Stable a number of serious illnesses for key members and at Willen the roof and vestry repairs.

As Minister of the two congregations my emphases in the past year continued very much as detailed in my annual report last year. In January I was appointed Team Rector which may not affect the day-to-day life of each congregation, but carries limited implications and wider parish responsibilities which will vary from time to time.

The main points to note over the last year include:

AT CROSS AND STABLE

- A decline in the number of people attending Cross & Stable church for a variety of reasons including removal from the area, frailty, and sadly death
- Increasing pressure on fewer individuals helping to run the building
- Nevertheless, being able to pay what we promised to the Parish for the share
- Three initiatives in particular:
- monthly fellowship meeting for members started in April 2008
- raising our profile: Mothering Sunday event, repeated this year
- co-operation with Catholic congregation, holding carol services annually since 2007

AT ST MARY MAGDALENE

- Completing the roof and vestry renovations and raising the funds to pay for them!
- Achieving the small increase in giving away 2% of our unrestricted income for 2008
- Margaret Moakes continuing ministry as Licensed Lay Minister (leading worship, leading small groups and in spirituality for others)
- Working with the Well in mutually enriching initiatives, including continuing a monthly healing service in church
- Enjoying some social and fund-raising occasions, mainly aimed at the Under One Roof appeal, but with potential for continuing to provide social occasions and general fund raising initiatives

GENERALLY

- Continuing a Christian group at the new Lovat Fields Retirement Village (“The Tree of Life Group”); well-attended Christmas carol service for 2nd year running
- Continuing to visit Neath House elderly care home once a month
- Continuing to visit local schools to take assemblies, help as a governor or teaching RE
- Occasional chaplaincy cover at Willen Hospice; weekly prayers with chaplain; joint outdoor service held in Hospice grounds in September went very well
- Welcoming some visiting preachers at both churches during the course of the year and having members of the Stantonbury Ministers Team visit to take services from time to time

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES WHICH FACE US ARE:

- Continuing to define a clearer relationship between the Well and St Mary Magdalene Church and promoting consciousness of that
- Finding a way to make contact with our local community for both churches
- Pastoral care at both churches
- Relating our vision and strategies for the future to the cluster, to the wider parish, and to the Mission Partnership especially through forthcoming reviews and developments at different levels (eg Local Shared Ministry; Ministerial and Parish reviews; Mission Partnership review.)

Rev'd Paul Smith

Churchwardens' Report

First of all we congratulate our Team Vicar Paul Smith who was appointed Team Rector of the Stantonbury Ecumenical Parish, early in the New Year.

We have had a mix of ministerial input at Cross and Stble on Sunday mornings: members of the Mission Partnership Presidency, Terry Oakley and Alison Tomlin and our Ecumenical Moderator Mary Cotes have led worship as has Tim Clapton, the Development Chaplain. Locals and Team Colleagues Steve Barnes, Maggie Prisk, Chris Collinge, Judy Rose, Lavina Porter, David Bell, Andy Jowitt, Mindy Bell, David Wilson and Margaret Moakes have all played their part and Paul Smith has divided his leadership and ministerial role here with Willen. There have been a few lay led services piloted by Bob Cross and similarly we have had a variety of organists encouraging us to sing.

Christian Aid collections realised £881.27; a September Music Evening master minded by Stephen Tucker made £693 for Cross and Stable and the same amount for Willen Hospice. A Valentine's Day coffee Morning organised by Jeanette Smith and helpers realised £85. Again harvest gifts went to the Salvation Army and clothing and toiletries to the Open Door Project for homeless young men. The Christmas Collection of £307 went to the HOPE Outreach UK project for Sri Lanka organised by a local Doctor Sam Muthuveloe.

The Iona Liturgy is used alternately on the 3rd Sunday with the Lima Liturgy. A Christmas Celebration with the Roman Catholics was augmented by a choir via John Wheaver. A Service took place in the Tree Cathedral in August and a joint service was also held in the Hospice grounds in September. A Lent Course in 2008 'Jesus Rediscovered' took place in the Quaker Centre. Each first Sunday in the month we are joined by a group of 'signers' and a number of Deaf folk, including a family and recently a 'specialist hearing dog Larry' with his owner!

We thank our members for the smooth running of Sunday Worship. Our grateful thanks go the stewards, coffee makers, readers, intercessors, junior church workers, those who give lifts in their cars, and those who bring flowers, not forgetting our treasurer and collection administrators, and the sacristan duties of church linen washing and bread and wine provision! There are many ways to belong to Cross and Stable and your help would be appreciated if you have not yet signed the rota sheet. We are sad to report the deaths of two of our members: Win Christie and Arthur Smith.

Ill health has caused disruption within the Pastoral Group and gaps in the rotas. We are grateful to all who have stepped into these gaps, and thank you for all your support.

Gwen Green and John Wheaver

Junior Church Report

During 2008 and the beginning of this year we have continued to provide a monthly Junior Church session on the first Sunday (Signed service). During the summer of 2008 both Isaac and Samuels families left C&S and we now just have four children in JC, Christopher and Joanne, Laura and Natasha.

Themes we have used in our sessions during the last year are;

- Fishers of Men
- Holy Spirit Power
- Moses' story
- Creation Topic (Autumn term 08)
- Story of Creation
- Harvest – Sharing Creation

- Creation – Recreation Tearfund ‘Be part of a Miracle’
- Advent- Christingles
- Epiphany – the Camel’s story
- Paul’s journey to Damascus

In July 2008 as a follow up to the special Mothering Sunday service, we again invited the families of the Dragonflies Preschool group to a ‘Sea Sunday’ family service. Using resources from the Mission to Seafarers and with craft activities for the children to take part in. Unfortunately just one family attended.

In December the children made Christingles for themselves and their families and for some members of the congregation; we had quite a production line going. The children enjoyed decorating the Christingles

For the Parish, a ‘Noah’s Ark’ party was held at St James in June 08, organised by Chris Collinge and the JC group leaders. Mainly for the younger ages (2 – 8 years) there were various ‘animal’ craft activities plus some visiting animals including Warren and Cameron’s snake, and a party tea.

During the last year JC has tried to support the Salvation Army ‘Open Door ‘ project. Collecting food, clothes and toiletries for homeless young men.

Congratulations to Katie and Warren on the safe arrival of Oliver in Oct 08 and we were happy to welcome Oliver to JC recently.

Thanks to Joy who has left C & S, for her help in JC over the years and we miss Win for her help in the JC sessions.

*JC Team: Gill Grant, Katie Casey, Lorna Smulders
Lorna Smulders*

Pastoral Group Report

Quite a number of our congregation have been ill during the year up to the end of February 2009. However our depleted Pastoral Team has managed to visit and telephone people who have been absent.

Our very dear friend, Win Christie, died in November 2008, just two days after her 81st birthday. Win had not been well during the whole of last year. She had a short spell in Willen Hospice, then back home, and finally into hospital. Win was a very active member of our church and had a cheery word for everyone. We are missing her presence very much. Arthur Smith also died last December, another long standing member of Cross and Stable. Four of us attended his funeral at Crownhill. We still have a number of members on the sick list at the present time, including Edith Cross, Joan Brine, Pat Hollis, Gwen Green and myself.

The Grapevine Leaders have dropped to three people. We desperately need more volunteers. Do you have a little time and interest in assisting us?

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Paul Smith, our minister, for his care of all Cross and Stable members. I thank you all for the cards, letters, telephone calls and visits since I have been unwell. I have appreciated all your prayers and good wishes.

Joan Wilson

Flowers and Furnishings

Firstly flowers.

Fallen away over the last few weeks of the year as I have been unable to contribute. The help afforded by Jeanette and other members of the Congregation has been much appreciated

The wreaths and trees contributed by all who worship in the building seemed to have worked well this last Christmas, thanks to all involved.

Furnishings.

The Chapel has been tidied up from time to time and a small TV and video player is available for Junior Church. In the vestry are now storage boxes for the weekly service sheets and the less used booklets. This means they are more easily available.

A search for a reasonable credence table is still under way.

Edith Cross

Report from the Worship Team for 2008

In the past year, as always, the Cross and Stable has held Services of worship in different styles. We use orders of service from the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and United Reformed Churches, also from the Church of Southern India, a Lima Liturgy, or sometimes a service written by the Preacher.

The Service on the first Sunday of each month is signed for people with hearing difficulties. Our Vicar, Rev. Paul Smith, generally leads these Services although other members of the Ministerial Team have also helped

Over the past year we have varied the pattern slightly by having an Ionian based Service alternating with the Lima style service on the fourth Sunday of each month.

Our lay-led services have been well received and now are a part of the three monthly preaching cycles. Normally, the Worship Team produce these and contributions are welcome from anyone. Input to the service and participation are welcome.

The Worship Team meet most months and review past services and plan for the future. We appreciate the help and leadership contributed by the Vicar.

On behalf of the whole congregation, we would like to thank all the willing volunteers who have played the organ or provided other musical accompaniment at our services and thank Paul for the effort he puts in to this particular aspect of our Worship.

This past year we shared our Christmas celebrations with our Roman Catholic friends and also, to a degree, with those who worship in the building after us on Sundays. We hope to explore these contacts further in the future.

Bob Cross

Ruminate

A men only group that has been in existence within the wider Parish for about eighteen months.

We meet every other month for a masculine mixture of fellowship, talks, walks and food. No conditions are imposed upon membership and anyone can attend.

Speakers are invited to talk on their own subjects and recently we heard from a Christian who had converted from a life as a Hindu.

Most meetings have a twenty to thirty attendance and all are welcome.

The name? That comes [I'm sorry] from a meeting in a room and eating – hence “in a room they ate” shortens to “Rum in Ate” thus “Ruminate” – I did apologise!

Bob Cross

Report from the SEC Representatives

As representatives for the Cross and Stable on the Stantonbury Ecumenical Council, Bob Cross and I have been to some interesting meetings and in this report I will try to share some of the news from the rest of the Parish. The SEC Churches are:

St Andrews, Great Linford, which is one of the older churches, with a membership roll of over 100 people. Their minister, Rev Peter Ballantine, is also responsible for overseeing Training in the Parish. They have recently established a memorial garden in front of the church and this year they will require repair work to the church roof.

St Andrews C of E School in Great Linford village was experiencing problems with the risk of being closed. The school has a new Head teacher, has resolved its problems and hopes that, by September 2009, it will have reached its full capacity.

Bradwell Church. The minister is Rev Andy Jowitt who is also the parish Evangelism Enabler. In 2008 Andy had his Licence to the parish extended.

The Church runs a successful Alpha Course, next one starts on April 24th.

Christchurch, Stantonbury. The Rev Chris Howden, a Baptist Minister, was licensed in October, to the Parish with responsibility for Christchurch.

St James Church, New Bradwell has been joined by the New Bradwell Methodists The minister is Rev Chrissie Collinge, who is also responsible for working with children and families. There is slow progress towards a formal and legal Sharing Agreement between the Church of England, Baptists, Methodists and URC. This agreement has the unanimous backing of SEC.

St Mary Magdalene Church, Willen shares their Minister Rev Paul Smith with Cross & Stable Church.

Paul has been appointed the Parish Rector for a period of seven years. Willen church has had its copper roof renewed, and other repairs carried out. The Church members will be holding a Celebration Weekend on 25 and 26 April.

People; Rev Mindy Bell, part of Stantonbury Clergy Team, was ordained in 2008 as a Methodist Minister. Rev David Bell and Rev Liz Baker have both been ordained as non-stipendiary ministers. David is working with Chrissie in New Bradwell and Liz is working in Watling Valley Ecumenical Partnership.

Shared Events

Soup Run Other parishes and church groups in Milton Keynes are providing soup and sandwiches to homeless people in the city centre. SEC is now responsible for this project on Monday evenings. New helpers welcome or financial donations to M. Lovegrove (320183)

Children's Parties There were two successful events: a Noah's Ark Party in June, with real animals, and as an alternative to Halloween, a "Glow in the Dark" Party.

Room'n'ate is a men's social evening when male parishioners are encouraged to bring their friends to a meal and entertainment that varied from playing golf to listening to speakers.

SEC AGM 2008. Thanks were given to Amy Bright for serving SEC as Treasurer for 12 years and as Lay Chair for two years. The new Lay Chair is Mike Morris and Maggie Prisk has taken over as Treasurer with Paul Watt as Accounts Co-ordinator.

There was a **Deanery Confirmation Service** in November. This has resulted in a lot of discussions because the MK Mission Partnership Presidents have ruled that a person cannot be re-baptised at an ecumenical confirmation service. It is only a Baptist practice to re-baptise an adult who was baptised as an infant, so this should take place in a Baptist service.

Parish Newsletter. This has been postponed because of other commitments. Paul Watt is now overseeing the setting-up of a Parish Web Site with links to all the SEC Churches. It might be possible to print out information from the Web site as a news sheet if appropriate.

Welcome Packs have been prepared to distribute to new residents in the Parish. Information in the packs is on separate sheets that can be up-dated as required. Plans to formally distribute these to the new housing estates have been delayed because the houses are only slowly being occupied.

Prayer Course 2009. During the week 26 June-3rd July 09 "Pilgrims" will have the chance to meet daily with a prayer guidance 'mentor', either at the Well or another suitable venue. SEC is willing to meet costs of this new initiative,

Gill Grant March 09

Mission Partnership Report

The Assembly

The Reverend John Townsend addressed the June meeting on the Fifth Mark of Mission: to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth. In July Bishop Danilo of the Philippines preached at Furzton en route to the Lambeth Conference. In November the Development Chaplain, Tim Clapton, spoke about the possibility of MK Citizens, having been excited by seeing London Citizens in action.

The Mission Partnership has continued its Review Process to re-present Christ, realise Life and release Energy. The final document whereby the Constitution is rewritten has yet to be finalised and produced.

Quite a lot of work is being done in the area of Local Shared Ministry, so that the church of the future is seen not as community gathered round a minister, but a ministering community.

Swen Green

Governance

The Legal Arrangements for the Management of Cross and Stable

Reason for this document:

Some have questioned our charitable status and another congregation in the city is in difficulties and their legal arrangements are not clear..

We need to have some clarity - hence this draft. This is very much a work in progress .

Where documents have been found the date is indicated. If anyone is aware of later versions then adjustments can be made.

Church

The local churches referred to in the legal documents are:

The Anglican Parish of Stantonbury and Willen created around 1986

The Stantonbury Baptist Church - status unknown

The Stantonbury Methodist Church - status unknown

The Stantonbury United Reformed Church - status unknown

The Stantonbury Ecumenical Parish created 6th June 1982

The constituent congregations are not defined in the constitution.

The Cross and Stable Ecumenical Congregation constitution & bye laws revised March 2001

The Charitable Status of Ecumenical Parishes and Congregations has not been determined by the Charity Commissioners and is under discussion nationally. LEPs are treated as if they are Charities but not registered as such, hence the LEP and the congregation do not have a charity number.

The Sharing Agreement dated 6th November 1989

between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

(I am concerned that the Baptist Church is not party to the Sharing Agreement.)

The sharing Agreement does not create the congregation but allows the traditions to share a place of worship under certain conditions.

Joint Council

There is a Joint Council for each of the Shared Buildings in the Parish. St Andrews, St Lawrence, St James, Christ Church and Cross & Stable. Each Sharing Agreement creates a Joint Council for that building. Each should meet annually. The main function is control of worship, finance and building management.

The members of the Joint Council are not (necessarily) members of the congregation concerned. Indeed it can happen that each of the Joint Councils in an LEP has the same membership. So one event can contain the 5 annual meetings of the 5 Joint Councils in half an hour and transact the minimalist business required.

The common Joint Council AGM may delegate some of its functions to the SEC and individual congregations - (for instance if Cross and Stable cannot pay their full quota then the SEC is responsible).

The Cross and Stable Building

Cross & Stable is vested in a custodian trustee (Oxford Diocese) but the ownership is more complex.

Cross and Stable belongs 86.1% to Oxford, 10.5% to Methodist and 3.4% to the URC according to the percentages in which they contributed capital.

The owners lease the building to the Trustees.

The Cross and Stable Church and Community Centre

Deed dated 18th January 1993 Charity No. 1017685

The trustees are appointed by the Milton Keynes Council (2), Linford Parish Council (1), Church (3).

The Cross and Stable Management Committee manage the building on behalf the Trustees and comprise roughly 50% church and 50% community. MKCC (2), SEC (4), User Groups (2), Residents (2), MKC (1) Linford Parish (1), Co-options (4).

The Cross and Stable Charities

Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 21st January 1987. Charity No. 800370

The Cross and Stable Charities is now owned by itself and is run by members (directors). It donates its profits to the SEC (if necessary through the Anglican Parish) for the benefit of Cross and Stable and others. The members are SEC (1), Stantonbury Methodist Church (1), Stantonbury United Reformed Church (1), Stantonbury Baptist Church (1), Oxford Board of Finance (2).

Sven Green, March 2009

Photocopier

A photocopier continues to be available to church members and other users of the Cross and Stable. If you do wish to use this resource please contact Peter or Gwen.

During the year some £380 has been spent on maintenance and £100 will be handed to the Management Committee. All costs for paper and toner have been met from income. All users have paid their bills. 49,000 copies have been made during the year. Copies are currently charged at 2p a copy (and sometimes less), a reduction from 2.25p a copy a year ago and 3p the year before. The automatic stapling function now works. After paying the Management Committee there will be a balance of £100 but some more maintenance is required.

Peter Green

Treasurer's Report 2008

The financial records for 2008 were kept as receipt and payment accounts.

Figures were prepared monthly and presented to the Officers at Church Meetings.

A sum of £3423.27 was received as tax returned on gift-aided donations.

The final account at the end of December shows that in 2008 there was a shortage of receipts against payments of -£141.56

The church had been asked to pay £20,188 towards the Parish Share. We actually paid £14,560, plus £500 in CAF cheques.

On 6/4/08 The Church Officers agreed to transfer £705.16 from the designated fund to the unrestricted funds

At a meeting on 12/11/08 the Officers agreed that a donation of £330 could be designated for future organ repairs.

Gill Grant March 09