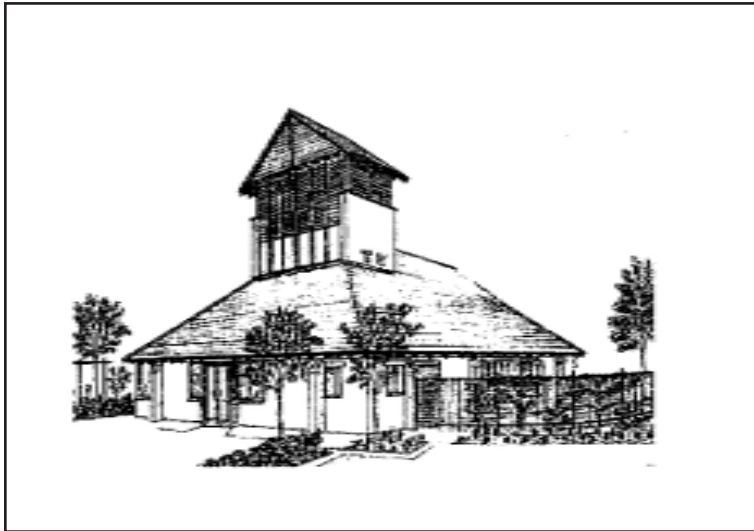
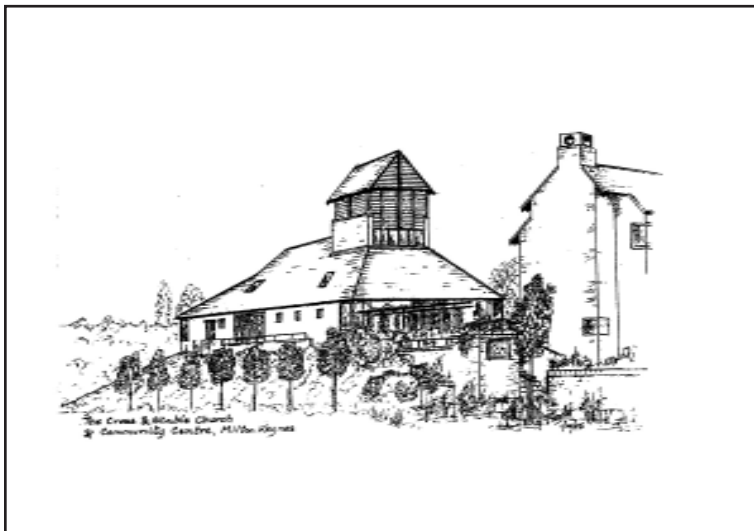




The Ecumenical Parish  
of Stantonbury



Annual Report  
2007



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, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2007**

## **Present:**

The Reverend Paul Smith (in the chair) together with 19 members.

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Stephen and Stephanie Tucker, Bob and Edith Cross, Ken and Joan Brine and Jeanette Smith.

## **2. Previous Minutes**

Amy Bright suggested an amendment to section 5 Charles Davis asked if parishioners could give a donation when attending social events. To change this to attending party lettings. This was agreed and amended. The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 19th March, 2006, were accepted as a correct record and signed.

## **3. Matters Arising**

None

## **4. Annual Reports**

All reports had been circulated beforehand. The Chairman thanked those who had written and submitted reports for the AGM. It was noted that since the Flowers and Furnishings report, there was now a bookshelf at the front of the church for leaflets and notices. Paul Bright commented on the Mission Partnership report that Mike Morris is standing down and there is a vacancy. Paul Smith suggested that we all need to be aware of this as it is our responsibility. Paul Smith gave thanks to Peter and Gwen Green for the photocopier in the church which has proven most useful. Peter said that it was possible to use the photocopier for personal needs but that access could not be during Playgroup occupation of the building. Access could perhaps be arranged through a church warden. Paul Smith raised some positive highlights over the year with fundraising and social events.

## **5. Financial Statements 2006/2007**

Gill Grant our treasurer said that we had met our target that we had pledged to the parish. The excess had been used to keep up with our payments this year which the Officers had agreed to. Gill Grant mentioned that meeting our target this year didn't look as good as last. We need to think about our giving this year. Gill Grant thanked Paul and Amy Bright for their help and the congregation for meeting our target this year.

Amy Head commented on the fact that the recently announced drop in tax rate by the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant that Gift Aid claims would be adversely affected. Amy Bright pointed out that this year's parish share would be £19,800 (payable through the SEC). Paul Smith said that this amounted to us having to find another £600 per month. This increase is due to the Diocese methods that we use.

It was proposed by Joan Wilson, seconded by Win Christie and agreed that the annual reports and accounts be approved.

## **6. Membership List**

Gwen Green proposed that we accept the 26 members who have signed their membership forms. The Grapevine can chase up their Bunches who have not signed. Paul Smith suggested that we accept the membership list. Those who have signed can vote and become Officers. However, by the next Officers Meeting we must have all the signatures. The majority of the congregation were in favour of this.

It was proposed by Peter Green, seconded by Amy Head and agreed to approve the membership list, with the conditions above.

## **7. Appointment of Church officers**

**a) Wardens:** The nominations were John Weaver and Gwen Green. There is a new requirement by The Diocese of Oxford that the nominations must be seconded in writing with a declaration by the candidates.

The Wardens will be elected by The Annual General Meeting of Stantonbury Ecumenical Parish on The 19th April 2007. Paul Bright proposed, seconded by Gill Grant. Duly elected.

**b) Secretary:** Katie Grant would continue. Proposed by George Aldous, seconded by Peter Green. Duly elected.

**c) Treasurer:** Gill Grant would continue. Proposed by Joan Wilson, seconded by Amy Bright. Duly elected.

**d) Minutes Secretary** Katie Grant offered to do this. Proposed by Gill Grant, seconded by John Wheaver. Duly elected.

#### **e) Team Leaders**

1) Senior Steward Ken Brine

2) Worship Pat Durrant

3) Junior Church Lorna Smulders

4) Pastoral Group Joan Wilson

5) Furnishings and Flowers Edith Cross

6) Social Team There had been various social events over the year organised by a group of people.

It was proposed by Gill Grant, seconded by Gwen Green and agreed that these appointments be approved. Duly elected.

### **8. Election of Representatives**

**a) SEC:** Bob Cross and Gill Grant continuing. It was proposed by Amy Bright, seconded by Lorna Smulders. Duly elected.

**b) Mission Partnership:** Gwen Green and Paul Bright would continue. It was proposed by John Wheaver, seconded by Lorna Smulders. Duly elected.

**c) Management Committee:** Continuing are the Vicar, Bob Cross, Amy Bright, Peter Green and Ken Brine. Paul Smith suggested additional appointments as necessary. It was proposed by Lorna Smulders, seconded by Win Christie that all the above representatives be approved. Duly elected.

### **9. Any Other Business**

Gill Grant highlighted the Christian Aid evening at the Well with supper on May 4th 2007. Katie Grant pointed out the Back to Church Sunday campaign on 30th September 2007. This was approved and decided to go to the Worship Team for organising. Paul Smith apologised to Allan Argue for not having a discussion on his proposal made at the last Annual Meeting that we have a question and answer session at church. Paul said that suggestion forms had been given out today. These are for people to write down any questions they may have in the Christian Faith to discuss one Sunday morning.

Amy Bright proposed that three members of The Cross and Stable congregation be elected to the Officers Meeting at The Annual General Meeting each year who are not Cross and Stable Team Leaders. It was proposed by Amy Bright, seconded by Peter Green. All in favour. Officers Meeting was given permission by Annual Meeting to make appointments during the year pending approval at next year's meeting.

Edith Cross conveyed a suggestion through Paul Smith that a singing group be started to support weekly worship. This was decided to pass on to the Worship Team. Paul Smith raised the discussion over whether to have Iona or Lima communion on the third Sunday of the month. It was decided to leave this decision to the congregational meeting in September 2007 and that we would continue to experiment in the meantime. It was proposed by Gwen Green, seconded by John Wheaver. Motion passed.

### **10. Date of next AGM**

Sunday 6th April 2008

**The meeting closed with the blessing and dismissal.**

*Signed: Chairman*

*Date*

# **Willen and Downs Barn Team Vicar's Report 2007 - 2008**

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. I have continued to find the Team with whom I work a source of encouragement, support and challenge in the work of ministry.

As Minister of the two congregations my emphases in the past year continued very much as detailed in my annual report last year. Significant developments over the last year have included:

## **GENERALLY**

- Establishing a Christian group at the new Lovat Fields Retirement Village which is called "The Tree of Life Group", and meets every other week, including a monthly communion; we also had a well-attended Christmas carol service there on Christmas Eve 2007
- Beginning to visit Neath House elderly care home once a month at their invitation
- Continuing to encourage support for the Parish Share. I am pleased that both churches managed to respond to their commitment for 2007 although there is always more to do
- 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
- Encouraging and supporting fund-raising and social activities at both churches

## **AT CROSS AND STABLE**

- Continued growth and diversity of the mix of people attending Cross & Stable church
- We have now settled into a pattern of Iona and Lima eucharists alternating monthly
- Successful 21st anniversary service and celebration lunch with Rev Terry Oakley, URC Moderator helping us plan the worship, lead and preach. Good to see many friends there.
- Thinking morning held in January; possible working vision statement: "To be a place that is known and a people who know each other." We need to work out how to sustain that in our church life. Two initiatives:
  - ø to start a monthly fellowship meeting for members
  - ø to raise our profile both in making contact with user groups and working with the Management Committee to promote the awareness of the presence of the building

## **AT ST MARY MAGDALENE**

- Following on from establishing the Under One Roof initiative, we had a successful launch meeting in March, courtesy of Willen School, for our appeal fund; regular co-ordinator's meetings have been keeping a watch on developments; at the time of writing we still await the final decision of English Heritage on proceeding with Stage 2 of the project.
- Giving away a small percentage of our annual income to overseas charity and looking for a small increase this year (up to 2%)
- Encouraged to welcome Margaret Moakes back into her officially recognised ministry as Licensed Lay Minister (leading worship, leading small groups and in spirituality for others)
- First Sunday of the month well established now, but need for its development
- Working with the Well in mutually enriching initiatives, including starting a monthly healing service in church

## **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
- Managing the roof repair project at Willen whilst keeping it in balance with other areas of congregational life
- Finding a way to make contact with our local community for both churches
- Pastoral care at Willen; keeping up with a number of temporary worshippers at Cross & Stable who move into the area for awhile but then move on again
- Finding ways to apply my MA studies in local ministry & mission

*Revd Paul Smith*

## Churchwardens' Report

2007 has seen a great variety of ministerial input on Sundays from nearby in the Stantonbury Team: Andy Jowitt, Judy Rose, Wendy Carey, Maggie Prisk, Mindy Bell, David Wilson, Lavina Porter, and recently Margaret Moakes; not forgetting the regular input of our own minister Paul Smith. Milton Keynes Hospice Chaplain, Steve Barnes and retired Team Vicar Peter Green have filled in. Special guests have included our Ecumenical Moderator Rev Dr Mary Cotes, Development Chaplain Tim Clapton and Rev Emmanuel Aggrey-Ogoe who helped us celebrate the 20th birthday of Cross and Stable using a Kenyan Liturgy. January 2008 Stephen Norrish of the Christian Foundation preached. The United Reformed Church President of the Mission Partnership, Rev Terry Oakley, helped us celebrate the 21st birthday, along with some thirty friends and former members of Cross and Stable, followed by a bring and share lunch. Some three lay led services have taken place, ably led by Bob Cross. Similarly there has been a variety of organists enhancing our worship: grateful thanks go to Nick, Adrian, Helen and Bob.

Our Christian Aid collections made £911; the September music evening masterminded by Stephen Tucker made £500, and a further £500 for Willen Hospice. Harvest produce filled the cupboards at the Salvation Army and boxes filled with clothing and toiletries for young men for the Open Door Project is ongoing. Our Christmas collections enabled an offering of £350 for the Transforming Lives of Children in Vietnam project run by Ashley and Christine Coggins, former members of Cross and Stable.

The third draft of the Iona Liturgy looks like alternating with the Lima Liturgy on the third Sunday of the month. The Christmas Celebration Service with the Catholic congregation was enhanced by a choir via John Weaver and encouraged greater numbers. John replaced Paul Bright as the second Church Warden.

For the smooth running of our Sunday Worship we rely on the assistance of many of our members: from stewards to coffee makers, readers and intercessors, junior church workers, those who give lifts in their cars, and those who bring flowers, not forgetting our valiant treasurer and the collection administrators. There are many ways of belonging to Cross and Stable, and your help would be appreciated, if you haven't already signed the rota sheet! Apart from the Sunday worship there are other ways in which you could help us. The Church Officers are looking for a replacement for Katie Casey, as Secretary, a Christian Aid Representative to replace Esther Otoo, and additions to the Pastoral Group. If you have DIY skills the Management Committee would also welcome you!

There are many ways to give glory to God and I am grateful for all your support.

*Swen Green and John Weaver*

## Cross and Stable Fellowship

A small group continues to meet once a fortnight in Joy's home. Lent 2007 saw us in the Quaker Centre studying, with Paul Smith's guidance, the York Course 'Can we build a better future?'

We have used the edited studies from two books: *For love and money*, produced by Christian Aid, explored 'Christian Faith and Belief' and from Mark Tully's TV series: *Jesus as Jew, God, Rebel and a Secret*. The one and a half hour sessions are relaxed, informal, with a short Bible Study section, some modern implications, prayer and coffee and conversation. We also spent some time looking at *The Lord's Prayer* - even devising a version which we found helpful to us all. We would love more people to come if they are free on alternate Wednesdays from 11am.

*Swen Green*

# Junior Church Report

During 2007 some of our families moved away and other children have grown and have other commitments. We have found that the numbers of children attending were quite low and some weeks there were no children for the JC session. Two of our JC leaders, Katie and Stephanie were only able to lead sessions occasionally due to work commitments. It was therefore decided that from the new academic year in September 2007, we would hold a JC session on the first Sunday of each month, the Signed Service. For the other Sundays, we put out the mat and cushions at the back of the church; with soft toys, colouring materials and books for the younger children. We agreed to review the situation after 6 months / for the 2008 AGM.

We used the following themes between April and July 2007.

- Easter Story
- Seeds ~ being a seed for change. Christian Aid Week '07
- Asking God questions.
- Parable Stories – Prodigal Son.

From September 2007 our schedule has been.....

- Sept - preparation for 'Back to Church Sunday' What is Church?
- Oct - Harvest ~ Sharing Story = Feeding the five thousand.
- Nov - N/T story Zacchaeus
- Dec - Nativity story
- 2008 Jan - Epiphany ~ the Wise men and their gifts
- Feb - 'Live Lent' challenge ~ being a neighbour Good Samaritan story
- Mar - Mothering Sunday

Over the last year we have been involved with a number of events.

In October '07, St Laurence's Bradwell Village hosted the 'Glow in the Dark' parish JC party. Organised by Chris Collinge and the parish JC leader's team. Gill, Katie, Lorna, Alicia and friend Emma, helped with some of the party activities. It was a lovely evening and the party was very successful with a good number of families attending.

The JC group are supporting the 'Open Door' project run by Shelter & Salvation Army on Conniburrow. A project providing clothing, toiletries and food for homeless young men.

For Christmas, Edith organised the annual 'Preparation of the Crib' with some of our youngsters.

For Mother's Day this year we tried something new and invited the children of Dragonflies Pre-school and their families to an informal pre-service

'Coffee, chat and Posies'. The church congregation and families could meet and chat, while the children made small posies as a thank-you for their mums/grans/carers. Some families stayed to the service following and we had a number of visiting children in our JC session. We talked about Mothering Sunday, what mums do! and the children made pop-up thank you cards. Thanks to Edith for the posies for the congregation, that she prepared beforehand.

A special thank you to Win, Joy and Joan who regularly help as our 'second person' in the JC sessions.

We thank Laura, Ellen, Christopher, Joann, Samuel, Bevan and Natasha for being part of our JC group.

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

*Lorna Smulders*

## **Pastoral Group Report**

It has been a very busy year for the Pastoral Team, who have been working with a reduced number of leaders. Yet I think anyone who has been ill at home or hospital has been contacted by one of us. Hopefully our congregational members will get in touch with Paul Smith our Minister or a member of the Pastoral Team if they hear of anyone who is ill.

A reminder to anyone who is fairly new to Cross and Stable. The Pastoral Team supports Grapevine Bunches and meet during the year. The Grapevine is the Church membership divided into bunches, each of which has a leader who checks if members need a visit or phone call. We add new members to the bunches and monitor the membership list.

Our 21st Anniversary was a memorable occasion with around 70 worshippers attending. Many had travelled a considerable distance to be with us. After the service a Bring and Share Lunch gave us a little time to catch up with friends and past members of our church.

*Jean Wilson*

## **Flowers and Furnishings**

### **Firstly flowers**

As Ester is no longer able to provide flowers it has fallen to the congregation. The Roman Catholic Church helped at Christmas and Easter for which we are very grateful.

If anyone would like to provide flowers for a special occasion please say. The trees provided by the Jubilee Church and the Saving Souls for Christ at Christmas were most welcome and appreciated.

### **Furnishings.**

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

For the future we still need a decent table at the Church entrance.

*Edith Cross*

## **Report from the Worship Team for 2006**

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 Reform 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.

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



We regularly partake in a Lay-led service which is generally well received and adds a new dimension to our sharing. The team is involved in the planning and preparation of these service. The team also becomes involved in the planning and preparation of the lay led services which, now, figure in our plans for each three monthly cycle s which, now, figure in our plans for each three monthly cycle

The Worship Team meet most months to review past services and to plan for the future. Many other issues are also discussed including types of service, preachers and hymns. Included are the occasional invitations to Preachers other than those with whom we share within the Parish.

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

If you enjoy a service please tell a friend; if not please tell the Worship Team through a Warden or the Vicar.

*Bob Cross*

## **Report from the SEC Representatives**

Your representatives have attended the meetings of the SEC throughout the year on your behalf.

Matters discussed have included

- Parish finances including variations in the way the Parish share is divided
- The SEC has ratified Diocesan up-dates and variations to the Parish Policy on “Children, Young people and the Church”
- Alpha courses are growing in number throughout the Parish
- The SEC continues its significant presence with the Stantonbury Credit Union which continues
- The parish faces up to staffing problems with vacancies to be filled at the AGM for Lay Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

*REC 14-Mar-08*

## **Mission Partnership Report**

### **The Assembly**

At the AGM Di Miller, the Lay Chair of Woughton LEP, was elected to succeed Mike Morris as Lay Chair of the Assembly.

Following the business part of the meeting **Norman Kember** gave a moving account of his time as a captive in Iraq.

The first part of the Review of the Mission Partnership has taken place with the collation of the responses to the questionnaires from individuals and churches. From this information a Vision for the future was formulated.

**The Mission Partnership seeks to:**

**re-present Christ, realise Life and release energy  
by creating environments, within Milton Keynes,  
which encourage an interface amongst the churches  
and between the churches and the wider community.**

Accepting this Vision and to comply with new charity regulations requires that The Constitution be rewritten and it is hoped to have the document available for ratification by the end of 2008.

Liz Sabey from the Open Door project described the Drop In project for the homeless which is situated at the Salvation Army at Conniburrow. The Drop In opened in February 2006 to provide meals for the homeless and vulnerably housed. It has been expanded to offer help with many problems involved with homelessness.

**Future Ministry in Milton Keynes.**

With the expansion of Milton Keynes and the financial pressures which may mean a drop in the number of stipendary clergy the Executive has authorised a project group to consider future ministry in Milton Keynes. The model being considered is that of Local Shared Ministry which has the following key features:

- a) All members of the church community are called to serve rather than be served.
- b) Those who are called to be leaders must encourage and support the ministry of others.
- c) The church exists for those who are not yet members. It is important therefore that the ministry of the church is not focused primarily on those who attend Sunday worship, but on the wider community.
- d) The leaders and members of the church have regular access to someone who is able to provide a supervisory role.
- e) The Wider Church commits to provide training and support and to make this available as locally as possible.
- f) God gives us what we need in order to answer his call, so the local church may already have the people it needs.
- g) The church is not a community gathered round a minister, but a ministering community.

*Paul Bright*

## **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 £320 has been spent on maintenance and £100 has been handed to the Management Committee. All costs for paper and toner have been met from income. All users have paid their bills. 58,000 copies have been made during the year. Copies are currently charged at 2.25p a copy, a reduction from 3p a copy a year ago.

*Peter Green*