

MULBARTON CHURCH



ANNUAL REPORT 2011 - 2012

ANNUAL REPORT OF MULBARTON CHURCH 2010-11

ELECTORAL ROLL 2010-11 – John Blakey

The Electoral Roll is our official “membership list”. The number on the Electoral Roll is used to compute our Parish Share to the Diocese. Membership gives the opportunity to have a say in church policy and vote and to stand for membership of the PCC.

For the year 2012-13 we have **71** members on the Electoral Roll – slightly less than last year. 3 new names have been added; 7 names have been removed this year (2 have died; 2 have moved away; 2 non-residents are now at other churches; 1 resigned). We have 16 members on the Electoral Roll living outside the parish.

ADMINISTRATION

Church wardens – Tim Davidson

Firstly I would like to give my thanks to Symon Mellows for his work and dedication to our church for the majority of the past twelve months. It was with regret that I learned of his premature resignation.

The maintenance of the church building has been well looked after and overseen by our very able Fabric Team, and after much persevering we have seen the East Window finally restored and installed!

Being Churchwarden has not been an arduous task, as most aspects of church life are covered by a myriad of dedicated individuals, and it is a privilege to support Jess and Dawn in our mission here in Mulbarton.

Elders – Jess Stubenbord [Our present eldership is Dawn, Tom, Patrick and Jess.]

We seek to meet each Thursday evening (or sometimes Saturday mornings) for fellowship, prayer, to review what we believe to be going on in church and to seek God’s ways forward for the church. We also pray for current pastoral needs.

We have just begun to review all the church ministries by inviting the co-ordinator for each ministry to a time of review and encouragement and then praying for their future service.

Jess finds the elders a great source of support and inspiration.

Again Jess stresses we do lack someone with the gifts to motivate/ encourage the whole church to press on in their walk and go deeper with Jesus.

Our relationship is one of mutual respect with the other main leadership group within the church, the PCC..

PCC Report from Secretary – Jill Wright

In the year ending April 2012, the PCC has had 6 evening meetings in alternate months plus a ‘Quiet Morning’ with the Elders in Harvest House. In addition, the Standing Committee has met to authorise urgent expenditure and even to view the churchyard extension! We began the year with 10 elected members (rather than 12), but unfortunately 2 members resigned during the year. Tony Lovick took over as Treasurer, and we decided to wait until the Annual Meeting to elect another churchwarden. Thanks, Tim, for holding the fort alone! And also thanks to Vivienne for ably chairing meetings.

This year’s discussions have been predominantly about buildings – the repair and renovation of the East window was finally achieved after a lot of ‘aggro’ with various official bodies (see Fabric Report, p.5); our application to save heat loss by putting glass doors on the porch was turned down, leading to an acrimonious meeting with the Archdeacon (after which 1 churchwarden resigned); and a small team has spent many, many hours putting together a plan for the future of the church building in the particular format that seems to be required now with all faculty applications. At the same time, we were considering how to enlarge Harvest House and after a lot of work by a few people we are now making progress (see report on p.6). We have also approved a small WiFi facility on the tower; organised a clear-out at the back of the N aisle and approved plans for nice cupboards; we have bought comfortable folding chairs to replace the old wooden ones. We have also discussed the church’s ministry and mission – the groups for children and young people; new initiatives such as the Dad’s & Kids mornings; renewing (and rewritten) Danny’s contract, among other things. We have voted on women bishops (majority in favour) and also proposed that in future PCC members are elected for (hopefully) 3 years, with one-third being replaced each year. That proposal comes to the whole church at the Annual meeting. During our morning with the Elders we looked at their proposals for a ‘mentoring’ scheme, which is still under discussion.

Finance has been another major topic as most things discussed involve money. Tony has done a wonderful job to encourage good housekeeping and maximise the giving – as you will see from his financial report (below, and at the end of this report).

We have had our ‘down’ times during year – about buildings, finance, people... but with prayer and discussion we have seen most of the major problems turned around to become exciting possibilities, which the 2012-13 PCC can take forward. Hopefully the sub-committees can be revived and become working groups that actually report and make proposals to the PCC, which would save a lot of time at meetings. I would also like to put on record our thanks to Jess and Anne-Mary who have hosted meetings in the Rectory when Harvest House was not available.

Humbleyard Deanery Synod – Jill Wright

2011-12 has been a busy and worthwhile year for the Deanery Synod – probably its most active in living memory!! To be fair, the Rural Dean (Vicar of Wymondham) and Assistant Dean (Rector of Swardeston and 4 or 5 other churches) are too busy with their own parishes plus helping vacant parishes in the Deanery to do more than is routinely necessary at Synod. But the strong representation from the Mulbarton group, working on the principle of ‘every member ministry’, has helped to galvanise lay members to organise things with the clergies’ blessing. It is largely thanks to Vivienne Clifford-Jackson’s drive and energy as Lay Chair that so much as happened.

We have had 3 meetings of Synod – the 3rd at a day-conference for members of all the churches in the deanery. Besides routine matters (reports from and for Diocesan Synod – of which Vivienne is a member; dealing with the Parish Share – of which Rupert Wilkins is Assessor) we had to vote on the proposal to ordain women as bishops – a motion carried by an overwhelming majority of both clergy and laity, and we have shared the good news of growth coming from each Benefice, of which there is plenty.

Guest speakers were David Broom and Alan Muff from Diocesan House in June, and the Bishop of Thetford in October. The emphasis on both addresses was on Mission, from quite different angles, and this was the theme for our day Conference, ‘Hand in Hand in Mission Together’, held on Saturday 17th March at Little Melton. Keynote speaker was Jean Kerr, Canon Missioner of Rochester Diocese who gave a challenging talk and led 2 workshops. Other workshops were led by Jill Gower (on prayer); Rev Sally Gaze (on discipleship in small groups); and Danny Ellero and Angela George (on working with children and young people). John Moore and Stewart Burchell led worship, and Tom Taylor produced a wonderful lunch. About 60 people were there (we could have had double that number) and most, if not all, those who came expecting little went away bowled over by how inspiring the day had been. A pity no-one from Mulbarton apart from Synod members came as participants – you could have learned and shared a lot....

FINANCE REPORT for full year 2011 – Tony Lovick (Treasurer)

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Main Church Accounts

Tony Lovick took over as Treasurer from Barrie Larter in August this year.

Up until that point there had been some concern over the deterioration of projections for the accounts which were estimating losses of up to £15k for the year.

A thorough review and re-projection of these in September put the position on a firmer footing, and a number of activities were identified with the aim of reaching the break-even point by the end of the year.

I am very pleased to report that we exceeded this target with a surplus of £6,800.

In addition to this we have also shown the pending tax claim for gifts already received which is available to claim immediately from HMRC. This gives the reported surplus a one off boost that takes it to £22,750.

Activities to bring the church accounts into balance:

1. Rupert has prepared the Tax reclaim for 2010.
2. Set up an accrual for the 2011 gift aid claim.
3. Gain Gift Aid efficiency on recent one off gifts to the church.
4. Seek to gain a VAT refund on the windows (this activity was not completed in 2011 due to the late completion of the works, but will be sought shortly)
5. Seek to maintain main account funds not immediately required in interest bearing accounts.
6. PCC guidance on their 10% tithing initiative

Church Maintenance Trust – Accounts on page 18

2011 saw the very significant repair of the East Window at a total cost of £23k. This was supported by a generous legacy of £15k with the remainder to be covered by a VAT reclaim and other church funds. (Only £10k of this is shown in the 2011 accounts due to the work running over into 2012).

Other significant repairs, and normal maintenance caused expenditure of another £7k.

Unfortunately an analysis of restricted giving showed a shortfall at the start of the year of £3,200, which we had to fill with a transfer of funds from the main account (otherwise the surplus there would have been higher).

The CMT also received another generous legacy during the year of £20k, allowing it to show a total surplus for the year of just over £12k.

Small Charities - Accounts on page 19

The Sick Poor Fund showed no activity during the year.

The Rector's Fund had small income and expenditure.

In addition, the capital value of permanent endowments has been split out to reveal the source of investment income.

(See p.6 for Giving and for Harvest House Development)

FABRIC REPORT: CHURCH, CHURCHYARD & HARVEST HOUSE

CHURCH – George Moore

East Window: After numerous technical questions requested by the CofE Building Council over many months of our Architect Denis Tuttle and M C Lead Glaziers, the window contractors, a faculty was eventually given for work to proceed, allowing 95% of the work to be carried out before the Christmas services. Our late Fabric Team and PCC member Valerie Jones would have been delighted to see the final results, achieved through her bequest for this work to be carried out. The modern isothermal construction should give the stained and painted glass protection over many hundreds of years.

Routine equipment servicing and testing: The following items in Church and Harvest House were attended to in 2011: fire extinguishers (one out-of-date in HH was renewed); portable electrical appliances; organ tuning; war memorial clock (serviced on behalf of the Parish Council).

Tower flood light covering leaded roof area: electric cable to existing junction box at top of tower renewed and junction box tested.

Chancel main spot lights: One of these bulbs had to be replaced. Fortunately our electrician, after searching, was able to obtain a replacement for this ancient fitting.

External structural repairs: Severe frost damage over the last 2 years has resulted in necessary stonework repairs to (1) north-west aisle buttress; (2) copper and lead flashing fixings to vestry roof; (3) stone and flint-work at eaves level each side of the entrance porch, and stonework to the left-hand jamb of the porch. Estimated cost £1525.

CHURCHYARD – George Moore

All churchyard areas have been well maintained during the 2011 growing season by Paul Riches, our maintenance contractor. He has again agreed to continue for the 2012 season at the rate of £8 an hour. Church mowers and strimmer have been serviced ready for the coming season.

The total cost of churchyard maintenance for 2011 was £2927.84, for which a grant of £1200 was again received from the Parish Council for upkeep as this is the graveyard for the whole village. Included in the total cost is material and labour for repainting the churchyard boundary fence.

In October, a boundary bank was formed at the north end of the churchyard extension, mainly using soil taken from graves and spread in various places. The height of this bank will be increased as soil becomes available. Some bulbs have been planted.

Two monuments in the churchyard area south of the church were repaired in August to a satisfactory safety condition (costing £624). The families of those buried in these old graves are no longer traceable.

The boundary fence was cleaned and painted with Sadolin Preservative during September.

The path leading to the churchyard extension needed some edging replaced during the year. Additional hardwood chippings which were in stock have been applied to top up any defective levels.

NOTE: George Moore tells us that this is his final report as he will be retiring as Fabric Officer at the end of 2012. We do want to thank him for the hours and hours of work, the phone calls, the meetings, the expertise he has put into this task over many years. THANKYOU, GEORGE – YOU’VE DONE A WONDERFUL JOB in the service of God and His church here in Mulbarton.

And THANKS, too, to Chris Carter for his reports to the PCC and be dealing with some complicated Insurance matters that have arisen with the building work this year.

BELFRY – George Moore (Tower Captain)

During 2011 our church bells were rung for 4 weddings with assistance from other tower ringers.

Permission was given for our bells to be rung by visiting teams and for the following events:

- (1) Bell ringers outing from Hemel Hempstead, 30 April 2011;
 - (2) Retired ringers outing from Kent area 12 Oct 2011, including a short Holy Communion service taken by Jess, with their organist, servers and readers (which was much appreciated by everyone);
 - (3) Group of Norfolk ringers and friends outing 7 Feb 2012;
 - (4) A quarter peal ring by Loddon Ringers on 24 Feb 2012 providing 50 minutes of good continuous ringing.
- Timothy Jackson, who moved to Mulbarton during 2011, has joined the Mulbarton team from St Peter Mancroft, Norwich. This is excellent news and will help our beginners to improve and we can inform other towers of our regular Wednesday night practices.

Trevor Whittaker, who was one of those previously taught basic handling and rope sight several years ago, has returned to our practices. And we now have 5 beginners who are all progressing well at various stages of rope sight and learning methods.

The work necessary to de-rust and paint the steel bell-frame and ladder leading to the roof area has been rescheduled again for 2012 (cost £640 + VAT at revised rate).

Since 1998 our set of 19 handbells have been stored at Whitechapel Bell Foundry. They were originally taken there for assessment and an estimate for repairs. Estimates were obtained at that time, then updated again in 2002. We are now obtaining various bell set number options with a view to purchase. The Bell Fund balance has increased over the years and should now meet the amount required.

HARVEST HOUSE (maintenance & use)

[No report received for 2011 but Ian Dunlop sent an update relating to work done in 2012]

Fitted electric radiant wall heater in kitchen – mounted above door.

Replaced external PIR flood light fitted on corner of Harvest House towards the car park.

Suggest we have a book to record maintenance carried out at Harvest House – to be kept at Harvest House, as it isn't always the same person who does it.

HARVEST HOUSE (development) – John Moore or Tim Jackson

After much prayer and planning we have now finalised the specification for the Annexe to Harvest House, appointed an architect and given the go ahead to take the project through planning consent. The Annexe will give us a new larger main room which can be configured for worship meetings, for youth or children's activities, for café or meals and which, in conjunction with the existing Harvest House space, will provide us with a much more useful facility. It is expected that it will take around 3 months to obtain planning consent and, dependent on any issue this throws up, we should be in a position to start the build later this year. This does however depend on your willingness to provide the funding needed and this is an ongoing prayer need.

Harvest House Appeal – Tony Lovick (Treasurer)

Display boards and letters were prepared to confirm support for the Harvest House Annexe plan, and fund the next phase of planning work.

To date £12,500 of gifts have been received and monthly income of £250 has also been committed.

This is an excellent start and will cover the planning phase, but much remains to ensure the complete project.

MISSION SUPPORT

GIVING TEAM REPORT – Tony Lovick (Treasurer) – Accounts on pages 20-21

[NOTE: It is PCC policy to ensure that at least a tithe of unallocated income to the church is shared among the home and overseas missions we have pledged to support.]

Past years 2009 and 2010 were reviewed to establish a carry forwards amount of £2,062.

For 2011 this carry forward was added to the tithe income for the year.

Various directed giving sets the minimum for each cause, and the PCC/giving team set targets for each, too.

Prior to the tax claim accrual the giving was in excess of targets, but these end of year adjustments have left a small shortfall of £11 for Awake Mother and £759 in total to be distributed in 2012.

D R CONGO: Kindu & Bukavu Dioceses – Jess Stubenbord

Unusually we have had no visitors from these dioceses this past year.

Bukavu – this region is still recovering from multiple problems, especially the long civil war within its borders. Generally the diocese seems to be doing very well under Bishop Bahati who has been bishop for some 8 years or so. He encouraged a mission by SOMA in the diocese last year.

It is marvellous that the local churches are keen to do outreach, youth work, run dispensaries and provide humanitarian aid... even though they have next to no financial resources.

Mulbarton church family pays the monthly wage of the diocesan secretary, Rev. Jules (\$40) and of Rev.

Bernard, the diocesan education director also (receives a few dollars less).

(Bernard still occasionally suffers from an on-going illness. Medications are expensive.)

Many needs are brought to our attention by pastors, bishops and heads of ministries. A recent request was to build an orphanage in Bukavu at the cost of some \$30,000.

We often hear from Rev. Desire, the development officer in Goma. He tells us of the on-going needs of the displaced people.

We have been raising money for a second gutters project in a volcanic area just north of Goma. Through the generosity of the church family, I have just sent off some £1,150 for the gutter projects for collecting cisterns in the community of Ngangi.

Bukavu diocese has no CMS missionary.

Kindu - this diocese is well run by Bishop Masimango and reaching out with the love of Jesus. It was in this diocese that Louise Wright worked for her last 13 years in Congo

Like Bukavu diocese, this is a large diocese and after 15 years Bishop Masimango has not yet managed to visit every parish in his large diocese. The church there is basically in good heart.

There are no longer any CMS mission links in the diocese and so less money will be coming in.

Awake Mother – support organised by Rachel Burchell

We continue to be the only financial support for this grass-roots project in Bukavu town to give women skills and lend them a start-up fund of a few dollars so they can earn money to help their families. The fund also makes small grants to widows, those looking after orphans or facing a crisis. Most of what we send is raised at events shared with the Cheshire Home and other Fairtrade activities (see overleaf).

CMS (Church Missionary Society): support for Ram Prasad from Nepal– Jill Wright

We have continued to support Ram Prasad, a Nepalese pastor, evangelist and Bible School trainer who sends us inspiring Link Letters and e-mail updates about the work in that land where Christians face real opposition and even death-threats. He is currently studying at Redland College, Gloucester, where he has completed a BA course in 1 year and has stayed on until Sept 2012 to complete a Masters degree in Mission. We committed ourselves to contributing towards his course and maintenance fees. Mulbarton's gifts also paid for the air fair for his wife to join him for 3 months this winter, and for him to return in 2012 to attend important conferences and collect more information for his MA thesis.

We were delighted to welcome Ram to our parishes in June 2011 and both Ram and his wife Keshari in the New Year 2012. On both occasions he spoke at several services and other meetings. Individuals and Ministry Groups are encouraged to pray for Ram whilst in the UK and for his colleagues continuing the work in Nepal.

ELLIE AND ALEX HAWKE – Jess & Anne-M Stubenbord

Ellie and Alex, with sons Isaac and Joshua, left All Nations Christian College in Hertfordshire in July 2011, where they were undertaking further mission studies. Alex received a first class honours degree in Biblical and cross-cultural studies. They are now working at Alex's home church in west London where for 18 months or so he'll be Assistant Pastor. Please pray that the Lord would show them if working in Asia is the right next step for them.

HOME MISSION

The Magdalen Project was our "home mission" until early 2011, when reorganisation and the loss of our personal links with the project called for a rethink. The Giving Team, in consultation with the PCC, decided to look again at where we had personal contact with a local mission. It was decided to support the work of Norwich Youth for Christ (NYC), whose work benefits our own young people.

TEARFUND – Simon Davies

We focus on Tearfund at our Harvest service and on other appropriate occasions during the year.

FAIRTRADE – Rachel Burchell

Last year's Fairtrade Easter trail was a beautiful sunny day, which may have impacted numbers, as there were not so many people. However, those that came enjoyed it and lots of lovely gifts were donated by Fairtrade shops for our tombola, and people enjoyed winning those. We raised about £100 for Awake Mother too. Christmas catalogue sales raised a further £100 for Awake Mother, with between £300 and £400 worth of goods ordered.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2012, saw a Fairtrade assembly at my place of work and 2 lessons at the Infant School in Mulbarton which were enthusiastically received and I still saw children the next day wearing their Fairtrade stickers. It was great to hear the Co-op had been into the Junior school to do an assembly too, so our youngsters are growing up knowing how much Fairtrade helps towards a more just and fair world. As always thanks to all those who continue to buy, support and pray for a fairer world.

'You are the ones who have ravaged the vineyard, the spoils of the poor are in your houses. By what right do you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?' says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth. *Isaiah 3:14-15*

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY & OUTREACH

Our Curate

Dawn Davidson is now in her third year as an ordained, non-stipendiary worker amongst us. She is still undertaking continuous ministerial training through the diocese and will this coming year convert her studies into an honours degree in theology. She is being very well received in all our parishes. From October she can drop the title of 'curate' to become Associate Minister within the Mulbarton group. Jess has monthly meetings with Dawn to review the ministry, share and pray together.

The Benefice Team, made up of reps from each parish in our group, meets with Dawn and myself about three times per year. We together think how we can do more with our other sister churches within the benefice as well as seek to support Dawn in these early days.

Those we employ

We have a great little team of part-time paid workers (not to mention that great and wonderful army of volunteers!).

Youth Worker- Danny Ellero. A wise, energetic, inspiring Christian leader among our young folk in church and in our local schools (20 hours per week).

Administrative Assistant – Caroline Dunlop. A conscientious help to Jess who amongst other things cleverly transforms our publications to look much more professional (8 hours per week).

Harvest House booking secretary and cleaner - Alison Cockrell. An efficient, uncomplaining worker of miracles as she always tidies up after us all.

Church cleaner – Jeanette Eagling. A cleaner extraordinaire (2 hours per week).

N.B. We are very grateful to Sue Mellows who works out their National Insurance, etc.

Our heart-felt thanks go to each of you folk, paid or unpaid, for your labour for us and the Lord.

SERVICES OF WORSHIP – Jess Stubenbord

Preaching during the past year: We have had to cut back on preachers used this year: Peter Ratcliffe's health weakened (and he died in February 2012) after 53 years of very faithfully biblical preaching and then Simon Davies has been following a course of intense studies so has come off the schedule for the while. So it has been left to Bev Theobald, who wonderfully gives the challenging All Age talks; to Dawn Davidson, who delivers memorable and inspiring talks; and then to me. We have also invited occasional outside speakers, especially at special services, like carol services, healing and wholeness. Jan Hunt will join the list of preachers in the coming year.

We often follow themes and sometimes go through a book as well as preaching on main church events, like Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, harvest.

Last year's preaching topics:

Jan – Feb	Disappointed with God
Mar – April	Letters to the 7 churches of Revelation
May – July	Embracing Heaven; escaping hell
Sept. – Dec	Route 66 - Enjoying the length and breadth of the Bible

Some of our midweek groups have been following up the Sunday talks as Bible studies.

We have had no bishop visiting this past year, but we did have the archdiaconal annual service at Mulbarton last year (with drums and full worship team). It was different to any other one I had attended !

Evening Services

Due to our folk's busy schedules we have only had monthly evening services, with Healing and Wholeness services and Encounter God times alternating each month.

These Encounter God evenings in Harvest house are opportunities to come before God in wonder, love and praise. We want to encourage folk to go deeper in their relationship with God and set aside a time to come and encounter Him.

Healing and Wholeness Services – Jess Stubenbord

As mentioned above we hold bi-monthly services in church where we encourage all with illness and anxieties to come because we believe we have a God who heals and cares still today. On average we have 30 folk come from far and wide. Only a few come from our church and the village,

Please tell us what would encourage you to bring folk to the healing and wholeness service.

As yet only a few testimonies of healing. However we press on believing that prophetic words Grantley Watkins spoke at a Letton Hall weekend some 6 years ago will come to pass, that God will use us more and more to bring healing and wholeness to many.

Taking healing out into the ever darker community –

We would like to find ways of taking healing into our village homes and possibly in the open air at fetes, etc. There is such a rise in the number of clairvoyancy and psychic meetings around us now. Our situation resembles that of Elijah and Elisha who needed to counter much false spirituality (1 Kings chapter 18). We want people to know that Almighty God is alive and active if we will but trust Him.

All Age Services - Bev Theobald

Again the team (Sue Mellows, Lynne Lambert, Fiona Loughborough, Anne Mary Stubenbord and myself) have worked hard to provide a number of alternative services aimed at the whole church family. We now have regular services at the school. These are at the beginning of the year and at the end of each term's Storykeepers and Energy. Our prayer is that the all age services will continue to be an avenue for all ages to worship and learn together and that they will be used by God to bring more families into the Kingdom. As a team we are always open to new ideas and volunteers!

Hanover Gardens Services – Jill Wright

The monthly Thursday afternoon service at Hanover Gardens has continued to be very well supported and we praise God for the many signs of growth. The majority who come are from Hanover Gardens (which was not the case a few years ago!), but the service also attracts several people who find it hard to get to a Sunday service or one of our fellowships.

The idea of having a Bible Fellowship group on another Thursday afternoon was floated but did not receive any support. However, it did stimulate discussion and during 2011 the PCC received a letter from Hanover Gardens residents asking if it might be possible to have a Sunday morning service as well. After discussions between Jess, Dawn and residents, the result is that the Thursday afternoon service has moved to the 2nd Thursday of the month so as not to be too close to the new 4th Sunday morning service (carefully planned so that it does not clash with Bracon Ash and Hethel services which are supported by some Hanover residents). The Sunday morning services began in January 2012 and have been well supported. We hope they will become a means of outreach to residents of Hanover and the area around who rarely if attend a church.

Worship - Co-ordinator, Fiona Loughborough

Worship is an important part of our personal and church life. Our aim is to praise and worship God and to encourage others to draw close to him. During this year we have had the privilege to lead worship for the Archdeacon's visitation held at Mulbarton for the first time and more recently to help celebrate Peter Ratcliffe's amazing life. I would like to thank our talented musicians that give up so much time on Sunday mornings.

Prayer Ministry & Healing Team – Anne Mary Stubenbord

A few new people have joined the team. We hope to have a training session in the near future. I hope this is a valued part of our church's life.

Prayer Chain – Dawn Davidson

A re-issue of the prayer chain contacts list is overdue (again), I apologise for the delay!

Some have commented that the prayer chain doesn't seem to be used as much as previously... I think this is partly because prayer requests are sometimes sent round via e-mail. It is always a privilege to be asked to pray and encouraging to be involved in this particular ministry. Do let Dawn know if you'd like to be added (or removed) as a link in the chain.

Baptism preparation – Jess Stubenbord

There have again been some 6 - 8 enquiries for baptism and 4 or so have taken place this year.

It is Dawn and my responsibility to encourage the non-church families to be involved and attend regularly and understand the commitment of baptism.

Some find such a change of pattern to their Sunday life difficult and so often their expectation of what they want and what we so desire for them is different. Sadly we see very little of, if ever, those who have had their child baptised after the event, even though Jess drops off regularly invites to the All Age service, etc. Please pray all these families would meet with Jesus.

Weddings & Marriage Preparation – Jess & Anne Mary Stubenbord

Last year we only had 7 weddings, which included one wedding blessing. The numbers of church weddings had dropped off as society becomes more and more secularised. However numbers for 2012 look better.

We encourage folk very strongly to undertake a 5 evening marriage preparation course. Normally they come expecting to learn very little but find that in fact they learn a great deal. So most couples who have done the evenings feel the course is so worthwhile. They hear lots of excellent teaching from Nick and Sila Lee about communication, love languages, dealing with problems, etc.

The statistics are so sad when you consider 40% of first marriages end in divorce, whilst 50% of second do too. So we need to pray for all those getting married.

NB. Again I'll reiterate there is a real pastoral concern for me that with our policy of not re-marrying any who have been divorced (where a partner is still alive), but offering a blessing service, some couples believe we are saying divorce is the big unforgiveable sin and go off feeling the church doesn't understand them. Jesus did unequivocally uphold the sanctity of marriage, but he also knows we, being fallen people, do mess

up. But if we were to allow remarriage for the two biblical exceptions, what about other valid reasons such as where a woman has been constantly battered...?

Marriage Course – Jess Stubenbord

This is for those already married. We would love a couple to take this on and run it as it offers such practical guidance and encouragement to make a good marriage even better! As there is so much to undermine marriage, we need to give couples in church and the community all the encouragement we can.

Evangelism – Jess Stubenbord

We did hold two smallish outreach programmes this autumn. For the first time we used the new Christianity Explored DVD course. It went down very well.

We did go carol singing around various places, especially The World's End pub and Hanover Gardens, when we offer the Good News rather than sing for money.

We do also have the two successful after school clubs in our two village schools.

We do need to pray in an ongoing and unrelenting way that God will cause our community and whole nation to seek after Him and obey His will. We are all called to be fishers of people, to go share the Good News.

Otherwise we risk becoming a club.

Ideally we would like to do some detached youth work.

Jess' big concern - that so few seem to have been invited to evangelistic opportunities like All Age services and Men's breakfasts. So please pray that there will be a greater compassion amongst us for those without the hope of Christ, and pray for someone to be our co-ordinator for Evangelism.

Alpha – Dawn Davidson

Alpha did not run at Mulbarton this year, instead we introduced a new course - see below. We fully intend to continue using Alpha in the future.

Christianity Explored

This is a ten session course covering the basics of Christian doctrine, suitable for newcomers/enquirers, as well as for any who feel ready to look more closely at the foundations of the faith. It is presented by Rico Tice from All Souls, Langham Place, London. We ran an evening course and a daytime course and received positive feedback from all participants. The sessions are a blend of Bible study, DVD (around 20 mins viewing time) and discussion.

Pastoral Visiting Team – Tim Davidson

Our aim is to assist Jess and Dawn in providing pastoral care for church members as well as people in the village. Team members are: Helen Pennington, Elsie Page, Sue Mellows, Anne Mary, Patrick Theobald and Tim Davidson.

Spiritual Buddies – Dawn Davidson - This scheme is currently under review

Church Weekend Away – Sue Mellows

As usual in October 2011 the church family stayed at Letton Hall near Dereham, with some joining us as day visitors. The theme for the weekend was *On the Ball*.

There was age appropriate teaching and activities for the adults and young people spread out over the whole weekend. The speaker for the adults was John Quinn; Danny Ellero led the youth programme and the children's work was led by a team of three students from UEA Christian Union.

This year the programme was structured to give more free time on Saturday afternoon and we had a choice of activities including crafts, a walk, some pampering and a chance to relax and chat or catch up with the newspapers.

On Saturday night we held a photo quiz and had entertainment from some of the church family. We were very grateful to Paul Ward who joined us on Saturday afternoon to organise our supper, and to Tom Taylor who master-minded our Sunday lunch.

This year we were absolutely full, so for the October 2012 weekend we have taken a step of faith and booked both the Main Hall and Dolphin Court. This will give us exciting new opportunities and plenty of space but we do need the support of the whole church family to make this viable. Please come and join us - booking details will be coming out fairly soon.

The present committee for the planning of the 2012 weekend consists of Liz Jesse, Jim Harrald, Adrian Munn, Anne Mary Stubenbord, Danny Ellero and George Newbery and myself. I would like to express my thanks to the members of the team for their support and hard work and to Patrick who stepped down last year after many years of service leading this event. The committee are always keen to welcome new members and ideas. Please speak with any of the team if you are interested.

Men's (and teenage males) Meetings – Ian Dunlop

A small group (about 7 or 8) met at the Rectory in December 2011 – prayerful decision was to start meetings for men with a curry night during Ram's visit in January. The suggested diary for future meetings was that in February and each alternate month a breakfast event would be held, and for the other months an evening gathering/event would be held. Ian agreed to co-ordinate the meetings but they are dependent on ideas and offers from other people. The timings have now altered to having breakfasts every 2 months initially, recommencing in May

At the January curry evening there were 20+ men and 3 teenagers to whom Ram spoke.

Danny spoke about himself and his work at the February breakfast. This was well attended – about 15, including a young person.

An anonymous donation towards the work has been gratefully received.

Men and Kids mornings - Bev Theobald

This new Saturday morning venture at the school, which we are supporting, has got off to a good start. It is really super to watch as Dads and children enjoy time together. We provide a variety of activities and the sausage sandwiches are very popular. The idea is for this to be a half-termly event. If any men feel they would like to get involved then please do speak to me.

Holiday Club – Bev Theobald

In 2011 we decided to run a full day's event rather than a week. It was called KOD (Kids only Day) and we concentrated on the 'I am' sayings of Jesus. It was a very successful day with many children coming back in the evening with their families. During the evening we enjoyed a barbecue and entertainment with Jamie Jolly. Thank you to the many people who got involved with running the day and the evening.

I would like to thank the Head Teacher, Mr Stuart Beard, for his kindness in allowing us to use the school so regularly and for his support for all that we do.

Other Outreach – collated by Jill Wright

Royal Wedding – a number of street parties were organised by house-groups which brought neighbours together.

Craft Festival - We must put on record the 2011 Craft Festival which took place over a whole weekend in June. Thanks to Anne Mary Stubenbord and her team of organisers (some church folk and some not) this was a wonderful event that took place in the church, Harvest House and the Infant School and brought the village together. Lots of appreciative comments, and people came into the church to see the displays who had not ventured through the door before....

2012 celebrations - The church took the initiative to 'kickstart' plans for village celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics. The Parish Council has got involved to some extent and has offered funding.

FELLOWSHIP/DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS & TEACHING for adults

Weekly Fellowship Groups – Overview by Jess

We have several of these. Some function during the day time (Mums Together on a Thurs morning, another on a Wednesday morning, one on a Friday afternoon, which is a women's group, and Cameo - again for women - on alternate Tuesday morning), whilst others meet during the evening, one on a Monday, another on Tuesday and one on Wed evenings.

Sometimes groups undertake their own Bible studies, at other times they have followed up questions based on a preaching scheme.

Most of the groups meet weekly and are asked as well as doing Bible study, worship and prayer to serve the church family and reach out to the community.

We believe these groups to be a vital component of our church family life and expect all who are in leadership of any form to belong to a group if at all possible. We need to learn and support and encourage each other more and more as society becomes ever more challenging.

Lent courses flourish each year too. These take a variety of formats so one might appeal to all our different folk. There is also more participation in these groups by the different church families than normally occurs.

Barnabas Fellowship Group (alternate Mondays) – Vivienne Clifford-Jackson

[Vivienne took this over from Peter Ratcliffe and re-established fortnightly meetings at her home.]

Barnabas is regularly attended by 10 members of the congregation and we have recently been following the series on the Minor Prophets as well as some of 'Mapping John' for Lent. We have been blessed by many answers to prayer and supportive fellowship, although we miss Peter as our leader very much, naturally.

Tuesday Evening Fellowship Group – Patrick & Bev Theobald

The group are currently using the 'More than Conquerors' DVD and study questions. We have found it challenging but stimulating material. Prior to that we had used the questions from Sunday's speakers and Route 66 to enhance our spiritual growth and fellowship. We have enjoyed Bible study, prayer and worship together as well as some very yummy cakes! Outreach has included planting and tending the school garden and cooking mince pies and biscuits for Church events at Christmas.

Wednesday (Morning) House Group – Anne Mary

The wednesday morning group has been meeting all year. We have watched many inspiring DVDs and have also doing the 'More than Conquers' course during Lent. We have also been doing a Bible study on Psalm 119. Numbers are small and we would welcome more for fellowship and sharing.

Wednesday Evening Ministry Group – Becky Taylor

We meet at the home of Jack and Elsie Page on Wednesday evenings – 7.45pm – 9.45pm

Membership has changed over the past year due to pressure of work and other commitments. The current membership is 13 with 10 regular attendees. In Spring 2011 we followed the Sunday preaching topics around the subject 'Disappointed with God', discussing the questions set by those preaching (our thanks go to the preaching team for the extra work involved in preparing these). For our Summer Term we used a video series 'More than Conquerors' by Simon Guillebaud whose presentation is up-to-date and world-relevant whilst challenging our actual response to the Word of God and the example of Jesus.

Following the World Trumpet Mission Video Conference in Mulbarton Church in the summer we embarked on a study prepared by John Mulinde entitled 'Awakening the Church', an in-depth course which challenges our understanding of serving God and poses the question 'What must we do to do the work that God requires?' (John 6:28). This course requires study at home and although we do seem to be in the slow lane we are discovering a new level of commitment to God and openness with one another.

'Mums Together' (Thursday mornings) – Julie Wilkins

We continue to meet weekly and currently number about 7. We continue to support each other in our roles as mothers. On alternate weeks we manage a short Bible study, although we are still finding it a challenge to find material that is simple and easy to do with all the distractions, and that has practical applications in our lives as mothers. Many thanks to Helen Pennington who helps lead studies and to all those who open up their homes as venues to our group: Zoe Kelly, Vicky Weaver and Alison Cockrell. Also thanks to Vicky Weaver who has managed to set up a virtual version of the group on Facebook where we can continue to support each other even if we cannot get along to the sessions.

Friday Afternoon Group – Marina Carter (pp. leader: Jo Wills)

A group of ladies continues to meet from 1.30 for a couple of hours most Friday afternoons, and we try to keep in touch with some who live away now, by getting together for lunch around various birthdays a couple of times during the year.

We have been doing studies using the 'Book by Book' programmes recorded from UCB TV, and on the first Friday most months we meet at Marina's to watch a talk by Joyce Meyer who has been a great inspiration to

us for many years now. We like to keep our studies short and sweet because some of us can't commit to being there every week, and it also makes it easy for newcomers to come and join us any time. Anyone interested in coming along, please ring Jo 570031 or Marina 578186 to check where and when our next meeting will be.

WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

BOUNCERS – Zoe Kelly

The Bouncer group caters for pre-school children who are over the age of one and who are able to stand /walk unaided. Younger children are welcome to attend for some of the session so that they can get used to the group but parents need to accompany them. We continue to be based in the 'Bouncers Room' upstairs in Harvest House although we do sometimes make use of the garden.

Our numbers fluctuate and our current maximum is 6 children. We usually operate with a leader and helper but sometimes need an extra helper when we have more children. Currently our leaders are Tania Davies, Zoe Kelly and Alison Pond. We have a regular band of helpers who have agreed to be on the rota for Bouncers. All this help is much appreciated and allows us to provide a safe and happy environment.

We are still using Scripture Union 'Tiddlywinks' material but we are flexible and tailor this to the needs and abilities of the children that we have each week. The session often includes songs, games, craft, play, rhymes and prayer, all linked to that week's Bible story. We have a variety of toys, preschool books and musical instruments in the Bouncers Room for the children to use.

CCC (Children's Christian Club) – Anne-Mary Stubenbord

We only have 3 leaders now and several helpers, but although numbers are low in this age-group (2 – 8 children attending) we have had happy times. Being in the Harvest House main rooms has its problems, but I hope recent e-mails and note in Pews News will help to make sure we can finish activities and end each session well.....

REVELATION (aka Firesquad) - Julie Wilkins

Revelation has seen a number of changes this year, including its name. It was a major loss to the group when the Roberts family left us. Thanks David and Ann for everything you put into the group. What with losing the Davies boys and losing the 8 "millennium babies" to Xtreme in September, it looked like we might have only 2 regular members. The greater intimacy has allowed quieter members to express themselves more though, and recently we have had up to six children. Julie Wilkins stepped up as acting coordinator and was joined by Rupert Wilkins and Rachel Burchell as leaders. John Blakey and Vivienne Clifford-Jackson continue to be helpers but have now been joined by Dennis Wells and Katrina Taylor and Holly Newbery. We continue to use the Energise material and find it good and very easy to use.

XTREME: Sunday Morning group for 11-14-year-olds - Danny Ellero

Xtreme has also recently completed its first year with me, and it's been a fantastic year. We're now going though the New Testament letters and we're still seeing about 10-13 youth.

[Xtreme & Switch have come up with some imaginative ideas to raise money for Operation Orphan.]

ANTS (And Now Truth Speaks) up to July 2011 – Becky Taylor

ANTS has not met since last July when I decided that, due to very poor attendance and interest from only one family, the season for this had passed. I have been very blessed in leading this group not only at the time but now as I see the youngsters going on with God and bearing spiritual fruit.

SWITCH – Danny Ellero

Switch celebrated its first birthday in January and how it's grown! We started with about 4-5 and we now have 2 groups running on each night, one for school years 7-10 and the other for school years 10-13. Over the two groups we now see about 15 youth all eager to learn about the Bible.

IGNITE – Danny Ellero

IGNight is a joint effort by a few smaller churches in South Norfolk and Norwich Youth For Christ. Pete Tyson is heading up the project with a strong team which includes some older youth, too. IGNight is an event

designed for young Christians, wanting to go deeper with God. It provides a time of worship, teaching and reflection encouraging the young people to do something with what they have heard. Since re-launching under Pete Tyson it has gone from strength to strength and we've just hit an all time high of 30 young people. That particular night was an evangelistic night giving any youth that hadn't committed themselves to Christ a chance to do so.

STORYKEEPERS (after school club at Mulbarton Infant School) – Bev Theobald

This year we have been working our way through the Bible and introducing the children to key figures along the way. We have had lots of fun, made some interesting crafts and even done a spot of drama! It is exciting to see so many children (40+) come along and learn about God's amazing story. The vast majority of them never regularly attend a church but they are learning what it is to be part of God's kingdom. Please continue to pray for us that we will "Shine" for Jesus and reflect His love. Those who regularly help at Storykeepers are Becky Taylor, Alison Cockrell, Fran Kittle, Sally Hayward, Katrina Taylor, Chris Pennington, Abi Loughborough, Charlotte Bond and myself. We also have refreshments served and washing up done by Jill Wright and Teresa Burrell.

Thank you to all who regularly pray for us and offer words of encouragement.

ENERGY (after school group at Mulbarton Junior school) – Danny Ellero

In 2010-2011 we had very high numbers to start with but as the year went on the numbers died down. This year (2011-2012) we've had a far more consistent numbers between 20-25 children from the Junior School. We've been focusing, these last two terms on the nature of God looking at different aspects from Him being Omnipresent to God being Just.

HETHERSETT HIGH SCHOOL

There are still difficulties, although I have been making progress.... Please pray for the teacher I am dealing with, as she is not being the most helpful in allowing me in.

YOUTH WEEKENDS AWAY 2011 AND 2012

We've been involved in two YWA's the first one was in Letton Hall: we 62 youth booked in. This year we took over both Dolphin Court and Letton Hall and we had 102 youth. We had an amazing time both years hearing from God and seeing the youth praying for each other. This year we were looking at seeking first God's kingdom and what that means.

OTHER OUTREACH to children in the village

The PCC makes funds available so that every child entering the Infant School receives a Bible.

Children contacted through the Junior School club are given the booklet 'It's Your Move' when they move to High School – a useful guide produced by Scripture Union.

The local pre-school groups (Children's Centre, Puddleducks and Mulberry Nursery) are invited to a Christmas event in church each December.

OTHER MINISTRIES

MARDLE

Continues to be produced 10 times a year. Peter Ratcliffe had to give up as editor in 2011 through ill-health and later in the year was replaced by Becky Taylor – whom we thank for joining the team. Then Peter Nicholls asked to bow out at the end of 2011 due to pressure of other work. Currently Chris Carter and Becky Taylor are producing Mardle alternate months, but it would be good to have a 3rd person in the team to reduce the load. Any volunteers?

SOCIALS & Outings secretary – situation still vacant....

FLOWERS, etc in church – Anne Mary Stubenbord

The small band of arrangers is glad of extra help for festivals, which we enjoy. In 2011, the Flower Festival (in conjunction with the Craft Festival) was a challenge, but was also fun and enjoyed by all who took part.

PA – Tim Davidson

The P.A system has been pretty much maintenance free this year. Our services are now mainly recorded in MP3 format, and are made available on the church website.

We are hoping to relocate the P.A & A.V in the near future, and are looking at different desk designs as part of the church refurbishment plan.

Many thanks to Dave Pollard, for his continuing support as fellow operator, and for standing in the gap when I haven't been available.

PROJECTION, etc – Sue Mellows

Many thanks to the team who have manned the projection keyboard this past year.

The laptop purchased last year has proved a successful solution to some of our earlier problems caused by the atmosphere in the church building. It gives us flexibility for people to prepare services in advance and ensure that new items are properly paginated, etc. Alternative positioning of the projector desk and PA etc is still being considered.

We do need more volunteers to join us and take a turn at operating the song words projection during the services (you don't have to be a computer wizard).

If you have any questions or observations about how we put up song words etc – do tell whoever is on duty - we do value your feedback and ideas.

WEBSITE

Our thanks to Symon Mellows for his work on this over several years, and for setting up various e-mail groups.

The benefice website www.mulbchurch.org.uk is now being kept current with services and other events thanks to our new webmaster, Dennis Wells.

CHILD PROTECTION / Vulnerable Adult Protection - Sue Mellows

All adults who are leaders/helpers within the youth and children's teams have the relevant CRB checks. I continue to ask: group leaders, please let me know straight away if you have new helpers, as I don't necessarily know when changes take place.

Unless individual training has been done, many of our workers are overdue an update to their Child Protection training. The delay in training has been caused by several changes in legislation over the last two years. We will hold a Child Protection training evening in Mulbarton as soon as it can be arranged and I will advertise when we have a date from the Diocese.

The Child Protection section of The Safe Haven document from the Diocese can be found at <http://norwich.anglican.org/children-young-people/parishes/child-protection>

NOW YOU HAVE READ THIS FAR.....

Please look back and notice the places where volunteers are needed, especially:

- ★ Mardle Editor (sharing with existing editors, so only for 3 or 4 issues a year)
- ★ Social and Outings organiser
- ★ To join the rota to operating the data projector

Can you help?

Compiled by Jill Wright from items sent by all the contributors named – to whom many, many thanks.