

Lode Parish Council

Minutes of the Open Parish Meeting held in the Fassage Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 22 May 2017

These minutes comprise 10 pages

Present Cllrs R Stevens (Chairman), I Faulkner (IF), E Mitchell (EM), F Platten (FP), M Walsh (MW), Parish Clerk (JG), retiring Parish Clerk (AT), and Mr C Platten, Mrs J Sale (JS), Ms Liz King and 6 members of the public.

Apologies Cllrs P Lane, R Small, D/Cllr A Sharp, A Langran (ALa), Mr A Cassidy. Written reports were submitted by J Kempster and A Langran in writing and others were given orally – See below.

Prior to the meeting, a presentation was made to Arthur Tomlinson in gratitude for his years of service as Parish Clerk.

Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23 May 2016 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Council Reports

Chairman's Report (RS)

Over the past year we have lost Charlie Rickard and Phil Dean as members of the Council, and gained Meleena Walsh and Ian Faulkner. These are all volunteer posts. Other members are Fran Platten, Elizabeth Mitchell, Pip Lane, Rob Small and myself.

We have lost Arthur Tomlinson and gained Jonathan Giles as Parish Clerk, which is a paid employee post.

After a delay, because of an objection from the British Horse Society and the need for the County Councillors to consider their officers' recommendation, the County passed its own planning application for the cycle path to Quy was passed last November. It is hoped that work will start this month.

We received, along with other parishes, an unexpected sum of £2900 from ECDC to spend on Community Infrastructure. We have donated £1000 of this to the refurbishment of the church clock. We have also received £914 recently as the first payment in four years of any Community Infrastructure Levy money. In future we should receive £13.50 per square metre of new residential floor-space (except for extensions under 100 square metres). We have recently found out that ECDC also has about £1200 that was raised before 2013 that can be applied for by any parish organisation for Community Infrastructure.

The £3329 shortfall in the cost of the new surface on the tennis court in 2015 has been raised and paid to us most gratefully by the Tennis Club. The other income we have is from the precept, allotment rents and cemetery fees. We have also been very grateful of the money raised from Jumble Sales, the Fete and from the Lode Runners. We will be keeping both our regular revenue and capital expense budgeting under control by regular updates at meetings. Last year, we had the 31st lowest council tax charge per household out of 34 parishes in East Cambridgeshire, yet we have a large number of things we own and maintain.

Meetings with the National Trust have resulted in little progress on unblocking the public footpath across the Anglesey Abbey Car Park and cutting back the vegetation along the first part of Harvey's Drove. The Trust is also still trying to establish the status of the land that has been used as the Sunray Allotments and the adjoining scrub-land to see if we could lease or buy it.

Councillors, National Trust and other volunteers planted 420 more trees on White Fen in the winter and others by Swaffham Road.

There have been many significant planning applications to consider and respond to ECDC. These have been: land either side of the Broughton Hall, land off Station Road, 1 Quay Road, 1 Longmeadow and Lode Station. Also a change of use of the extended ex-Social Club building to a Public House. We have also been consulted about proposals for land at Sunnyridge Farm for inclusion in ECDC's new and revised Local Plan for houses. We are also considering producing a Neighbourhood Plan to steer development suitable for the parish to the right places rather than ECDC being at the mercy of speculative development that might be approved by the Government.

We are working on getting more productive use of our allotments, some of which have been rather neglected by their tenants. In the cemetery, the tap has been replaced, a recycled seat added and another mended and a new sundial has been ordered. The grass and hedge continues to be well-maintained.

The recreation ground is cut regularly by Truelink from Stretham and is used by Bottisham and Lode Cricket club in their season and Burwell Tigers in theirs. We have excavated the ditch to hopefully relieve flooding on Shrub Corner in Lode Road. We hope to get the thistles treated soon.

The Fassage Hall is now in excellent condition with about thirty outstanding issues from last May now cleared. We will be having a report later on its hiring, and its finances, which will form part of our return to the Charity Commission for the Fassage Hall and Recreation Ground Charity and to our external auditor.

Some improvements have been made to the Play Area (horse, toddler and junior swings, slide). We will soon have a cantilever swing there too and a new multi-coloured picnic table. We are also developing the area between the basketball area and the table tennis table for older children and adults. We have installed a table tennis table and soon two pieces of gym equipment will be installed.

Around the village, Truelink continue to cut the verges which are not cut by ECDC (in Quay Road, Lode Road, High Street, Mill Road, Station Road). CCC pay towards the costs. We own and maintain several seats, three bus shelters, the village sign and the street lamp in Abbey Lane.

We organised the annual litter pick in February, which collected far less litter, except on White Fen Drove, Quay Road, Lode Road (Bottisham) and Swaffham Road. These roads will be targeted regularly by members to ensure that they are kept clear during the year.

Lastly, we are fortunate in having an excellent section provided for us on the village website.

I haven't named all those who are not on the parish council who have contributed, but we are extremely grateful for all their help to make this a marvellous village for all to enjoy. These include:

Ian Middleton, Ian Faulkner, Charlie Platten, Charlie Rickard, Julie Sale, Alan Lamb, John Lince, Jackie Lince, Jean Howard, Carol Faulkner, Mike Hatley, Andy Hayward, Martyn Lord, Tony Cassidy, Will Jaggard and Alan Bailey.

Cllr Stevens was asked whether new applications made in respect of the sites North and South of Broughton Hall might have implications for the trees on the site. He responded that one of the reasons for turning down the latest applications was that a significant tree would be lost for a development that that was not deemed to in keeping with the character of the neighbouring properties. He indicated that Planners may agree to the removal of a tree if a more sympathetic design were submitted

Financial Report: Responsible Financial Officer – Arthur Tomlinson

Budget/Precept: There appears to be a misunderstanding about the way in which the budget is prepared and the roles of the RFO, the Finance sub-committee and the Parish

Council involved in the process.

The RFO: In October of the year the RFO has to take out a crystal ball and attempt to forecast what funds will be required to ensure that Lode with Longmeadow continues to function smoothly. Using experience of the budgeting process each sub heading has to be costed out with any anticipated inflationary element factored in. The main driving force here is that the precept request must meet the needs of all the residents of the village. In October 2016 this process took 13 hours of concentrated effort.

Sub-Committee: The information is distributed to members of the sub-committee which meets and, if necessary, questions the RFO on the figures and the process of development to ensure that the request is correct. The information produced as the result of this process ensures that the November meeting of the PC does not become bogged down in examining the minutiae of the figures or ignoring them all together as other items considered to be more "important" are considered. I would counsel against trying to manage without it as it performs a vital task. After due consideration and taking account of the balances held by Barclays the level of Precept requirement is recommended to the November meeting of the PC.

Parish Council: The RFO sends copies of the figures, minutes of the sub-committee meeting together with any supporting information to Councillors. This makes the task of the PC exceedingly simple as it has all the information required for it to give its approval for the precept request to be sent to ECDC. At times the PC will receive requests for funds to be provided for the purchase of extra items of equipment etc from a small group of parishioners. The table tennis table is one which readily springs to mind. A number of things must be taken into consideration at this time. These include accurate costings for the purchase and if the cost is above £500 3 quotations for the work must be obtained, a source of funding so that the purchase does not impact upon the whole village should be obtained and any future costs such as maintenance etc as this will impact upon the budget in future years identified. In recent times Lode has been fortunate in having 2 champion fund raising individuals. When the old pavilion was reaching the end of its productive life Alan Lamb stepped forward to raise the funds needed to build Passage Hall. The champion's award, however, must go to Fran who through her jumble sales has added to the special projects ring fenced fund at regular intervals. This fund is available for any future requirement.

Conclusion: Like all Chancellors it falls to me to save the best bit to the end. The 2016/2017 financial year saw the funds held in reserve outstrip the precept level for the first time. At the end of the year the balances stood at £26923.55 with the precept request standing at £14280.00 a slight increase on that recommended by the sub committee.

Internal Auditor's Report: Mr A Cassidy

The position of Internal Auditor, independent of the Council, was introduced by the Government as an on-going requirement to ensure that local councils "maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of their accounting records and control systems" and "to assist the council in fulfilling its responsibility for the protection and detection of fraud, error or mistakes".

I have now undertaken the duties of Internal Auditor to Lode Parish Council for 14 years.

After helpful meetings with the Parish Clerk and the Finance Sub-Committee, I have inspected the documents provided, and obtained clarification of the various procedures undertaken within the Lode Parish Council to my satisfaction. I wish to report as follows –

1. Book-keeping System. The basic requirements relating to the keeping of the Day Book, which contains details of all receipts and payment are satisfactory. Subsidiary records such as allotment rents, cemetery fees, and petty cash all support the Day Book. The Day Book and computer spreadsheets support the necessary Bank Reconciliation monitored by Finance Sub-Committee.

2. Financial Standing Orders and Payment Controls. The current Standing Orders include a Financial Procedures document and the role of the Finance Sub-Committee is clear. Purchasing procedures and payments are supported by the necessary paperwork. Quotations, cheque book stubs, payment receipts, invoices, etc. are all filed for checking. VAT is appropriately accounted for and recovered.

3. Risk Assessment and Asset Control. The Annual and on-going risk assessment achieved its objectives, and financial reserves and 'ring fenced' sums are clearly recorded. A regular review of assets, (mainly equipment), is undertaken as is the adequacy of insurance cover.

4. Budgetary, Income and Petty Cash Controls. The regular reporting of expenditure and any variances from the budget is under adequate control, with the involvement of Finance Sub-Committee.

The Precept and Grant income has been properly and promptly received. All cheque payments are checked against invoices and initialed on the cheque book stubs.

5. Payroll Controls. A review of arrangements for payments to employees and contractors, particularly regarding administration and documentation in accordance with PAYE/NIC regulations, was carried out to my satisfaction.

6. Year End Procedures. From my review to date of the Local Councils' Governance and Accountability Guidance, plus the helpful clarifications and provision of documents by Parish Clerk, I feel that the Annual Return for Year Ending 31st March 2017 can be satisfactorily completed to my satisfaction.

A. J. Cassidy,
Internal Auditor to Lode Parish Council
7th April 2017

County/District Councillor Reports

None

Village Reports

Anglesey Abbey – Amanda Forecast: Although no report was received specifically for this meeting, Cllr Stevens said that the brief report provided to the Parish Council for its May meeting was relevant: After being advised by Cllr Platten that a local resident had suffered a serious injury tripping over one of the barriers on the cinder railway track bed, Ms Forecast confirmed that the Trust had now made it a priority to remove them. Richard Todd's house will be renovated to provide accommodation for volunteers in future. The Trust confirmed it is working through its legal department to understand the status of the allotment land controlled by the Trust.

Charities – Clerk (Arthur Tomlinson) Even though this item speaks of Charities Lode only provides one charity and one distribution unit. These are the John Salisbury Charity and the Lode Local Charity. This latter is misnamed as the Bottisham United Charity (BUC) provides funds generated from rents for distribution to those who qualify.

John Salisbury – (Arthur Tomlinson) This charity was originally established to support the village school when it was housed in Broughton Hall. Funds were to be provided for those items not covered by the state. The annual rental income for the School Field is £246.80, out of which £46.80 is paid to the drainage board. The value of this income has eroded over the years and so an annual contribution was no longer sensible. By the end of 2016 the total holding stood at £1344.54. Two thirds of the income is donated to Bottisham Primary School with the balance going to Swaffham Bulbeck Primary School. As the School Field is a village responsibility the Parish Council nominates 3 Trustees to administer the fund.

Lode Local Charity – (Arthur Tomlinson) As this is not a Parish Council matter it is administered by a group of volunteers who contribute their time to ensure that the distribution runs smoothly. The income is generated from the renting out of a number of fields in the area and several villages benefit from this fund. Originally the intention was to provide coal to the needy of the village and tools for those embarking on an apprenticeship. Naturally things have moved on and now the distribution includes those who have reached the State pension age and students who are entering a higher course of education who meet the residential qualification. Funds are received from BUC twice a year in July and November. The qualifying pensioners receive either Tesco gift cards or vouchers which can be used to purchase oil or coal. Until recently it has been possible to use the vouchers to obtain services from the Post Office but changes to regulations now make this impossible.

In 2016 72 gift cards and 7 vouchers were distributed in July and 73 gift cards and 7 vouchers in November were delivered to recipients by the volunteers. Two students also qualified.

Sports' Club – Report from Jeff Kempster on Lode Tennis Club: The Club has had a very successful year 2016/17 following the installation of the new "Savanna" court surface at the end of 2015. The new surface has enabled the court to be used far more during the winter and with much improved safety for all players. It has been accepted by everyone as a huge improvement over the old tarmac surface, and so far appears to be living up to the claims that it is easier, and far cheaper, to maintain.

Lode Tennis Club was formed in 1996 to administer all aspects of the tennis court on behalf of the Parish Council (including all maintenance and any improvements), such that there would be no net cost incurred by the Parish Council.

Lode Tennis Club would like to thank the Parish Council profusely for its decision at the end of 2015 to allow the club some additional time (up to 3 years) to make good its contribution of the last £3,330 of the full cost of the new surface. We are pleased to report that this year we have paid the last instalment of £1,330 to the Parish Council, so within 18 months.

The Club now hopes to continue with the ongoing running of the court and the Club with no further need to impose upon the Parish Council's good auspices.

Lode Tennis Club Activities for the Year 2016/17 The tennis club is well supported through membership subscriptions. Total numbers are up slightly on last year. (See membership numbers below).

The court has been well maintained, largely through the efforts of volunteers within the membership. A popular Mixed Doubles Tournament was organised through the summer of 2016 which is to be repeated during 2017 with an even higher participation.

The club continues to hold well attended social events during the year, notably an Open Day in August 2016, a safari dinner party in September 2016, a Quiz Night in February 2017 and a Curry Night in May 2017.

Total membership is currently estimated at: 47 member units (some adult, some couple and some family) – giving an estimated total membership of 97 (using an estimate of just 3 members for each family membership).

Future Plans: Apart from ongoing maintenance, the Club has an ambition (at some point in the future) to significantly improve the court fencing with a state of the art modular fencing. This will be far stronger and long-lived than the existing fencing, and the new fencing would enable the installation, as part of its construction, of a practice "wall". These plans will be for some time in the future, and the Club is currently considering options for achieving the finance required for this project.

More details about the Club can be found on its website at www.lodetennis.net

Cycle Way Update – Fran Platten: It seems that the last few hurdles are slowly being overcome. Hopefully, the last bit of legal stuff will be complete by mid June, so perhaps in July we can see things starting to move. I believe the actual time for building is 20 weeks, so maybe before the end of 2017 we can start using it. Fingers crossed!

Fassage Hall – Julie Sale: Fassage hall booking are buoyant. The main source of income is from the Montessori Nursery, "Little legs of Lode".

The Whist group still meet on Thursday evenings. Other bookings are made up of children's birthday parties, family gatherings and special celebrations and funeral teas. Burwell Tigers hire the football pitch and changing rooms in the winter and Lode cricket team hire the premises in the summer.

Alan Lamb left the village in April 2016. We thank him for all his hard work in getting the building up and running. The hall has proved to be an asset to the village. John Lince took over as Chairman and Jackie Lince took over as secretary.

Alan Bailey is our new maintenance man. We have carried out an extensive programme of repairs and maintenance this year.

1. The rainwater harvester has been removed and the hole filled in, although there is still some subsidence.
2. The electrical wiring has been checked.
3. Repairs and maintenance of the heat exchange pump have taken place.
4. The floors in the changing rooms, showers and main hall have been cleaned and the changing area floor has been repainted.
5. The septic tank has been emptied.
6. The walls of the main hall have been repainted and the outside of the building have also been repainted.
7. A new power supply has been added to the outside of the building for music events.
8. New keys have been cut and records are now kept of key holders.
9. New Gopak tables have been purchased and the old tables disposed of.
10. Sam Lawrence has carried out some plumbing maintenance.

Robert Stevens has spent many hours investigating how things work in the building. In particular the electrics. The hot water is now on a timer and the water for the showers is only on for matches.

Regrettably John and Jackie Lince have resigned from the Fassage Hall Committee. John managed to get a lot of things done in the short time that he was chairman. We thank him for that. Carole Faulkner joined the committee during the year but we could do with some more people on the committee. It would be good if we could get some people with younger children interested in coming forward.

Lode Chapel – Alan Brand: Alan Brand was unable to be at the meeting but sent the following note:

".....I am blessed to be able to write something in the village magazine each month, a privilege I do not take for granted, but please forgive me for not writing a specific report for this meeting.

Suffice to say, Lode Chapel is a special place, forming part of the vision of RENEW, even though our worship is primarily held at Bottisham Primary School on Sunday mornings, our evening services at the chapel on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month are very special times, to which all are invited.

We are also very blessed to be able to enable other groups to use the chapel for a wide range of community and church activities.

Thanks and appreciation must especially go to Ann and Peter Wells for their dedication in

tending to the chapel garden and interior and liaising with all the community groups. I pray the meeting goes well tonight, and would like it to be known that I am available to be contacted at 4 Mill Road, by any villagers who would like to know more about RENEW / Lode Chapel, or who would just like to have a cuppa and a chat, the kettle is always on.”

Lode with Longmeadow Village Trust – Charlie Platten: The Trust was formed so that the proceeds of sale of the Lode Social Club could benefit those living in Lode and Longmeadow. Current capital is £29,240 with a further £85,000 to be received in the coming year. The Trustees have developed a process for organisations listed as “Recognised Village Organisations” to apply for funds for projects which would benefit the inhabitants of Lode with Longmeadow in line with the Trust’s objects as registered with the Charity Commission.

Lode Star – Elizabeth Mitchell: The first issue of Lode Star was printed in January 1977. It has been delivered to every household in the village eleven times a year since then – with a double issue in the summer to give the editors a break. Susan Swannell has been the Production Editor throughout the past 40 years. The Parish Council marked her amazing achievement with a presentation at the March Parish Council meeting. Village residents contributed to gifts and messages of congratulations.

Lode Star is grateful to the Parish Council for an annual contribution of £200. Other regular contributors including the Church and Chapel make donations too but costs are mostly met through advertising.

Thanks also go to the team of deliverers. Doreen Webb has passed on the co-ordination of delivery to Ian Faulkner. Many thanks to Doreen for her years of service.

The feedback we get is that people particularly enjoy the articles written by local residents about their interests and experiences – Arthur Tomlinson’s memoirs for example. The regular update from the archives is popular too, and we know people use the advertising pages and turn to the back page for useful contacts

We would love to have more contributions from younger readers; more letters to encourage debate about issues of concern in the village and ideas for improvement; and more topical photographs of events and scenes around the village. We would also welcome volunteers to redesign the look of the magazine. We hope Lode Star will continue to provide the village with useful information and reports about life in Lode and Longmeadow.

Neighbourhood Watch – no report received

NT/Lode Liaison Committee – Fran Platten: We have 2 meetings each year, and discuss any problems that have arisen, and have an update on new plans at Anglesey Abbey.

Parking in the Paddocks for overspill for the NT and for the village use. So far this year it has been used 11 times, 2 of which were used for the snowdrops. The planning permission allows for 28 days each year so we are well within the limit. Examples of its use by the village are for the fete, the half marathon and by the church.

The other important issue is the land around the allotments which includes the community orchard, the car park for the Passage, and the land beside the Passage itself. All this is owned by the NT and the parish has been using it for many years. However, there is debate as to whether the land is alienable or not. If it is alienable, it can be sold, but if not, it cannot. At the moment, the problem is in the hands of the legal department of the NT. Meanwhile, the tenants of the allotments are moving out onto other allotments, and some are very pleased with the move to marvellous soil near the tennis courts!

The bars across the old railway line are to be removed soon. They were installed many years ago, and no one knows why, but think it might have been to deter motorbikes. This will make access much better for wheelchairs, and pushchairs.

It was decided that we should have a constitution for this group. Charlie Rickard and Charlie Platten have produced a draft. It will be only 1 page and very simple, but its purpose is to clarify what this liaison group does or is supposed to do!

The people who come to the meetings live all over the village and down the Fen so views can be put forward from different people in different areas of Lode.

We report the meeting in the Lode Star after the meetings.

Fran Platten (member of Lode PC and chair of the group)

Mothers' Union – Ann Langran

The Anglesey Group Mothers' Union (which includes members from three of our five villages (Bottisham, Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck)) continues to meet in Lode Chapel on the 3rd Thursday afternoon of each month at 2.30pm.

The Committee led Group currently has 24 members. Our meeting programme included guest speakers on a wide variety of topics, a social afternoon and Christmas Lunch. In August we celebrated the 140th Anniversary of the Mothers' Union with a Summer Afternoon Tea in Lode Chapel.

As a result of our fundraising throughout the year we made donations to Mothers' Union Projects as follows:

£100 Away From It All (holidays for families with special needs)

£52 Overseas Fund

£50 Literacy Programme.

This included £36 raised by the sale of pocket crosses, beautifully made by one of our members.

Our branch also hosted two Deanery events in St. James' Church Lode. The Lady Day Service in on 25th March and Coffee Morning on 6th October.

Trees – Charlie Platten/Rob Small/Liz King: Charlie Platten reported that he is relinquishing the role of Tree Officer but was pleased that Rob Small and Liz King have agreed to take it on. They will liaise with Cathy White from East Cambridgeshire DC. Liz King commented on the diversity of landscape spaces within the village and sees her role as consolidating the projects already underway. They are planning an event in the Community Orchard in the autumn which will include a press enabling people to extract juice from the fruit they have harvested.

St James' Church – Julie Sale: Another busy year filled with the usual activities and some progress on our church refurbishment project and clock restoration.

On Sunday 3 July Rev'd Dr Gina Radford was ordained in Ely cathedral, and some members of St James attended. Gina has been appointed as curate to work alongside Rev'd Sue Giles in the Benefice.

There are services in Lode on the 1st & 3rd Sundays in the month and Benefice Services on 2nd & 4th Sundays that rotate around the 5 parishes. Lifts to church are available.

During the year there have been 4 Baptisms, 0 Weddings and 5 Funerals.

Our Pancake Day this year was combined with a Newcomers event on Saturday 13 February. It was good to meet some of the new young families who have moved into the village. We had races for the children and fathers and lots of pancake eating!

The Lent course this year was called 'Fruitfulness on the Frontline'. RENEW and the Benefice shared this course and groups met in members' homes.

On 20 March a Palm Sunday service was held at St James with a Shetland Pony to enact Jesus's procession into Jerusalem. Again, a Crown of Thorns, a visual witness to Easter was displayed in Lode.

The Mothering Sunday Communion Service was well attended, and as usual Posies, made by volunteers, were received with thanks by all the ladies who attended.

The Annual PCC meeting was again in two parts. The election of the churchwardens was held after the service on Sunday 3 April, and the main meeting took place on 14 April at 7pm in Swaffham Prior school. The first half of the meeting was a Benefice meeting. We then split into separate groups to hold our individual meetings to discuss our Annual reports and elect members of our PCC.

We have used our new space at the back of the church for Play and Praise and Film church in the summer months and to serve refreshments after various events. We have also hosted the Book Fest and the Christmas Fayre.

Other special services held at St James included:

4 April: Deanery Mother's Union Lady Day Service at 2.30pm

9 April: Deanery Confirmation Service at 5.30pm

8 May: Rogation Sunday

17 & 18 September: The church was open on Saturday and Sunday to view the Harvest flower displays. All produce donated was sent to Open Door Food Bank in Newmarket. The Harvest Festival service was followed by a cold buffet lunch in church

Sunday 13 November: Remembrance Day Parade was hosted by St James this year. The act of remembrance at 10.50 am was followed by a service in the church at 11.00 am.

18 December : Carol Service Janet Marsh led the choir. We thank Lynda Ibbitt for leading the choir for many years.

24 December : Christmas Eve afternoon Crib Service with Christingle, followed at 10.00 pm with Christmas Communion

I would like to thank our vicar Rev'd Sue Giles for her patience and perseverance in the planning and implementation of the initial stage of our project at St James, started in 2015. We are grateful to the Archdeacon and DAC members for coming to St James on 11 November to discuss our plans. We thank them for their comments and support to create space in the church to provide room for different activities including social and fund raising, We hope to attract many people from Lode and the other villages in the Benefice to use the church space regularly throughout the week.

We thank the Parish Council for their generous donation to the repair and upgrade of the clock to auto wind. There was a delay in starting the work as James Jewellers are very busy. The clock is now back in position. There have been further problems with the striking mechanism. 2 scissor lifts were hired to gain access to the bell turret. The bell clapper has been taken away for repairs and should be returned shortly.

Finally thank you everyone who helps with the running of St James: the PCC members, sides men, readers, flower arrangers, fund raisers, cleaners, refreshments and groundsman and brass cleaners and anyone else. Each one of you and your contribution enriches our church life.

The St James website is regularly updated and still linked to the Anglesey Group Benefice website, which can be accessed from the Lode village website or independently.

Women's Institute – Jean Coxall: Our membership over the past year has remained at 36 with a good attendance at each meeting.

We have been entertained and educated by our many excellent speakers on such topics as Life in the 40's and 50's which many of us could remember; Colours in our homes; Gemstones; Camsight; The convict ship for women; The Lopsided Barge and Flower arranging (always very popular) with all arrangements put in a raffle and many members went home with wonderful displays. We also had a Members Evening when three members spoke of their visits to China covering the Forbidden City, The Terracotta Army, the Panda Sanctuary and walking the Great Wall of China. We were blessed with fine weather for our Garden Party held in the President's garden.

Our Christmas party was very successful with a wonderful meal prepared by the

committee, and much fun and laughter followed with a quiz and games of Santa Beetle.

Members have been on many events organised by the Federation; Buckingham Palace; V&A Museum; Eltham Palace and the Red House; Olympic Icons; Canada to Cambridge; Chartwell – the list goes on. Also three members have been on courses at Denman.

We joined with Bottisham WI for a visit to Sandringham which was very interesting and a lovely sunny day.

The speaker for the Group Meeting held at Quy was the actress Eliza McClelland who spoke about her bead work. The competition of tableau depicting a song from a musical was won by us with “I’m going to wash that man right out of my hair” from South Pacific so hold the trophy for a year.

We again fielded two darts teams with mixed successes but great fun was had by all.

As usual we delivered Christmas presents to all the known over 75’s in the village and these always seem to be much appreciated.

The Programme for 2017-18 has just been printed and it looks as though we are in for another interesting and entertaining year.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm