

**THE PARISH OF ST. NEOTS WITH EYNESBURY: ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS
& ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

Sunday 19th April 2026 in the Church Room after the 9.30 a.m. Eucharist at St Neots.

Apologies:

Annual Meeting of the Parishioners

1. Appointment of Clerk
2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2025 Meeting of the Parishioners.
3. Election of Church Wardens (*two for St Neots, two for Eynesbury, all being wardens of the whole*).
4. St Neots Charities Report.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Appointment of Clerk.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Parochial Church Meeting.
3. The Receipt of Reports:
 - (a) Electoral Roll Report.
 - (b) The Annual Report of the PCC and the Financial Statements of the PCC.
 - (c) The Safeguarding Officer's report
 - (d) The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments Report.
 - (e) The Deanery Synod Report.
 - (f) Other informal reports of sub-committees and organisations
4. Election of 4 Representatives of the Laity to the PCC.
5. Election of 2 representatives to the Deanery Synod.
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner to PCC
7. The Rector's remarks (delivered orally)
8. Questions about parochial church matters (if any).
9. Resolutions to discuss matters of general church interest (if any).
10. Date of next meeting

A meeting of the PCC follows:

For the appointment of: a Secretary of the PCC; a Treasurer of the PCC; a Vice-chair of the PCC; an Electoral Roll Officer; a Parish Safeguarding Officer; the standing Committee (being in addition to the Minister, two of the Churchwardens and two others); a Stewardship recorder and Gift Aid Officer; Sidesmen.

For the identification of the date of the next meetings, and no other business.

A meeting of the Churchwardens follows (chaired by the Rector) to appoint two of their number to be the two churchwarden trustees of the Newton's and Hatley's School Foundation.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETINGS OF THE PARISH OF ST. NEOTS WITH EYNESBURY

Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners, Sunday 6th April 2025 held at 10.45am after the 9.30am Eucharist at St Neots Parish Church.

Attendance:56

The Rector, Revd Paul Hutchinson welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that all on the Church Electoral Roll and all on the Civil Electoral Roll for the Parish are entitled to attend: anyone else was welcome to be present but could not participate.

1. Catherina Griffiths was elected as **clerk to the meeting**.
2. **The minutes of the 2024 Meeting of the Parishioners** were accepted on a show of hands proposed by Angie Robertson, seconded Olga Lewis.

3. Election of Church Wardens:

Christine Miles proposed by Ruth Simmonds, seconded Roger Simmonds.

Tony Hopwood proposed by Jacky Isaac, seconded Gertrude Wheel.

Jacky Isaac proposed by Ann Barnsley, seconded Philip Barrett.

Marion Catmull proposed by Rosemary Darrington, seconded Jo Bowers.

All were duly elected with thanks for their service during the past year. All will serve as wardens over the whole parish of St Neots with Eynesbury.

4. St Neots Charities Report. (Circulated in advance) Fr Paul explained that some of the 16 charities, which existed for PCC purposes, have been wound up and assets are now in PCC funds. The Rowley Windows and Curates charity is awaiting a decision before it can be wound up. The Rector thanked the wardens for their help in sorting this out. The annual income of poverty funds will be known as The Dryden and Rowley Fund. It only dispenses £1,000 per year.

The meeting of the Parishioners ended.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Meeting, Sunday 6th April 2025

Attendance:56

Apologies were received from David Read, Christine Miles, Judy Ruff, Liz Linley, Michael Woodward and Lynn Wells.

The Rector explained that members of the Electoral Roll were entitled to attend, but that, as with the previous meeting, others were welcome to observe but not participate.

1. There being no other nominations, Catherina Griffiths was appointed as **clerk to the meeting**.
2. **The minutes of the 2024 Annual Parochial Church Meeting** were accepted on a show of hands after a proposition by Jacky Isaac, seconded by Elizabeth Sibson.
3. **The Receipt of Reports:** **a) Electoral Roll:** Elizabeth Sibson, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that since the last meeting on 28th April 2024, the roll had undergone a complete revision, resulting in 161 names, 71 fewer than last year. Two of these members had died – Angela Marsden and Geoff Browne. There were 5 new names and one too late for inclusion. Elizabeth thanked Christine Miles for her help in in this. Fr Paul thanked Elizabeth for her diligence and efficiency in keeping the roll and in organising the full revision. **b) The**

Report of the PCC: (Circulated in advance). This was accepted by the meeting. The narrative shows the public benefit to the Charity Commissioners. The Rector thanked Tony Hopwood, treasurer, Sue Chase for assisting with the quarterly accounts, and Kath Pickering the Independent Examiner. It has been a busy year.

The Financial Statement of the PCC: (Circulated in advance). Although there is a deficit, much of it was planned using capital sums to get work done. Philip Chamberlain asked if there was a budget for the current year. Tony Hopwood said that this will be presented at the next PCC meeting. Tony explained that income cannot be controlled but the recent drive to convert to Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and stewardship letters have resulted in a £10,000 increase in income. (This excludes large one-off gifts that have been given). The advantage of PGS is that the fees are paid by the diocese and Gift Aid comes back to us quicker and regularly, a much more efficient system. There have been employment costs to the PCC for the Parish Administrator (Helen Bloxham) and Children's and Families Minister (Revd Margaret Marshall). Some of this has been paid for from unrestricted reserves. We have been advised that we are holding more money in reserves than we should be. Some of this has been used to upgrade the Church Room and repair the buttress. The PCC have resolved to make progress on the creation of a servery and display area in SNPC using space in the north aisle. This will use identified reserves and be part of a bigger project later. This report was received by the meeting.

c) Safeguarding Officer's Report: (circulated in advance). The report was accepted with thanks to Ann Barnsley for her work on this. Jacky Isaac emphasised the importance of Safeguarding training which can be done online or in house if required.

d) The Fabric, Goods, and Ornaments Report: (circulated in advance). Accepted by all. Thanks were expressed to the Church Wardens and the Treasurer for all their work and support. Jacky Isaac reported that some capital has been spent on repairs but she thanked Terry Way and Stephen Gill for their work, saving a lot of money on repairs in the Church Rooms and the church. Tony Hopwood reported that the repairs to the path at Eynesbury Church have been delayed as they are not using the same sandstone (which is slippery when wet) and a full report is needed.

e) Deanery Synod Report: (circulated in advance) Accepted by all. The Rector reported that from this summer, the northwest part of the deanery will have 3 vacancies, due to 2 retirements and the other moving parish. This will mean a call upon our active retired clergy. He thanked all the Deanery Synod representatives.

f) Informal Reports: (circulated in advance). Thanks were expressed to all on behalf of all in the church who had contributed to this. Rosemary Darrington expressed her disappointment that **Churches Together** will not be holding a Good Friday Witness again this year. Fr Paul thanked Helen Bloxham for her work as Parish Administrator. He also thanked Revd Margaret Marshall for her work with children and families. Margaret reported that she has done a lot of work in schools as well as **All Aboard** and **Stay and Play**.

A lot of time is spent in building relationships, but there is not such a degree of regularity in attendance as in the past. There is no connection between both activities, and Margaret has made an effort to improve publicity, but the best promotion is still word of mouth. The Stay and Play leaders are leaving and it is difficult to get anyone else to commit to coordinating the group. Margaret thanked Bev Rawlings for her help at All Aboard and Andrea Eckloff for her wonderful themed cakes, and also Lloyd Barnett for providing the music each month. Fr Paul thanked all who take on responsibilities.

4. Election of Representatives of the Laity to the PCC:

Due to the drop in Electoral Roll numbers, PCC representation is now 4 members to serve for 3 years. However a vacancy allows for another representative to serve for 2 years.

Andrew Isaac Prop –Ann Barnsley; Sec – Liz Linley

Stephen Gill Prop – Helen Bloxham; Sec – Carol Way

Gabriel Amable Prop – Christian Laughton; Sec – Catherina Griffiths

Godfrey Wilson Prop –Philip Barrett; Sec – Jacky Isaac

These 4 members to serve for 3 years.

Helen Bloxham Prop – Godfrey Wilson; Sec – Stephen Gill

Helen to serve for 2 years.

The Rector thanked all for standing again and to all who serve on the PCC.

5. Independent Examiner to PCC: Kath Pickering was elected on a proposal by Gordon Depledge, seconded by Angie Robertson. Thanks were expressed to her for her work.

6. Rector's remarks: Fr. Paul said that the sermon explained the extravagant generosity of God and we are modelling some of it. We are fostering a group of people we want to belong to. Welcome and outreach is important and the quality of relationships matter.

7. Questions: Jacky Isaac reported that the SNPC churchyard wall repair is the responsibility of the local authority. Discussions have happened and the council has approved a budget of £250,000 for the work. The start date is uncertain, but the work is more extensive than applied for in the 2019 faculty and it will affect the highway. The work is likely to be done in 2 or 3 phases. Fr Paul reported that there have been talks about adding more seating in the churchyard but locations are a problem. SNPC churchyard is an important green space in the town centre. The National Church is asking questions about ecological management of churchyards. St Neots is not short of biodiversity and he felt that the best use of the churchyard is as a green space and not a wilderness. The Town Council keeps Eynesbury churchyard in a maintained order.

8. Resolutions: there were none.

9. Date of next meeting: It was proposed to meet on Sunday 19th April 2026 in the Church Room at 10.30am after the 9.30am service at St Neots.

The meeting ended at 11.55am and Canon Melvyn Barnsley thanked Paul for his leadership.

Reports

Parish Safeguarding Report

Ely Diocese underwent a safeguarding audit in February this year and the outcome was positive, recognising a strong commitment to keeping children and vulnerable adults safe. The audit also identified areas for development and an action plan will be produced to address the recommendations raised. Therefore, the work to strengthen safeguarding arrangements will continue and further adjustments are likely to be required to our procedures here, as in all other parishes.

More roles in the church have been identified as requiring some level of safeguarding training and this will be followed up. I have attended 4 PCC meetings this year to report on developments. Risk assessments and role descriptions required to comply with safeguarding requirements have been completed.

One issue has arisen which was reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Advice was sought and given, and adjustments will be made to certain procedures as a result.

Ann Barnsley
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

Fabric

At St Neots Parish Church & Eynesbury Parish Church

Routine servicing has taken place in both Eynesbury Parish Church and St Neots Parish Church - this includes;

- Fire extinguishers,
- Gutter valleys and downpipes,
- Lightning conductors and security system.
- First aid boxes are checked on a monthly basis in both churches
- In the Church Rooms annual servicing has taken place on the water heater, boiler and gas cooker

Fabric - Eynesbury Parish Church

The following has taken place;

- The Church path has been replaced, funded by the Mal Young legacy
- New pew cushions have been purchased, enabled by a donation from a member of the congregation in memory of her son.

Fabric – St Neots Parish Church

The following has taken place;

- The organ has been tuned.
- There have been some pew repairs
- Following the routine testing of the lightning protection some repairs have been carried out.
- Repairs have taken place to the microphone and audio system
- Annual maintenance has taken place on the SNPC Clock

- Whilst annual services have been carried out on the SNPC heating system there have been ongoing failures in the system that have required ongoing maintenance and whilst this has been completed a review of the current heating is now required.

St Neots Parish Church – Church Rooms

Work has been carried out during the year on the Church Rooms of St Neots Parish Church this included;

- Replacement basin, taps and toilet seat in one of the toilets.
- Repairs have been carried out on the Church Room door and flooring

St Neots Parish Church – Churchyard wall update

As highlighted last year the whole of the Churchyard wall needs to be replaced and this will be funded by St Neots Town Council.

There have been ongoing discussions regarding;

- appointment of a contractor to carry out the works
- revised faculty application, type of bricks and coping stones etc. In principle this is agreed.

It is now anticipated that works on the replacement wall will begin in May 2026 and will take approx. 12 weeks.

Ornaments

St Neots Parish Church & Eynesbury Parish Church

There have been no additions to the ornaments at either church.

Jacky Isaac/Christine Miles/Anthony Hopwood/Marion Catmull, Churchwardens

PCC

The PCC has met regularly to discuss affairs of the parish; to approve the budget and monitor finances and approve charitable giving; to discuss and approve necessary repairs to the fabric; to approve policy documents. Ann Barnsley has attended regularly to report on Safeguarding and explain updates in national safeguarding guidelines. Some items discussed during the year were the Eynesbury path, Eynesbury safe, SNPC churchyard wall, and the re-ordering of the SNPC north aisle.

Deanery Synod

The Synod has met three times during the year to discuss matters of interest for the parishes of the deanery, but two of those meetings were as farewells to Revd David Shepherd (Buckden and Offords); Canon Annette Reed (Paxtons Benefice), and Canon Nicki Bland (Staughtons Benefice and Rural Dean). This has left the deanery with three stipendiary clergy, no Rural Dean and no Deanery Treasurer. Revd Philip Howson, Assistant Rural Dean of Huntingdon Deanery (W & S Leightonstone parishes) is supporting the vacant parishes and we are grateful to the services of the retired clergy and LLMs for ensuring services continue in these benefices. Finance has been quite an issue without a Deanery Treasurer and in spite of invitations to synods there was no support from the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance who has since resigned. The Archdeacon has attended a couple of meetings and at the last synod of the year,

the Diocesan Environment Officer Revd Nigel Cooper gave a presentation on caring for our environment through our churches.

Churches Together in St Neots

CTSN has become an umbrella group for all the work done by Christians in the town. There is a very small working party continuing to keep links alive.

Some of the CTSN groups include the Foodbank, ACTIOS, Thursday Food, the Christian Care Centre, the Men's Forum, St Neots Bereavement and Friendship Group, Christian Aid.

Christian Aid

The total area collection for Christian Aid Week amounted to £1,176.31 of which we raised £397.16. The Christmas Card Tree collection raised £197 for the Christmas Appeal and during 2025 a total of £1592.31 was sent to Christian Aid from St Neots and District. Gift Aid means that we have added a further £252 this year. This does not include online donations.

Sub-committee Reports

Mission and Care

The Committee met to discuss allocation of charitable giving. Helen Bloxham keeps us informed of news from the various charities and it is hoped to invite speakers during the year so that we are informed about what our money is being used for.

Children's Activities

After three years of dedicated Children's, schools' and families' work in our Benefice, much has changed. We had no illusions that it would be easy because our post-Covid world is challenging in many ways. Fewer and fewer children are brought to church services and Sunday School is no more. Building relationships is not easy. Although Fr Paul and I still work with our schools, this rarely includes contact with parents, which is of vital importance. The weekly term-time Play Church has suffered since we no longer have our wonderful parent leader, Sian Mandrell and we have limped along with Judy Ruff and Catherina Griffiths doing all the donkey work. We are presently working to recruit and appoint younger leaders. Few are prepared to make such a commitment. Refreshments are still served by Mothers' Union members and additional volunteers - many thanks to them and our hard-working leaders.

Our monthly 'All-age' service, 'All Aboard', continues to go well, but attendance fluctuates. The same audience participation, drama, catchy songs, craft activities and wonderful cakes are still enjoyed and we have Good Friday and December (Christingle) special events. Messy Church now seems beyond our human resources, sadly. A huge thank you to our resident pianist, and to those who have contributed and helped with refreshments.

Three years ago I reported: I desperately need a 'team' to support this vital work and would be very grateful for offers of help. I have had a number of key assistants, to whom I am enormously grateful - I could not have managed without Lloyd Barnett - but the work still needs more support from the wider congregation. Please help with whatever you can. Thank you.

Revd Margaret Marshall

Church Organisations

Choir Report

‘Psallam Spiritu et Mente’

‘I will sing with the Spirit and with Understanding’ RSCM Motto

The choir continues to lead worship at Sunday morning Eucharist and the monthly choral evensong. Occasionally the choir is asked to sing at funerals and weddings although we haven’t done a wedding for some considerable time. We are also privileged to join with Great Gransden choir for a few services, either evensong or the RSCM music Sunday service. This year it will be on Sunday evening 14th June.

We had a cathedral evensong planned at Southwark cathedral for 10th January but the cathedral asked if we could do 3rd instead. This we did and it was a very enjoyable service. There were plans to sing at Rochester Cathedral but these have been dropped. We were joined by our friends from Christ Church St. Leonards as in most other cathedral visits and other friends. We, as a choir, are able to cover the work at St. Mary’s but we are still short in all parts. We have also had a quite a lot of illness recently. Ideally, I would like to see two more sopranos, two more altos, two more tenors and two more basses. It has been good to welcome one new soprano. However, the Director of Music at St. Leonards will be moving to South West Wales during the summer. I am not sure whether our link with the choir in St. Leonards will continue, which is sad, but things move on. It would be good if we were able to tackle a cathedral on our own, as we have done, but we would definitely need the extra voices mentioned above.

I continue to play at Eynesbury church which I very much enjoy apart from the state of the organs there. The folk at Eynesbury are always welcoming.

Organ

The summer organ recitals at St Neots church will again be happening. The first is on Wednesday 22nd July at 12.15 and these occur weekly until 29th August. All recitals are free, a voluntary donation is asked for and there is usually a good selection of refreshments. My thanks to all who helped in any way to make these a success. Some of you may remember that the pedal action failed on the Monday before one of the recitals. A temporary repair was made by borrowing part of the small organ. The voluntary donations received, after a fee was paid to each recitalist, were enough to get a new unit. This has just been fitted and is working perfectly, the small organ is now able to be played again.

*Lloyd Barnett
Director of Music*

Mothers Union

2025 began with a lunch at The Barley Mow. The MU theme for the year was “Join us and Join in” and we have been joining with other branches in the Deanery at St Ives for the Lady Day Service in March, and Brampton, when we enjoyed an interesting walk around the village before a guided tour of the church. Our speakers at meetings included Caroline Deeprise from The Angel’s Foundation, who gave a moving talk about what happens when women move on from the Refuge. Liz Davies spoke about local May Day traditions and

customs on May Day. Joan Van Leeuwen gave an interesting talk about her personal faith journey in September and Ann Barnsley explained why Safeguarding is so important at our November meeting. Rosey Fuell led a Quiet Afternoon in Eynesbury Church during Lent, and Canon Robert Sibson led the Mary Sumner Day service in August and the Deanery Advent Service in December. In June we met at Willington Garden Centre for lunch, and several members enjoyed an afternoon of retail therapy there. Our Garden Party was held in the Church Rooms and Churchyard this year on a very warm afternoon and raised money for AFIA (Away From it All) holidays.

We met in the Lady Chapel for our Wave of Prayer service in December, when we prayed for our link diocese and the rest of the world prayed for us. Mothers Union is a global organisation with 4 million members in 84 countries. As well as our meetings we collect necessary items for the Refuge and this year collected enough household cleaning items to fill 6 washing up bowls for women moving on; we raise funds to send needy families on AFIA holidays; we knit items needed in care homes, hostels and hospitals; we run a Relationships Course for inmates at Littlehey Prison.

In St Neots we usually meet on the 3rd Wednesday in the afternoon during the winter months and on the 1st Thursday in the evening in summer months. All are welcome.

Catherina Griffiths

Bible Study Group

We have been running two groups throughout 2025-2026, which have both been well attended.

Early in January 2025 we completed our study of the Gospel of John, which we all found exhilarating, interesting, and challenging.

During LENT 2025 we did a study by Nick Fawcett called 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of the Church. It actually comes as two studies, 'The Good,' which looked at certain Christian people who had done a lot of good for the Church and the world. We had already done this one the previous Advent. 'The Bad and the Ugly.' looked at the Chequered history of the Church, 'The Blight of Hypocrisy', 'The Blight of Homophobia' as well as three other subjects, which were all eye opening and from which we learnt a lot.

During the Summer of 2025, we did a study of how our Christian Faith interacts with people across the Middle East & North Africa [MENA] from Morocco to Tajikistan which included the Holy Land. We learnt how the early disciples took the Word out to these areas, just as Jesus asked them, to the world around them, walking and travelling along the Great Highway, as Thomas did to get to India.

In July we looked at Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Ephesians, as he remonstrated with these new believers, who had been led away from what he had already taught them about Jesus, as he wrote to encourage and support them to return to the love they had for Jesus.

During ADVENT 2025, we looked at another Nick Fawcett Study called 'Lighten Our Path' which helped us to see the different ways that light is seen through our faith. subjects like 'From Darkness to Light.' 'A Glorious Light,' and 'A Guiding Light', 'Sharing the

Light’, and ‘An Inextinguishable Light’ were discussed and helped us to get a good understanding of the Light of Jesus, as we came up to Christmas, when the Light of the World was born.

We have now completed another LENT course by Nick Fawcett called ‘Spot The Difference’, it challenges us each week as we look at and discuss together if we are following what Jesus taught us. The titles of which are, ‘A love that Shows’, ‘An allegiance that Shows,’ ‘A Joy that Shows,’ ‘A concern that Shows,’ and ‘A Faith that Shows.’ All of these have been challenging to us all, as we have been required to think hard about how does our personal faith come across to non-believers, and also other Christians?

We already have a full complement of numbers at the Thursday afternoon group (fire restriction on numbers), but there are four places available at the Friday afternoon group. We meet on the second and fourth Thursday and Friday of each month, in Eynesbury Church Room to start at 2pm..... Please contact Rosemary Darrington via the Parish Office if you are interested in joining.

Church Flower Arrangers

This past year has been very productive and shown different approaches to design. Our team of flower arrangers have excelled themselves once again. Whilst being in church, visitors have commented on the beautiful flowers especially at Harvest and Christmas.

I have started to encourage younger arrangers (with the help of a Mum or Nan) - I think this must be pursued.

My grateful thanks to all the arrangers.

Bev Rawlings.

St Neots Handbell Ringers

The team continue to meet weekly on Sunday evenings at 7.30pm. We ring a variety of music from popular tunes, tunes from shows to popular classics. In January we were joined by 5 new members, 3 of whom have stayed with us. We hope that soon we will be able to play some more complicated pieces that we haven’t played for several years due to not enough ringers. Our new members made their debut in a concert at Berkley St Methodist Church Ladies Fellowship in November and then our last performance of the year was at Old Market Court in December.

Anyone wishing to learn should contact Catherina Griffiths (393372).

Tower Bell Ringers

Ringling at St Neots has continued with 2 more learners starting during the year.

Unfortunately we said goodbye to Mike and Amy, but Mike was able to ring in his first quarter peal as a farewell to them both as they returned to the United States. James S also rang his first two quarter peals during the summer – firstly on the tenor bell then the second was ringing the treble to a quarter peal of doubles. In total three peals and seven quarter peals were rung at St Neots during the year. The peal in February was only the second to be rung on the back 6 bells and was the most methods rung in a peal at St Neots – 41 different methods. The Rector conducted a quarter peal (his second time in 28 years!) to celebrate Revd Margaret Marshall’s 20 years as a priest. Another notable quarter peal was rung in

October, when Phillip George celebrated the 60th anniversary of learning to ring which also coincided with his 1000th quarter peal on tower bells, and 1,000th quarter peal for his wife, Sheila. Phillip was taught by George Bonham and rang at St Neots for many years, and still does occasionally. The last quarter peal of the year was to celebrate the installation of Fr Paul as an Honorary Canon of Ely, as well as a 60th birthday compliment to him. Although we haven't been able to ring for many services at Eynesbury, the bells have attracted three groups of visiting ringers and were rung for a wedding. Eynesbury bells were also rung prior to the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. We also rang as part of the national initiative to celebrate 80 years since VE Day and in August for VJ Day.

Several members of the band have visited other towers during the year to join in with their bellringing practice. We have been to Godmanchester, Biggleswade, and have started a regular 8 bell practice with Eaton Socon ringers.

During the summer we cancelled practices in order to spring clean both towers, a filthy job but worthwhile. The clock has been showing its age and there have been problems with the hour striking. It does keep fairly good time for a 106 year old timepiece.

We also welcomed visitors to the tower a couple of times, with a talk and ringing demonstration in the summer when the tower was open to the public. We hosted another visit from the Beavers to have a go at chiming the bells as well as climbing to the top of the tower. Particular thanks to James Gamble, and David Griffiths who do so much to keep ringing going and to John Hutchinson for assisting David in teaching learners.

Catherina Griffiths

Ps and Qs

We are a group of like-minded people who meet weekly to do crafts. Many years ago we originally started doing only patchwork and quilting (hence the name), but over time have evolved and now we do knitting, crotchet, embroidery, painting, cross stitch, beading and of course patchwork and quilting.

Val Freeman

Men's Forum Group

This meets once a month usually at the Berkley Street Methodist Church (Members from the Methodist, URC, St Mary's Eynesbury, and St Mary's St Neots with Eynesbury) attending.

Visits

Ladybird at Hartford a boat trip on the Great Ouse

Talks by visitors at the Methodist Church

Talk on Adrian Besant 2009 trip to Uganda.

Talk on future of our health by Dr Mike Quail.

Talk on the Project to build the A428 and A421 from the Black cat to Caxton

Showing plans, progress using drone films and planned time scale

Talk by Gillian Freeman on her book and living as a Jew in England.

Talk by John Wrycroft on St Neots Common.

Talk by Liz Davies on History of St Neots in ten objects.

Talk by David Roberts on how to look at the stars.

Activities

Games evening with Fish and Chips.

Evening at Gt Barford Bowls Club

Snooker Evening at Conservative Club

Most were attended well but we would like more people from

From the Parish Church the numbers have dropped.

As it only costs £3 for most evenings

You can contact Derek Wheel or Philip Barrett for details for 2026 program

Book Group

The group has met regularly to read and discuss a variety of books, borrowed from the library such as The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid; The Figurine by Victoria Hislop; Poor by Katriona O’Sullivan; The Reader on the 6:27 by Jean Paul Didierlaurent; Stoneyard Devotional by Charlotte Wood; The Housekeepers by Alex Hay; The Confession by Jessie Burton; and the last discussion of the year was of a biography of our own choice. The variety of books chosen was extremely interesting – Queen Elizabeth II; St Paul; Alan Turing; Clive Myrie; and Virginia Hall (WW2 spy).

Catherina Griffiths

Saturday Social

Saturday Social continues to attract an average of 20 or so people every month. Sadly, some of our older parishioners, for health reasons are no longer to enjoy the company. We have celebrated a few birthdays, where cake is always in supply. Liz Elson has been a regular attender with MU cards. The jigsaws and books are in plentiful supply and are very much appreciated. We have also attracted some ladies who don’t regularly attend church, but use us a focal point to meet friends. We are very grateful to the volunteers who help with teas, coffees, hot chocolate and the washing up. We are always open to ideas if there is a need to change the format, but for the time being we will continue to meet on the 4th Saturday of every month.

Christine Miles and Angie Robertson.

Thursday Food

Thursday Food continues to run every Thursday at Berkley Street Methodist Church, and we are extremely grateful to the Church for the use of their lovely Church Hall and kitchen. Numbers attending Thursday Food have steadily increased throughout the year and we regularly welcome between 20 and 25 people each week, with some guests coming on a regular basis. Each week fresh, home cooked food is prepared and served on the premises and our guests are always offered a two-course meal with drinks. There is no charge to our guests, and we are very grateful to the generosity of the volunteers who provide all ingredients, tea, coffee, serviettes, takeaway boxes (for any leftovers) and other sundry items from their own pockets. We are blessed to have such committed and hardworking volunteers, although numbers have dropped off a little over the last few months, for various reasons. We

are now at a stage where volunteer numbers are lower than they have ever been and guest number higher than ever. We would really welcome more helpers.

We hosted our annual Christmas meal on Thursday 18th December and this was attended by 40 guests. It was a very noisy, lively, busy and enjoyable evening.

Finally, my thanks go to all those who over the year have supported this work, the Methodist Church, CTSN and our amazing volunteers, from many churches in the town and none, who give of their time and talents so generously.

Please continue to pray for this venture and consider prayerfully if there is any way in which you could help, through prayer, financial donation or coming along to help one evening a month as part of a team. Also please pray for our guests, who often live in very difficult circumstances.

Jane Gill

Foodbank and Acts435 Report

Acts435

This amazing charity continues to provide people in need with essential items they would not otherwise be able to afford up to a maximum of £200.

Over the last year 8 people have been helped with donations of £990. Since the project started in St Neots in 2020 133 people have been helped by donations totalling £17095.

This has provided a diverse range of goods including beds, sofas, washing machines, carpets, a bus pass, a replacement birth certificate, and children's clothes and shoes etc.

Although donors do not know the identity of those they are helping, and I as Advocate don't know who gives I am certain that the bulk of this generosity has come from our community – thank you!

To know more about this please talk to me or go to acts435.org.uk

Carol Way

St Neots Foodbank (Registered Charity Number 1178630)

The Foodbank has continued to be very busy, and the fact that numbers of visitors are down we see as a positive indication that our work to reduce poverty and debt is bearing fruit.

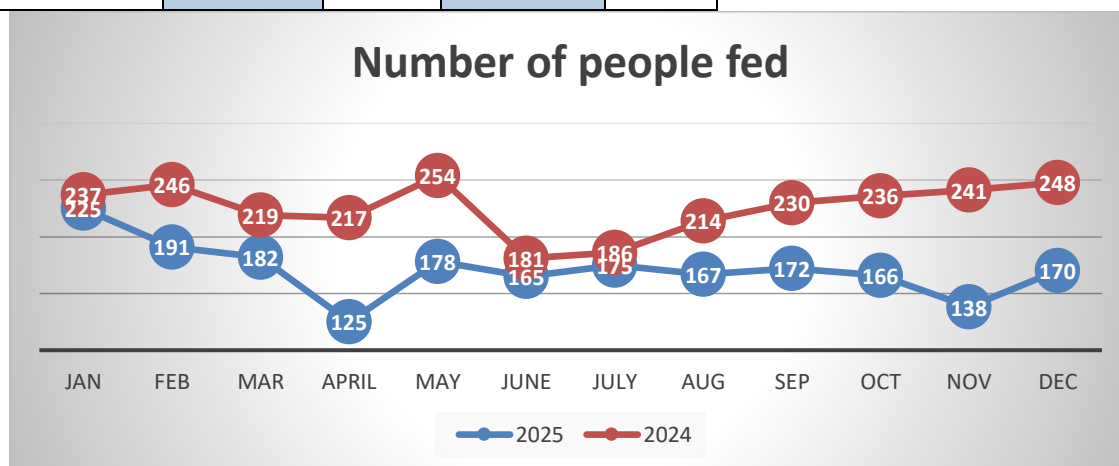
We continue to have four Distribution Centres open each week, and at three of these we have advisors from Citizens' Advice and MAST to talk to our visitors and help them to resolve issues and concerns. Since mid-January we have also had a Citizens Advice Community Energy Advisor attending our Berkley Street sessions; this is going well and we hope to soon make this available at our other centres.

We continue to work with Waitrose to buy vouchers to be able to give our visitors fresh fruit and vegetables as we are unable to include these in our parcels.

From 27th- 29th November we had our annual three-day Tesco collection. – Trustees and volunteers who came along to support were brilliant as always, both in store and sorting the donations in Open Door Church. We collected 166 crates of food, which is 22 fewer than last year, but interestingly the weight collected was 20kg more than last year! We were given a total of 1,669kg, which we were very grateful to be able to store in Open Door's new church hall. New volunteers and donations, both financial and of food, are always welcome.

Data since last year and previous year comparison

	Nov 25	Nov 24	Dec 25	Dec 24
Stock in - kg	3445	3864	2970	3476
Stock out - kg	1735	2193	4892	5777
People Fed	138	241	170	248
No of vouchers	69	106	72	103



Carol Way

The Friends of St Neots Parish Church

If you are a friend of St Neots Parish Church this report may seem pretty familiar to my 2025 AGM report and my Christmas newsletter, so apologies. For first time readers, two further successful concerts were held in 2025. The World of Gilbert and Sullivan performed by The Wandering Minstrels concert raised £2,096.15 and The Kings Men concert, the choristers of Kings College, Cambridge, on their fourth visit raised £1,672.80, with a further £100 donated to Guide Dogs for the Blind in appreciation of the solo performance prior to the concert given by Martine Clarke. Two brilliant but completely different musical evenings in our church. With much sadness, we lost long standing committee member, David Smith on 5th November and he will be greatly missed for his sales acumen and commitment to The Friends. Many thanks to the committee members for their service and to the Friends for their membership. Also, special thanks to our Rector, Paul and Church Administrator, Helen. Finally, hot new news! On 26th September, we welcome The Fairhaven Singers of Cambridge, so please save the date and spread the word. Many thanks to Paul for this introduction. A debut visit which will be another wonderful evening of singing in St Marys. We have paid £450 to the PCC being the balance of a repair bill for the central heating and we have just paid £1,000 for the freshening up of the west door to the church. we have funds on deposit for use in accordance with the objects of the charity.

Enjoy the summer and see you at The Fairhaven Singers concert on 26th September at 7.00pm. Cost £15 per head!

Bruce Elam