

LET US TALK

1. **What is the 'Personality and Character' of our local church?**

- a. The church of St Mary the Virgin, Winterbourne Gunner was built in the period 1180 to 1220 in the Manor of Winterbourne Cherborough, possibly by John de Chyreborough who, it is recorded, died in 1269 "possessed of the church". The second manor in the parish was Winterbourne Gunner, named after Gunnora de la Mare, the lady of the manor who died in 1249. Both manors passed into the ownership of John Shewter in 1570 when the village became more usually known as Winterbourne Gunner.
- b. St Mary's PCC keeps the church building open 24 hours a day. This has its dangers but we are keen to keep the church available to all who need spiritual comfort or physical shelter at all times.
- c. The church has seating for 49 in the Nave and Tower areas plus a further 10 on the choir stalls in the Chancel. It is not unusual for between 130 and 170 adults and children to attend the Crib Service or an Easter Service for the local school.
- d. The Electoral Roll numbers 39, which has fallen from 54 in 1998, but has held steady at that level since 2009 despite the loss of parishioners who have either died or moved from the area. The age profile is 'mature' with 3 members below 40, all of whom live and work well outside of the village; of the remainder, 16 are between 70 and mid-90s.
- e. Only 12 of the 39 members on the Electoral Roll live in Winterbourne Gunner Parish; 7 of these serve on the PCC which, excluding the Vicar, comprises 11 members.
- f. Although the Electoral Roll is small, the congregation is very loyal with an average of 17 attending our Sunday service; between 10 and 15 at morning prayer and 20 to 25 at communion services.
- g. The building is much loved; over the last decade considerable sums have been expended to:
 - renovate listed monuments in the churchyard.
 - renovate the two bells and re-hang the second.
 - re-render and re-lime wash the Tower walls.
 - fit new convector heaters.
 - create more room in the chancel by removing oak choir stalls and constructing two prayer desks from the wood.
 - maintain the many mature trees and shrubs in the churchyard.
 - refurbish the 68 metre long footpath which is the only access to the church. There is no access for vehicles and no adjacent car parking area other than verges (however, at times we are able to use the field adjacent to the church with permission from the farmer if his cows are not loose in the field).
- h. Due to the work carried out at 1g above, PCC monetary reserves have,

for a number of years, been getting smaller despite the generosity of our church members, a successful fundraising campaign for the tower renovation amongst church members and the local communities and various grants from external charitable organisations.

i. Despite the advancing years of many, our congregation members maintain a strong community spirit looking out beyond the church to serve the local and wider communities. Areas of local and national community life in which they are engaged include:

- (1) A Foundation Governor of a local C of E Primary School.
- (2) A Governor of Salisbury Cathedral School.
- (3) A President and Vice President of the local Scout Council.
- (4) Member and Treasurer of a Mothers' Union Branch.
- (5) Chairman of a local Day Centre for the Elderly.
- (6) Driver for a local Day Centre for the Elderly.
- (7) Volunteer Helper and Home/Hospital Visitor for the Day Centre for the Elderly.
- (8) Membership of U3A.
- (9) Membership of a local brass band.
- (10) Membership of a local opera and local ladies singing group.
- (11) Assistance at the Trussell Trust in Salisbury.
- (12) Membership of the Glebe Hall Committee in Winterbourne Earls.
- (13) Membership of and periodic Treasurer for the Winterbourne Fete Committee.
- (14) Lay Cannon and member of Chapter at Salisbury Cathedral.
- (15) Snr Indep. Dir and Vice Chairman Salisbury NHS Trust.
- (16) Lay Chairman of organ donation committee and clinical governance committee.
- (17) President of Veterinary Benevolent Fund.
- (18) Chairman of University Federation of Animal Welfare.
- (19) Chairman of Humane Slaughter Association Aquatic Veterinary Medical Association.
- (20) Director at large of World
- (21) Three members of the church congregation organise the Moviola film shows for the Winterbournes.
- (22) Assistance with running the charity jumble sales at the Glebe Hall.
- (23) Membership of various Winterbourne societies including the Historical Society.
- (24) Secretary of local WI.
- (25) Treasurer of local WI.
- (26) Drivers for Bourne Valley Link.
- (27) Secretary of local Over 60's Club.
- (28) Treasurer of local Over 60's Club.
- (29) Secretary of a local Charitable Trust.

j. The Book of Common Prayer is used at services at St Mary's Church. This seems to be filling a need as most of our regular church members come from outside of the parish.

k. Although we have been eating into our reserves we still maintain a good level of charitable giving, normally to 5 charities (local, national and international) and still pay the full Diocesan, Deanery and Team Shares.

2. What are the priorities of our local church?

The priorities of the PCC at St Mary's Church are generated by:

- a. The small number and mature age of our parishioners.
- b. The few people capable and willing to undertaking projects outside of their own personal lives, often due to the fact that they have for many years taken on key posts within the PCC and outside as shown at para 1i above.
- c. The over-burdening of various PCC officers.
- d. The small size of the church and its lack of a water supply and toilets.

3. Our priorities are therefore to:

- a. Maintain the financial viability of the church whilst continuing supporting charitable giving..
- b. Maintain the integrity of the building and churchyard.
- c. To enhance the relationship between the church and the Military Camp in Winterbourne Gunner.
- d. To undertake a Stewardship project.
- e. To grow the church. If we do not do this, St Mary's Church has no future beyond the next 10 - 20 years.

4. Is there one thing you would like to take on in the coming year (recognising that may mean you may need to stop doing something else)?

The most urgent task is to run a Stewardship campaign. The key factor affecting our ability to do this is the availability of those few people willing and able to plan and action this. These people are already deeply involved in either full time work or charitable voluntary work within and without the church and cannot stop doing this.

5. Are there ways in which we can work together to achieve more?

- a. Centralising the administration of the fees for weddings and funerals at Team level. This is working well in the Bourne Valley Team.

6. How can we best measure quality and impact of church life?

- a. Ask ourselves what would be the impact if church members stopped carrying out the tasks at para 1i above?
- b. By sustaining or growing congregations.