St Martins Parish Council

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the St Martins Parish held on Thursday 16th April 2015 at 7.00 p.m. in The St Martins Community Centre, St Martins.**

In the Chair – Cllr S. Schofield

**PRESENT:** 21 Members of the public were present (recorded in attendance book).

**Also in attendance: the Parish Clerk.**

**The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting including** Andrea Brody of Fairshare Credit Union and **representatives from local groups and organisations.**

**APOLOGIES: There were no recorded.**

**MINUTES: Helen Williams proposed, Nick Heard seconded and it was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of St Martins Parish held on the 17th April 2014.**

**CHAIRMANS REPORT:**

**Cllr Sue Schofield gave the following report.** This year has seen some changes. First of all we had a new Clerk, Edward Davies, who is proving to be a real asset to the Council. One of his first moves was to install a new accounts package, he has spent some time populating the database and with a few tweaks it is proving to be a powerful tool in understanding where we are with the accounts. Thank you Edward for your commitment and hard work to this Council, long may it continue.

Helen Williams felt it was the right time to resign as Chair due to family commitments, so in June it was my honour to take the Chair. Can I thank Helen for all the hard work and time she spent leading the Council very effectively. Following the departure of Emma Harkiss from the Council we have now appointed Mr Dan Anderton to fill her seat. I am sure he will prove to be an asset to the Council and I look forward to working with him.

You may have noticed that the Council no longer produces a quarterly newsletter but publish their news in the new Village Life magazine. We are very happy to support the magazine with an annual grant as we believe they are doing a fabulous job, keeping the village informed. More from them later.

There are also a group of people reviewing the Parish Plan. This is a document that is added to the Place Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for our area and is the document that is consulted by Shropshire Council when we as a Council apply for money from the housing development levies. We will hear more about the Parish Plan later.

The Playing Field behind Stan’s is now in the control of this Council and we have just finished the negotiation of a 3 year lease for that ground and the contract for hedge and grass cutting. The newly formed Recreation Services Committee are looking at what needs to be done to keep it safe for use and the likely cost of this. To be more specific, we are looking at are the posts and rails around the football pitch and the high fence at the Garden Village end of the field. We are also planning to renew the boards in the Skateboard Park and have agreed to install a MUGA end (this is a goal with a splayed sides and a basketball hoop) on the main Trust land.

I wonder how many of you realise that more of the street lighting is now switched off at midnight and switched back on at 5am. This policy is in line with Shropshire Council’s policy to save money. As your Council we seek to look for good practice in all areas and we are currently looking at LED lighting for our residential spaces. We are awaiting a report to tell us if the concrete columns and metal posts are strong enough to support the heavier LED heads. There will be a cost of making the change, but with something like a 72% reduction in electricity running costs and a significant saving in maintenance, we feel it is worth it and will go a long way to keeping this Council’s budget as low as possible.

Shropshire Council have taken the unprecedented decision not to pass on the Governments Local Tax Support Grant to Town and Parish Council this year, this means to us a reduced income of over £5,000. The average of 2.8% increase of the local council tax, which we set, does not go very far to addressing this shortfall and, with the added responsibilities of the Recreational areas we now maintain, our income for this year does not match that of previous years.

Every month the Police send us a list of recorded crimes in the village. I have to say there is very little on this list, 7 recorded last month, and this means we are a very low crime area. Is this because there is very little going on even though the street lights are switched off through the early hours of the morning or is it because they are not phoned in? Can I encourage you all to report incidents to the 101 crime number, even if you believe that the Police can’t do anything about the issue, it might just help to keep a police presence in the village.

Speeding traffic is also a problem to the village. The Police are conducting an ongoing survey of traffic speeds through the village and other members of the public are also monitoring the situation. We are taking this information to the Community Safety Partnership to seek some calming measures. What those might be we don’t know at this stage, but your Council would like to see at least flashing speed warning signs or even a permanent fixed speed camera.

Planning applications are one of the more irksome issues we have to deal with at each Council meeting. Cottage Lane and the former Ifton Heath School are two which are ongoing and are proving to be difficult to resolve. As a Council we are calling the Planning Department to account for its reasons for allowing the flawed applications to go through and so to allow housing development outside of the SAMDev, also, when it come to the Showmen at the school, we will endeavour to get the changes to the application to ensure it does not become an open site for all travellers. We find increasingly that our comments seem to be ignored. Whether this is due to the significant reduction of staff at Shropshire Council or a lack of expertise or just compliance, we do not know, but we will continue this fight, taking the issues to the Local Government Ombudsman if necessary.

Finally, I’d like to thank all Councillors for the time and effort in supporting the work of the Council and for their support of this Chair over the last 10 months. I hope it will continue – NO, I know it will continue because they are a great bunch of people.

**SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL REPORT:**

Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport said that the Chairman had already reported on the planning issues in the parish. These issues unfortunately are County wide. The school has now re-opened, going well and everyone seems to have settled down. Still some issues with traffic calming around the vicinity of the school but he was pleased to report that the footpath is now being widened which should have been completed before the school re-opened. All staff energy was now being targeted into cost savings with some 80m already found. The application for coal methane extraction at Dudleston Heath is now out at a public enquiry.

**FAIRSHARE CREDIT UNION:**

The Chairman welcomed Andrea Brody of Fairshare Credit Union.

FAIRshare has recently opened new outreach services in your community. Every Tuesday, the FAIRshare Service Point visits St Martins, Weston Rhyn & Gobowen, in association with the Three Parishes Big Local Partnership.

There are around 500 Credit Unions in the UK, with around 1.5 million members UK wide. Internationally there are active Credit Unions in 103 countries around the world with more than 210 million members worldwide. 45% of the population in the USA are Credit Union members, 43% in Canada, 30% in Australia & 73% in Ireland.

So what is a Credit Union? It is a friendly, not-for-profit, financial co-operative or ‘community bank’, owned by & run for the benefit of its members. A Credit Union’s customers are its members. Credit Unions provide a safe secure home for their members’ savings, and offer low cost affordable loans to those who save regularly. A credit union is an ethical “not-for-profit” organisation, with any surplus or profit made being distributed to members in the form of an annual dividend.

Credit Unions are authorised & regulated by the FCA & the PRA, & members’ savings are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, currently to the value of £85,000. A Credit Union is for all sorts of people. Membership ranges from savers who may occasionally borrow, to those who are financially excluded who save a small amount to gain access to low cost loans. Regular savings create a “pool of money” which can be loaned to members. The money stays within the local community and benefits others in Shropshire.

FAIRshare does not carry out any credit checks before opening an account – previous County Court Judgements (CCJs) – bankruptcy or insolvency –do not prevent someone from joining, nor do we charge for the services provided.

Credit Union interest rates are capped by our regulators at 3% per month, or 42.6% APR, whereas door step & pay day lenders typically charge anything from 200% to 5000%.

FAIRshare asks members to save as little or as much as they can afford, from just £1/week or £5/month. Members have the option to access affordable low cost loans from £50 to £7,500 in value, with repayments over anything from a few weeks up to five years. Interest is calculated on the reducing balance – not the original loan value – and the amount borrowed is based on the member’s income and expenditure and their ability to repay the loan. There are no arrangement fees and no penalties for early repayment – and loans to individuals are covered by FREE life insurance\* for peace of mind. (\*Terms & conditions apply).

FAIRshare welcomes community & corporate membership from clubs, groups, societies, charities, associations, businesses & organisations who are looking for a safe, secure, ethical home for their funds, whilst benefitting the local community.

Payroll Savings is a scheme FAIRshare runs in partnership with a number of Shropshire employers, and allows staff to pay money directly from their salary to their FAIRshare account. It is a convenient, confidential & hassle free way to save & repay loans and is a staff benefit a business can offer to help improve the financial well-being of its staff as well as meeting its corporate social responsibility objectives.

FAIRshare also offers business loans to businesses with a base in Shropshire that have been trading successfully for at least 18 months. Like many organisations, FAIRshare relies on the invaluable help and support of volunteers.

If anyone is interested in volunteering, whether helping occasionally or on a regular basis, or championing FAIRshare and the Credit Union movement, please do contact us. FAIRshare is committed to helping as many people in Shropshire as possible, and this is only possible with the help of volunteers and the community.

Many people are not familiar with credit unions and are not aware of the range of services they offer.  We do not have a Wonga-sized marketing budget to promote ourselves, and rely on people with strong community connections to spread the word about the ethical benefits of joining FAIRshare Credit Union.

The Chairman thanked Andrea for her presentation and for her time this evening.

**BIG LOCAL:**

The Chairman welcomed Nick Heard who gave the following presentation on the Big Local.

Nick explained what was in their plan and how are they progressing with it?

**Big Local Co-ordinator**

Bridget, our Big Local Co-ordinator, has been in post for 12 months and is the main point of contact for Three Parishes Big Local. Her role includes supporting the partnership, Big Local communications and publicity, progressing the Community Plan, supporting Community-led projects, developing and managing the Community Chest and community-led project funding grant application processes

**Community & Youth Worker**

Andy, our Community & Youth worker has been in post for 5 months. His role is to work towards improving youth and community provision within the Three Parishes, to ensure equality of service provision across the Three Parishes and to recruit and manage volunteers to support the delivery of the Community Plan.

**Personal Finance and Savings Clubs in Schools**

We have worked with Fairshare Credit Union to bring regular service points to each of the three villages which now take place weekly on a Tuesday: At the service points, Fairshare can open savings accounts, administer loan applications, provide budgeting advice and a debt signposting service for residents. They also offer services for Community groups and businesses. We are working with Fairshare to develop savings clubs in the primary schools and youth clubs in our area.

**Community Chest**

Our Community Chest small grants fund was one of the first projects from our Community plan to have an impact on the Community. Launched in August 2014, we have since received 18 applications and awarded grants totalling £5,650 to groups across the three villages.

**Community led project fund**

Branded “The Big Grants Scheme”, this fund was launched in March 2015 with £50,000 of funding available for larger community projects during the first 18 months of the scheme. The aim of the scheme is to support projects or activities, especially new or innovative projects that require a grant of £501 or more and that work towards improving the Three Parishes Big Local Community, achieving our aspirations. The typical maximum grant value from this fund is £5000 although we would consider supporting higher value projects that would make a significant contribution to the community.

**Grant funding advice and support service**

We are supporting Community groups to source other avenues of potential funding for their projects. This service is available by contacting the Big Local Co-ordinator.

**Business Forum**

The investigation phase of this project is currently underway. We are looking at current support for businesses available in the area.

**Carshare Scheme**

We have worked with Shropshire Council to develop a tailored version of their Carshare website – www.shropshare.co.uk that is suitable for residents of the three parishes. We will also be installing signage within the 3 villages to promote car sharing within the next few months.

**No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)**

No Interest Loans are designed to support those in most financial need of a short term loan. We are working with the current NILS scheme in Tenbury Wells to look at how we could develop and manage a version of this scheme within the Three Parishes Big Local area.

10. Social Investment in Social businesses and entrepreneurs. This is an area of the Community Plan that is still in the project development phase.

The Chairman thanked Nick for his presentation and for his time this evening.

**UNSUNG HERO AWARD:**

The Chairman reminded everyone that the parish council would be looking towards the end of this year for nominations for this award to persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the community over a number years.

**REPORTS FROM PUBLIC GROUPS:**

**St Martins Trust Centre**

Cllr Steve Davenport gave the following report.

With the Village Life coming on line we invested in a new photocopier which is full colour and staples booklets. We have had a new concrete path in the compound at the back of the building, a lot of the labour was given by the guys from Stoke Heath Prison and finish off by Huw Manford, and also our thanks go to Green Skips and Travis Perkins for donating half of the materials.

The flag pole is up and we flew the Union flag for the first for Remembrance Sunday.

Oswestry Collage have tried to get some classes going here over the last 12 months but unfortunately it has all come to nothing. They are committed to ‘Learning in the Community’ but only one or two people want to take up the opportunity, not enough to run any classes.

Fibre Optic broadband is here, are old computers are a bit slow but once on the web we have speeds up to 36mps.

Carrot and Carp is going from strength to strength. There are two good committees which work together very well. The pond has been cleared and the orchard planted but I’ll let them talk more about that later.

We have two new Trustees Keith Allum and Dan Anderton. It is good to have a couples of young men on the team, as they do bring a fresh and exciting view to the work. Keith on the Angling Committee and Dan who is updating the Community Website, which we hope will be ready to upload at the Big Get Together on the 15th May.

Plans for the future, we are seeking to up-grade the Kitchen to make it more of a commercial kitchen so people can hire it to cook, in a more commercial way or to allow luncheon club to operate here.

The Community Garden is in need of some restoration, I’m sure you’ve seen that the raised bed has failed this year and some of the bench seats have broken too. Application for a grant to replace one of the seats with an almost indestructible, recycled materials seat similar to the one by the toddlers play area. We are looking at the other areas where there is wood and hopefully in due course will change them. If anyone can help with materials or labour please come and talk to us.

As ever our thanks go to are volunteers, Keith Palling and John Hitchcock our computer team, Neil Thompson, handyman who has nearly caught up with all the little jobs around the place and our newly appointed gardener, Peter Imbry.

**St Martins Parish Plan**

Cllr Jim Hoos gave the following report from the Parish Plan Committee.

A recent survey was carried out at Stan’s Store to find out residents views on updates for the parish plan. The results were as follows;

Amenities:- tennis courts, permanent village library, mobile cinema, trim track at Ifton Meadows and better public transport.

Environment:- Reduce speeding through the village, 30 mph signs on all approach roads, traffic lights instead of mini roundabouts and no parking on pavements and near road junctions.

Elderly:- Quiet garden area and bus service from Cedar Close.

Housing:- Starter/Affordable housing plus more housing for single adults.

Mothers & Toddlers:- reopen group plus walking bus to school.

Jobs & Business:- Museum & Visitor Centre plus more small business units on local industrial site.

Items of concern that the committee felt needed immediate attention of the parish council included;

* Move the school flashing lights at Ifton to new School.
* School signs at Moors Bank too small and obscured by trees.
* 30 mph signs on all approach roads to village.
* Progress needed on removal of hedge and provision of foot/cycle path at Rhos Ilan Farm.
* Re marking of names on War Memorial.

**St Martins Village Life**

Cllr John Stevens gave the following report for the Village Life Magazine.

In January of last year a public meeting at the Centre decided to set up a committee to launch a new regular magazine for St Martins village. Ten people agreed to serve on the editorial committee, and they subsequently agreed to name the magazine Village Life, to produce it on a bi-monthly basis starting in May 2014 and set the target of making it financially self-supporting and sustainable.

Thanks to the hard work of the committee in composing and editing each edition, the dozen or so volunteers who turn up at the Centre to print and assemble it, and the 26 volunteers who deliver it to every home (and a number of businesses) in the village, the first year of production was completed with the publication of the March 2015 edition at the end of last month.

All the feedback we have received tells us that Village Life is well received and well read, but we are always open to any new ideas that could improve it – so please keep them coming!

The target of financial sustainability is of course a never ending task, but, thanks to an initial grant from the Local Joint Committee, ongoing grants from the Parish Council and Big Local, together with advertising revenue from 37 local businesses and organisations, we have raised sufficient income to ensure continuation well into our second year and we are confident that we can extend well beyond that.

We express our thanks to all those who fall into the categories above, as well as to the many people who contribute articles and “what’s on” information to each edition, and additionally to those individuals who have made donations to the magazine whether directly or through the collection boxes around the village.

Our special thanks go to the Trustees of St Martins Centre with whom we have a reciprocal arrangement that keeps the cost of printing down for us and ensures that that they have a good deal with the supplier of their printer/copier.

Finally, our thanks go to people who have contributed to specific activities for which we are especially grateful. Sue Schofield, who does the detailed work of turning contributor items into a well laid out magazine; to Cherry Healey, who has transferred all of her support, knowledge and enthusiasm from Chatabout to Village Life (including the list of all her previous advertisers); and finally to the late Cynthia Gartry whose enduring contribution was the inspiration for the design of the magazine cover.

**St Martins Youth Club**

Sue Heard gave the following report from the Youth Club.

We have had yet another busy year and thankfully Nick is back on duty with us! Recently our Friday evening sessions have been attended by over 50 young people with one evening breaking the 70 record.

As usual our activities include Pool, Table Tennis, PS3, Air Hockey, Table football, Arts & Crafts, Tuck shop and cooking when we have enough staff. The Easter Crispy cakes proved popular and ran for two weeks.

The young people range in age from 10 to 16 and come from Weston Rhyn, Gobowen, Chirk Bank, Oswestry as well as St Martins. As you can imagine they are not all little angels but most weeks you don't hear any raised voices.

There have been two minor incidents, one in the club and one outside but with the support of PC Kate Le Clere and her merry band of CSO's the young people concerned have been spoken to and with the support of their parents continue to attend.

We are teaming up with The New Saints Community Foundation to hopefully organise coaching for table tennis as well as introduce more activities, especially outside in the summer months.

Thanks to Sue, Judi, Wendy and Keith who also volunteer to give up their Friday evenings to come along to support our young people.

**St Martins Chapel**

Sue Heard gave the following report on behalf of the Chapel.

Services continue to be held at the Chapel by both the Methodists and The Eagles Fellowship. The Guides, Brownies and Rainbows also continue to use the school room along with other local groups who sometimes hold meetings there.

Thursday morning coffee sessions are extremely well attended with over 40 there this morning.

**Fiends of Ifton Meadows**

Ann Williams gave the following report on behalf of Friends of Ifton Meadows.

A brief summary of work carried out by IMMC/Friends of Ifton Meadows for year April 2014 to April 2015. Following the decision not to hold a Lantern Parade in 2014 we found our work load a lot easier. We had not realised the amount of time we spent on arranging and holding this event and although it is disappointing that no one came forward to help we are glad that we made the decision not to continue.

Part of the fence at colliery entrance needed to be replaced and this was recently carried out by Shropshire Council but the proposed adjustment to the layout had to be cancelled due to financial cut backs.

Friends of Ifton Meadows have been working on the second Sunday of each month cutting brambles, pulling ragwort etc.

In November they also planted 400 wild daffodils - 200 each of Tenby and British. The work we do is varied and also includes monitoring the flora and fauna when every possible. These have taken well and the first display is better than we expect.

A visit was also made to inspect the Hafod Nature Reserve to see if we could pick up any ideas for our own site.

In March 2015 we held an open meeting with speaker Tony Grey who talked on 'Pollinators' and the importance of the role they perform. Help to maintain and monitor this Local Nature Reserve is always welcome.

Meetings are held on 2nd Tuesday of each month 7.30 p.m. at St.Martins Centre and workdays 2nd Sunday of each month 1.30 to 4 p.m. meeting at the Colliery entrance.

April 2015.

**St Martins Craft Guild**

Alice Wilding gave the following report on behalf of the Craft Guild.

The Craft Guild meets weekly on Wednesday afternoons in the lounge at Cedar Close between 2 pm and 4 pm. The members mainly knit or crochet, and twice a year we send gifts that have been made especially for them to charities. In the summer we donate mostly blankets and snuggle guilt’s to a Women’s Refuge in mid Wales, these items taken there for us by the local Linus charity organiser, Mrs Marion Evans, who is our liaison with the charity and told us what they chiefly want.

Near Christmas for the last three years we have given a variety of knitted or crocheted items to an organisation in southern Portugal which we heard of through one of our members, now retired from the guild, where there is great deprivation among the local people.

When we are making things for our charities, members use yarn that has been donated or has been purchased from Guild funds, but members are also free to make items for their own use in which case they use their own materials. We charge £1 each per week which covers our rent at Cedar Close, tea and biscuits, and yarns as needed.

**Footpaths**

Cllr Brian Latham gave the following report on footpaths in the parish.

While the footpaths close to the village continue to be used regularly, the majority of paths further away are used much less frequently. The most likely reason for this seems to be that they do not link places of significance. In an attempt to create more interest, we are hoping to publish a number of circular walks of varying distances with brief descriptions of features of interest. The first of these, a walk around Wigginton has been published in Village Life. Our eventual aim is to have enough routes to be able to publish them in the form of a leaflet.

The paths have come through the winter fairly well though some stiles and gateways have been badly affected by mud and standing water. We have put crushed brick and stone in several to alleviate this problem but with limited improvement because the cause is lack of drainage. The very popular footpaths from Cottage Lane became virtually unusable for several weeks because of waterlogging.

The status of the bridleway from Moors lane to Wigginton remains with the Inspector and is unresolved. If the inspector finds in favour of the Right of Way, reinstatement will be difficult.

Reductions in staffing within Shropshire Council have resulted in fewer resources being available to deal with footpaths issues and as a result, an increasing burden is likely to devolve to the Parishes but without additional support at an administrative level.

**St Martins Historians**

Cllr Neil Graham gave the following report on behalf of the St Martins Historians.

We are a small group of like-minded people with a shared interest in the past. Our aim is to investigate and study the history and culture of the local area and beyond, with a view to communicating our findings to the local community at large.

We meet on the first Wednesday of each month at the lounge at Cedar Close at 7.30 pm. We explore a variety of local history topics, with series of talks given by invited speakers and visits to places of interest. All visitors are welcome.

When we have an invited speaker we open out the meeting to the rest of the village and hold the event in the Community Centre.

Over the past few months we have had another presentation given by local historian and author, Mr Idris Evans from Llangollen. He has visited the Historians many times before and in March came back to talk to us about “The Welsh Drovers”.

We have also had some days out when we visited Overton, Erbistock & Marchwell Churches and were given very informative guided tours and also enjoyed lunch out at a local hostelry. Last September we visited Churches in Hanmer and Bronington, with the customary lunch out at the Hanmer Arms! Plans are afoot to visit Churches in Penley and Bettisfield next.

The group were also involved in the Heritage Open Day in September, when our own St Martins Church was open to visitors as part of the scheme. Members of the group showed the visitors around and provided much needed delicious refreshments. The Bell ringing band was also involved and several visitors even had a go at ringing the bells. We all enjoyed the experience and even helped devise a new guide pamphlet to the church. We have been asked to participate again this year and we are all looking forward to the venture.

Sadly, we bade farewell to one of our founder members in June, Mr Keith Young, who had been our treasurer since the group’s inauguration, has now moved to Congleton to live with his daughter. Of course, this had to be marked by a farewell lunch at The Keys. This was also the venue for our Christmas Lunch, when we all enjoyed a most beautiful meal.

We have also begun to research all the names on the War Memorial, in view of the Centenary anniversary of the First World War, which has proved to be a long, although interesting task.

We have also been invited to have a stand at the 3 parishes Big Local Event on the 16th May at St Martins School. We look forward to seeing you there!

We may only be few in number, and we are all over retirement age. Nevertheless, we are blessed with a spirit that overcomes adversities and look forward to a new season of interesting talks and visits to fascinating places with renewed enthusiasm, and we would very much like to encourage some new members to join us on our venture.

**St Martins Brownies**

Heather Lloyd gave the following report on behalf of St Martins Brownies.

Looking back we had a great year. A Trip to the Iron Works for a picnic.

On May 16-18th we had our biggest adventure yet, we went to PGL in Shrewsbury.

The accommodation was comfortable, the activities well planned and safe, the staff member we had looking after us was so funny and got on so well with the girls we learnt so much. The food was to die for and so much of it.

The girls tried and did their very best at each activity. Wall climbing, orienteering, pole climbing swinging high above the ground, not for the faint hearted.

I felt so full of pride for all the girls had achieved over the weekend. Next project, this was working with the Wrekin housing trust. The girls looked around the finished houses in colliery road.

They then took this further and designed their own shoe box room which was placed in a competition for the best thought out design and materials used. The designs were then judged by Steve Swan and Sarah of Wrekin Housing Trust, not an easy job. We were given 24 high visibility vest by Wrekin Housing Trust for which we are very great full. We used our new vest to join Caroline from Shropshire road Safety when she game to visit and worked on the Road Safety badge with the girls.

In the summer we held a BBQ to bring an end to 100 years of celebration of Girl Guiding.

We held a party in Mrs Arthens garden, we had invited all the Whittington / Gobowen district Rainbows, Brownies and guides over 50 girls plus leaders. The Brownies Celebrated the Remembrance Day in a special way this year as well as meeting with others at the cenotaph and marching to the Church service. We held our own act of Remembrance at St Martins School inviting the Chairman of the parish council and chairman of the Chirk British Legion to talk to the Girls and parents. The girls acted some of the roles girl guides played in helping the war effort.

A Trip to Drayton manor with Brownies, Rainbows, Guides and families thousands there.

Christmas carol service and play in the Methodist church.

Nick Heard then thanked Heather for all the work carried out behind the Chapel.

**St Martins Parish Church Report**

Cllr John Sands gave the following report on behalf of the Parish Church.

St Martins Parish Church is there for everyone. We have a service every Sunday at 9.30 am, also on the 1st Sunday of every month we have a Sunday First Service which starts at 11.00 am, this service is suitable for families and many enjoy this worship time. Baptisms usually take place on Sunday afternoons.

Every Tuesday a coffee morning takes place in the Chapter House at 10.30 am.

During the past year we have done a lot of work in the Churchyard. We have planted a new beach hedge around the cremation area. We have also cut back some overgrown trees. The grass is cut in the Churchyard at least 12 times a year and we are very grateful to the Parish Council for contributing to this.

Last July the Church Organ was completely overhauled.

We have six bells which are rung every Sunday, but of course we are always grateful when new members join the team of bell ringers.

**Age UK**

Myfanwy Dulson gave the following report on behalf of Age UK Day Centre, Cedar Close, St Martins. We are a small group of dedicated volunteers who organise the day centre on a Tuesday and make a varied programme of activities for the members who attend, including companionship and stimulation.

The members enjoy playing cards, dominoes, art work, bingo and every two weeks we have a trainer Shelly to come and do arm chair exercises. We are also able to cater for people who have dementia all of which gives the carers a well-earned break. The Keys provide us with an excellent lunch and Dial a Ride provide transport. Lastly we would like to thank all the people who support us in fund raising.

**St Martins Book Box**

Cllr Sue Schofield gave the following report from the Book Box

Book Box is a book lending service which is used by many people on a regular basis. Our membership is up to 103 adults and 48 children. As you can see there are lots of books that have been donated, about 2,000 at present and changing all the time. There has got to be something for everyone.

Our thanks goes to Mrs Cherry Haeley for donating the two wheeled bookcases, they have made quite a difference. We could fill the whole room with books but there are times we have to be quite ruthless in deciding which to keep and which to pass on to charity shops, mainly to make room for new book that people who are very generous in bring in.

**Grow It, Market It, Show It.**

Cllr Sue Schofield gave the following report from the Grow It, Market It, Show It.

Last year’s show was very successful, again over 200 entries from over 70 people, from tomatoes to pumpkins, Sweet peas to Dahlias cake, jams, children’s classes and crafts of all sorts.

My thanks as chair goes to the other committee members, who work so hard on the day not to mention the work prior to the day. Thanks is also due to those who made the effort to enter, as without them there would be no show. There are a number of others who I should thank, who invested in the day but I would end up feeling like an Oscar winner giving a long list of people who no one knows.

This year’s show is on Sept 12th, we will again feature the Man Cake Class so get practicing. This month saw the start of the Sunflowers growing competition, if you want to get involved in that I have some forms and seeds. There is information around about the National Competition for TOP TRAY and TOP VASE in conjunction with Gardens News magazine, also we are going to split up the craft classes, not quite sure how yet but watch out for the information in the Village Life.

Can I take this opportunity to appeal for good quality item for the prize draw, we usually have about 20 prizes, I don’t know about you but I find it difficult job to be always going to businesses asking for help, although they are always very good at donating.

**St Martins Scouts**

The Parish Clerk read out a report from Nick Pickles.

Beavers - tragically lost our beaver leader, Gareth Utting at 34 to heart attack. Kerry Llywarch and Deb Jones now running beavers. Cubs - leaders are Barry Evans and Nigel Llywarch. Scouts - leaders are. Rob Pickles, Dave. Crips and help from Sarah Llywarch.

Group scout leader - currently looking to fill this position and also assistant if possible. Nick Pickles was GSL but recently stepped down and will be helping with all sections as needed.   
All sections planted daffodils in memory of Gareth at scout hut which are now flowering wonderfully. All sections camped at Walford College in July for district camp with several other groups and enjoyed various activities such as climbing, archery, canoeing, back woods, cooking, animal man, craft, camp fire and many more. All sections have undertaken several badges including first aid, outdoor challenge, hikes and nights away. Have very recently received some grants towards archery and camping equipment and are also hoping to put fences up around the grounds to make it more secure and private.   
  
Still looking for committee members and leaders for each section and anyone interested should contact Nicola Pickles - 07800655961. Currently have space in all sections and would welcome new starters - beavers 5 3/4 - 8, cubs 8 - 10 1/2 and scouts 10 - 14.

**St Martins WI**

The Parish Clerk read out a report from Shirley Willis.

Meetings have been held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in the lounge at the institute. Speakers talk on a wide range of things also some are like workshops and we all get involved. If there is any time over we like to play blind whist, bingo, beetle drives or quizzes which is always great fun with plenty of laughter. At the end of April two members completed a walk on the Shropshire Way map, a route that was very challenging to mark the start of the centenary. At the end of May members ran a stall at the Derwen fête. In June members catered for the steam rally with Whittington as a fund raising event. A Few members joined the bus to Cumbria organised by West Felton. On July 8th many members from St. Martins went to see “the Centenary Baton” passed over to Powys at Llanyblodwell Hall. The Baton will have travelled every county in England and Wales ending at the Royal Albert Hall on June 4th this year.

In August we organised a coach trip to Salford Quays and entered the Oswestry Show competitions. In September an annual social meeting was held at West Felton for Oswestry North groups. In November, at our A.G.M. I was re-elected as President with 9 other committee members. On Remembrance Day a wreath was laid at the Cenotaph for the centenary of W.W.1. A tea-party for the elderly was held at the chapter house and parcels where sent to Dolywern Cheshire Home for Christmas. A Carol service was held at West Felton and our Christmas dinner at The White Lion Whittington in December ending a very busy year. This year we have many more things planned to mark the W.I. Centenary with celebrations happening all over the country.

At present we have 25 members, an increase from last year again, new members and visitors are always welcome.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and all those who presented reports.

The meeting closed at 8.43 p.m.

Signed …………………………………………. Date ………………………

Chairman