

Wroughton & Wichelstowe Parish Church – the last year

We love working with our local community. and every month we met with our Discovery Church friends to pray for and bless the villages of Wroughton and Wichelstowe and all who live and work in them.

In the past year we have continued to go into Wroughton Infants School and East Wichel Primary School for 'Open the book' sessions where we act out Bible stories in school assemblies – and will soon be starting this at Kingfisher School, Middle Wichel. We also read stories at our monthly visit with Wroughton Preschool. Schools visit us at Easter and Christmas and we take assemblies at Wroughton Junior School.

We put on events open to all in our local community, aimed at engaging children and families - Pancake races in February, an 'Easter Rocks' activity morning, a summer 'Wildlife Survey', the Pumpkin party (Halloween alternative) at the end of October and a Christmas activity morning in December. We also supported village events including the Wroughton Carnival in July and the commemoration of the 1200th anniversary of the Battle of Ellendune in Wroughton in September. We would love to build more relationships with Wichelstowe in the future, if people resource allows.

Our lay ministers visit a number of nursing and residential homes in the parish, and our clergy visited the Prospect Hospice to see patients who have requested support. Our church offers baptisms, weddings, funerals and burials of ashes, providing bereavement support to families as necessary.

We have had many visitors to the church (which is open all day, every day) and the churchyard – some to visit loved ones and tend graves, some just to enjoy the peace and quiet. However, practically it falls on volunteers to manage and maintain it. We are very grateful to the Wroughton Lower Churchyard volunteers from the village who keep the lower churchyard looking so well- tended, and to volunteers from our church community who look after the Upper Churchyard. We work together to maintain the churchyard especially now that the churchyard is closed and Swindon Borough Council only cut the grass twice a year. We are continuing to work on re- wilding some areas of the upper churchyard and planted Yellow Rattle seeds on one of the long grass areas to encourage native wildflowers to grow.

Locally we support the Filling Station, which provided around 3,200 bags of food and provisions to an average of 63 people in need on the streets of Swindon. Members of our congregation also volunteer with the Swindon Food Collective at their warehouse in Swindon and the distribution centre in Wroughton which is run in conjunction with Discovery Church.

As a church we acknowledge the damage caused to our common home and are committed to minimising our negative impact on the environment. We follow the Eco Church programme run by the Christian charity 'A Rocha' to take practical action on caring for God's earth. Our worship addresses creation care and climate injustice and a

dedicated 'Season of Creation' is held in September/October. During the year we continued to encourage and inspire our church community to live gently on the earth as individuals and households by hosting various events and activities and supporting campaigns and charities involved in the climate and nature crises. The rain garden at the Church Hall was featured on BBC Points West!

Our Church Hall, Priors Hill, is used by a number of village activities, including Wroughton Preschool which uses the hall every weekday from 8am until 4pm during school term times. In recent years it has become very popular for children's parties.

Our weekly attendance has continued to grow to an average of 110. Children of all ages are welcome at any service, with a monthly all-age service and Sunday Club for under 11's on two Sundays a month. Our 5 'small groups' provide valuable opportunities for teaching, fellowship and pastoral support. Healing ministry and prayer support is always available.