

### **And then there were two**

In recent years at The Church in the Woottons we have been very fortunate to have had a team of five licensed ministers and, in recent years this has allowed us to offer up to five church services in our churches, and in South Wootton Village Hall on a Sunday. Our team is being pared down for various reasons. Graham our Curate left us in the summer, Tony Kendall retired as Reader during in the year, and the Revd. David Tate and his wife Margaret are planning to move away early in the new year. I and the Revd. Linda Ashby will be left as the only two clergy in the parish and so clearly, some things must change - especially as Linda serves in a voluntary capacity.

From the 8th January, we will be offering a new pattern of services. On Sunday mornings in Church there will be two services, one at 8.30am and the other at 10.00am. We will hold these services in alternating church buildings – on one Sunday the two services will be held in St. Mary's Church, on the next Sunday they will be held in All Saints Church. Breakfast at 10 will continue to be held at South Wootton Village Hall on the first and third Sundays of each month.

I think this new way of doing things will have several advantages. It will help increase our sense of togetherness. We already hold united services each month and many people say how good it is for the congregations to meet together and a full church feels really good. The smaller number of services will reduce the workload for our dedicated team of wardens, sacristans, sidespeople, coffee makers and musicians. Everyone really enjoys what they do, and we are very grateful to our volunteers who work tirelessly. But everyone needs a break, and people will be free more often to simply enjoy being in church without the distractions of what needs doing next and when. Also the new pattern of services will mean that either Linda Ashby or I will be able to oversee the services on a particular Sunday when the other is away – we do need Sundays off sometimes.

As far as possible we will conduct Baptism services in the Church that is already being used on that Sunday. Heating just one of our church buildings will reduce our energy bills and markedly improve our carbon footprint – such a vital consideration these days.

Currently our service pattern is quite complicated – each Sunday the services are different – in the future the pattern will be far more simple and this will be better for all of us – those who come each week, and those who come occasionally. What we do each Sunday will be much easier to grasp for those looking for a new church too. We will still be offering a broad mixture of styles of worship from traditional prayer book services through Communion services with choir to contemporary services with music groups and less formality.

In this issue of Contact you will find the new service pattern explained in tabular form. If you are a regular or infrequent worshipper, or if you have not visited us yet I hope to see you soon in the new year.

May the New Year be as good for you as it possibly can be.

James

Rector of the Church in the Woottons