

## Somersham Baptist Church Parish Council Report 2025

Our Sunday congregation averages 25-30 people, half from the village, half from outside. There are a wide range of ages, from young to old, including two teenagers; we could do with a few more to help them develop within their own peer age group.

In 2024 giving, including Gift Aid was a healthy £42,000, some of which was designated for the refurbishment project, and nearly £4,300 was passed on to other Christian Ministries.

Like many other Churches we use courses produced by the director of Evangelism at All Souls, Langham Place, London. 'Christianity Explored' introduces Jesus, who he is, why he came and what he asks for. 'Life Explored' examines the character of God from Genesis to Revelation and shows in giving us Himself it is the best gift we can ever receive. We have hosted these courses both in the Duke of Marlborough and at the Chapel. Last year we were able to baptise one mature person from the village who has come to believe and joined us in membership.

Last year, the building works were completed and we have a nice shiny new exterior to our buildings and the more environmentally friendly interior that should make it more pleasant in winter (and quieter for our neighbours). The total cost was in the region of £60,000 including the patio works. We have been able to make use of grants and an interest free loan and people have been most generous in their giving.

Last year also saw the retirement of our much-loved Pastor, Mark Newcombe. Whilst we are sad to see him leave the church, he will still continue to live in the village and be the friendly calming influence that him and Carolyn have been for the past 28 years. As a church, we are actively seeking a new Pastor to continue the Lord's work in the village and build on the work led by Mark.

Friends and Neighbours (our Ladies' meeting) did suffer from the refurbishment, but now we have settled back and numbers have picked up. Friends and Neighbours generally meet on the second Monday of each month between 7.30pm and 9.30pm

Lunch and Listen has been unaffected by the building work, we regularly get over 12 guests who do not attend church or chapel but who attend for the fellowship and good food on a monthly basis. Again, this is generally the first Thursday of each month, including coffee from 10.30am and lunch at 12.00noon. It is open to all, but please contact Edwin Mayhew to ensure that any dietary needs are catered for.

We also have started a Men's Group, who will be meeting on a monthly basis. As it is a new venture, we have not yet settled on a fixed evening, so please use the Link Magazine or the notice board for the next meeting date and details. We are excited to launch this new group to both members and the wider community, and will have fun evenings as well as the opportunity to talk.

We continue to look for mature Christians to start a new children's ministry, and also for mature and gifted Christian workers to join our four church officers in leading the Church.

Stephen R Bullard (Deacon)