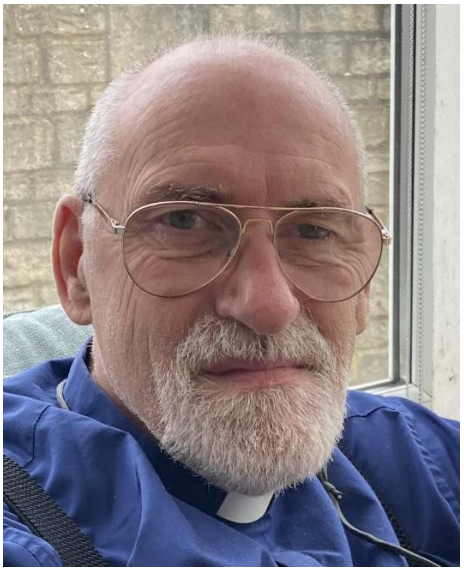

A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

The road to Royal Wootton Bassett is long and winding, well at least it has been for me. (And perhaps when you know me better you will understand it might continue to be as I have next to no sense of direction.)

The journey began in Doncaster where I first worked for the Methodist Church and then took me via Birmingham (training) to Colchester, then Greater Manchester. Later, Staffordshire, then Coventry, followed by Ipswich and Hull. So, a long and winding road. Most of that time was working in Healthcare Chaplaincy. However, I arrived in Royal Wootton Bassett in late August to take up new responsibilities in the Methodist Church.

Wiltshire is not an area of the country I have previously had any connection with and on an initial visit I confessed my knowledge of the area was limited to the fact that Swindon was home to both the *Magic Roundabout* (not the children's TV programme – which, for some will give away my age) and *Bible Society* (which helps people see the Bible through fresh eyes and discover its life-changing message for themselves).

I should have found time to develop hobbies – but I haven't really, although I do enjoy watching sport, especially football. As a follower of Jesus, I believe that in Him we can encounter a God who is Generous, Gracious and Loving, and through whom all things are possible. This belief was reinforced in 2016 when my local team (Leicester City) won the Premier League. Thankfully the Good News of Jesus is more reliable than Leicester's performances, as 10 years after that remarkable achievement they now languish much lower in the football league.

I am accompanied at home by my elderly cat, Wesley. He does not roam as widely as he used to and is now very much a house cat. I, on the other hand, am very much looking forward to making new friends, exploring an area of the country I have not

previously known and playing my part in providing pastoral care and leadership to the people called Methodists.

Thank you to everyone in the churches and the wider community for the warm welcome I have received so far, and I look forward to getting to know people and places better over the days, weeks, months and hopefully years ahead.

Tony