

Stratton St. Margaret



Mystery surrounds the decision to close Stratton Green Baptist Church, which has been a place of worship for 263 years. A post on the website of the Swindon Road church said members were sad to announce that its final service will take place at 10.30am on Sunday, July 6. The post read: Important Notice: We are sad to say after 263 years Stratton Green Baptist Church is to close. Our Final Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving will be held on Sunday 6 July 2014 at 10.30am. The event aims to be a celebration of the church's history. Yesterday, no one from the church was available to explain why it was closing but councillors expressed their sadness at the news.

Mayor Teresa Page, who represents Upper Stratton and Penhill, said: I'm very shocked and disappointed to hear this news as it was a very good community church. They were always very good when I was working at Stratton Hospital, as an auxiliary nurse, as they'd regularly come to the hospital and sing frequently. It is a sad sign of the times that they're closing. Stratton St Margaret parish councillor Michael Spry said: It was only last year and the year before that they were refurbishing the church, so closing is the last thing I would have been expecting to happen. I'm sure there will be many people who are disappointed to see the church go. Swindon councillor Joe Tray, who represents Upper Stratton and Penhill, said: I'm shocked and dismayed by the news that the church is going to close. I don't know if it is a reflection of the times we live in or not but it is a very sad thing to hear.

The first church building on the Swindon Road site was built in 1751 by a group of Christians who had been regularly meeting in a house in Stratton Green since 1740. The structure deteriorated and the majority of the building was demolished in 1934. The current Baptist church was then built and opened later that year with a Sunday school opening in Stratton Green in 1937. The church's membership has fluctuated over the years and at one point it only had one member. It is unknown whether a fall in numbers prompted the decision to close Stratton Green Baptist Church.

Evening Advertiser - 24th June 2014