

Parish nurses collect award

By PAUL HOBSON

A SUFFOLK church has won a national award for its parish nursing scheme.

Maidstone Road Baptist Church, Felixstowe, was selected above dozens of worthy projects to win a Faithworks Community Excellence Award for adult health and social care, worth £5,000.

The team picked up the award, sponsored by Anthony Collins Solicitors, during a ceremony at the House of Commons last week.

Maidstone Road appointed a parish nurse in 2006. Jane Pears is a registered nurse who works through the church two days a week offering spiritual as well as physical and mental health care.

She cares for people of all ages and backgrounds in a service that extends to areas not covered by conventional statutory facilities.

Her team helps people with issues such as grief and worry, who need help understanding medical procedures and options, who are physically unable to get themselves to the doctor or hospital or who feel their faith may be suffering as a result of their health.

Her support workers help the nurse with foot and leg care for elderly clients and chair-based exercises weekly, as well as other courses to improve physical and mental wellbeing.

For the other three days a week Jane, a member of Maidstone Road, works for the NHS in Felixstowe as a junior community sister.

Steve Lineham, chair of the management team, MRBC Parish Nursing said, 'This award means an enormous amount to us.

'We know that Faithworks sets a really high standard and so to be shortlisted was tremendously humbling.

'But we see it as affirmation of what we are doing in our community.

'We believe parish nursing working alongside the NHS is an excellent model that deserves to be widely adopted and taken up by other churches and public bodies.'

He added, 'Last month

our church agreed to extend the parish nurse's contract indefinitely, not knowing where the funding would come from, so this award is a great help and we hope that God will be glorified through what we are doing.'

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