

It is nearly 12 months since the floods hit St Michael's-on-Wyre when it was a miracle that the CofE primary School was able to stage its nativity play. You may recall that early in December the school had been badly hit by flooding and much of it was under water.

Lots of the fittings and furniture had to be thrown out and a temporary home was needed. At various times, they set up at a local farmer's Caravan Park, a Free Methodist Church and Myerscough College.

The village community, the church, parents, school staff, the local MP, Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education, the insurers, the Environment Agency and even the army all went out of their way to make things go as smoothly as possible for the pupils of St Michael's.

Fundraising events took place to assist the situation; people provided transport and storage facilities and the school cook still managed to produce daily lunch.

But the nativity play sticks long in the memory for two reasons. First of all there were 27 solos from girls and boys who had volunteered!

Secondly, and surprisingly, the focus of the nativity was the experience of a Syrian refugee family fleeing across Europe.

It was as though the school was saying, yes we have plenty of problems ourselves but, compared to some refugee families, our plight is much less severe.

I also recall that the chair of governors had been flooded from his home but that didn't stop him spearheading the effort for the school alongside the headteacher.

Then last week the school had a 'Flood Restoration Thanksgiving Service'.

It brought together the main players who had facilitated the travails of the school especially during their absence from their home site.

It was an opportunity to say thank you and present a gold star award and certificate to those alongside them in their hour of need.

The pupils sang 'We will never forget to say thank you' and the order of service included the words: 'Our school and nursery are blessed to enjoy the tremendous support from so many people'.

I want to echo that. If only we could bottle that sense of true community spirit, that working together for the local school.

We started by singing: "When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?"

The answer in St Michaels-on-Wyre was a resounding yes and it was just lovely to behold.

+Geoff