

*Parish of
St. John-in-Bedwardine*

2020

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

and

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 18th October at 11.30am

AGENDA

and

REPORTS

**The Accounts for 2019 and the Independent
Examiner's Report are shown in Annexe A**

St. John-in-Bedwardine Church
Agenda for the Annual Meeting
Sunday 18th October at 11.30am

Welcome and Opening prayers

PART 1 MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS Page

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2019 Part 1.

1. Election of Churchwardens. 2

PART 2 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Apologies.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2019 Part 2. 2-3

3. Matters Arising.

4. Elections of Parochial representatives of the laity:

 a. To the Parochial Church Council (4 vacancies).

 b. To the Deanery Synod (3 vacancies).

5. Appointments:

 a. Appointment of Independent Examiner. 4

6. A Report on changes in the roll since the last annual meeting. 4

7. An Annual Report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally:

 a. Vicar's Annual Report. 4-5

 b. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council..... 5-6

 c. Reports from Church Committees and Groups (written). 7-16

8. Financial Report and Accounts for the year ending 31.12.19

*The Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2019 are contained in **Annexe A** and incorporate the Finance Report and the Independent Examiner's report.*

9. Churchwardens' annual report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Parish Church. 17-18

10. Report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod. 20

11. Any Other Business.

PART 3 MEETING OF THE NEW PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Election of Assistant Churchwardens.

2. Election of Lay Vice-Chairman.

3. Election of Secretary.

4. Co-option of Members.

5. Election of Treasurer.

6. Confirmation of Standing Committee

7. AOB.

8. Date of next meeting.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING
12 NOON SUNDAY, 7TH APRIL 2019

The Vicar took the chair. There were 37 present; 8 apologies were recorded. The complete list is available in the minute file.

Part 1 *The appointment of Churchwardens.*

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd April 2018 (part 1) were approved.

There were two nominations for the post of Churchwarden, Gordon Templeton and Joy Job. The PCC elected them both unanimously.

The Vicar thanked Gordon and Joy for all their work, including all that is done behind the scenes.

Part 2 *The Annual Parochial Church Meeting.*

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd April 2018 (part 2) were approved as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising.

For the PCC election: There were 4 vacancies. 4 people were proposed and elected: Graham Willis, Barbara Willis, Margaret Rutter and Graham Evans.

There were no proposed Sidesmen – this job is being undertaken by volunteers without the need for a title.

Chris Rees proposed, and Phil Bradford seconded the re-appointment of Grahame Lucas as our independent inspector. All were in favour. The PCC have recorded their thanks to Grahame Lucas.

Graham Evans, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that following the 6 yearly complete revision of the electoral roll it now has 125 members: The reduction is due to death, moving away and losing contact with the church. The number of people not re-joining the electoral roll was similar to the figure at the last 6 yearly revision – the fall in numbers was due to fewer people joining.

The Vicar noted that all reports had been issued in advance in booklet form to give people time to read them before the meeting. He asked for comments or questions about each report in turn. Some of the points raised:

- The Vicar said that members of the 8am congregation have received a letter about a consultative meeting which will take place on 12th May to discuss the future of the service due to some questions about its viability. There may be changes to the 8am service pattern after May.
- The Vicar asked to record thanks to Margaret Miller for providing the cover for the piano and to Arthur Miller for his work on the chairs in the Blakefield Room.
- The report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council is a statutory report.
- Everyone was given a chance to raise questions on any of the other reports. No questions were received.

The 2018 accounts and treasurers' report were presented to the meeting. Chris Rees explained that the tower and bell ringers accounts have been combined. Repairs to the tower (approximately £500 per annum) will now come from general funds. The organ repairs were partly paid for from general funds which is why the balance has reduced. We have a very generous legacy coming in that will more than cover this amount.

Phil Bradford proposed that the accounts were formally adopted. All were in favour.

Phil Bradford thanked Chris Rees for all the time and effort he had put into the accounts.

The Churchwardens' Annual Report for 2018 was accepted.

The Vicar read out a statement on the potential reordering of the church. He asked everyone to take a copy away with them to think about and then give their views to the PCC by Wednesday 15th May. He said that it is important that everyone's voice is heard.

Anne Sherratt pointed out that her report on baptisms had not been included in the APCM booklet. Liz Edwards will send a copy to Graham Evans for inclusion in the next magazine.

Part 3 *Parochial Church Council Meeting (apologies received from Luise Horrocks)*

At the PCC Meeting held immediately following the APCM the following appointments were made:

Assistant Churchwarden: It was agreed to hold this position in abeyance at the current time. Chris Rees suggested that the current churchwardens train up potential new churchwardens in the coming year.

Lay Vice Chair: Sue Bale was nominated by Graham Evans and seconded by Chris Rees.

Secretary: Elizabeth Edwards (appointed as a non-member of the PCC, remunerated within her role as Parish Administrator) was nominated by Chris Rees, seconded by Colin Nash.

Co-opted Members: No members were co-opted onto the PCC. (The PCC can have 2 people co-opted and this can be done at any time during the year).

Treasurer: Chris Rees was nominated by Graham Evans, seconded by Barbara Willis.

Composition of the **Standing Committee** was agreed as: The Vicar, Lay Vice Chair, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Graham Evans (as previous PCC Secretary), with Sarah Cottrill (Vicar of St Clements) invited to attend.

The next PCC meeting is on Wednesday 22nd May 2019 where responses to the re-ordering of the church will be the main item discussed.

*Liz Edwards, PCC Secretary
April 2019*

APPOINTMENTS

Appointment of Independent Examiner

The proposal is to re-appoint Mr Grahame Lucas as our Independent Examiner.

Chris Rees, Treasurer, September 2020

Electoral Roll Report – April 2020

The church Electoral Roll stood at 125 after the 2019 APCM.

3 people has been added since the 2019 APCM and 6 have been removed. The new roll is 122 (a decrease of 3).

In accordance with rule 5 of the Church Representation Rules 2020, a copy of the roll as revised has been published for not less than fourteen days before the annual parochial church meeting.

Graham Evans, Electoral Roll Officer

Vicar's Annual Report

Had I written this report before I went to Peru in March, it would have been very different. With all that has happened since then, and the current situation in which we find ourselves, it is rather hard to compose something meaningful about 2019 which is not inevitably coloured by hindsight. At the end of last year, however, I felt that we were generally in a positive place. Although the Team was still not (and is still not) in place, St John's was working more closely with St Michael's and the two parishes were generally actively seeking cooperation. We had agreed a new service pattern which balanced some of the competing tensions while largely retaining St John's tradition, supplemented by the likes of Café Church and parish breakfasts. With a large weekly attendance at Little Lambs and the introduction of Diddy Disciples, we were making positive moves in our work with children and families. The New Testament course run during Lent suggested people had an interest in studying something about their faith. The consultation process about reordering was progressing steadily and we had reached a point where we were considering more formal plans in order to equip our church for its mission in a changed context. The picture was not all cheerful. Finances were less healthy than hoped and we had intended to run a stewardship campaign this summer. We were (and still are) facing some costly work arising from the Quinquennial, not least on the tower stonework. For the most part, however, I was pleased with the direction in which we were moving and grateful for the commitment and dedication of a large number of volunteers in sustaining our worshipping and wider life.

It is not the place of this report to comment on 2020, although it should be acknowledged that everything that has happened since March will inevitably change things and set back many of those positive developments. I would like to recognise with gratitude the work of Sarah, the wardens, the ALMs and a team of volunteers during lockdown and beyond, for it is only thanks to their willingness to do so much that we have managed to keep going in the ways that we have. The next few months will be extremely challenging, not just for us as a church, but for all those individuals isolated and lonely at home and many more besides. Difficult times and hard questions lie ahead. Please continue to pray for God's strength and guidance as we face whatever may be on the path in front of us.

Revd Phil Bradford

Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council 2019-20

The PCC met 7 times during the year (April 2019 to March 2020), a short meeting to appoint officers following the APCM in April and 6 ordinary meetings in May, July, September, November, January and March.

In May 2019 the PCC considered the draft proposals and returned their comments for the new Worcester City West Team. No objections were raised to the proposals from other PCC's within the Deanery. This has now gone to the Church Commissioners who will check the legalities. Following this the proposals will go on public display in all the interested churches.

Pews and re-ordering – a briefing paper was put together by Phil Bradford with the responses regarding proposed re-ordering. The majority of responses were in favour of partial or complete removal of pews. The DAC carried out a site visit in September 2019 in line with the statement of significance. The next step is a community consultation and feasibility study. In January 2020 the PCC adopted the following as their Parish Vision Statement: "We envisage St John's church as a vibrant hub for the worshipping and wider community." The PCC also adopted the following as their Re-ordering Project Mission Statement: "To provide a welcoming and flexible space for present and future use by the church and the community. We want our building to be a meeting place for the St John's community, a place for learning and listening and a place where creativity can thrive as well as a home for worship that can be both passionate and reflective." The next stage will be a Buildings Audit.

After April 2020 the PCC have agreed to cease the regular Sunday 8am service and move the 5pm evening services to 5.30pm.

The website is running well and is continually updated. Facebook is a lively site with regular posts.

A child's Processional Cross has been purchased with the Arthur Burgess legacy.

The new Parish Giving Scheme will form part of the next stewardship campaign. Planned Giving cards were re-introduced for use on the plate for those giving by standing order. Contactless payments are now also being taken.

On-going car park issues have mainly been resolved with the purchase of a new lock and re-issuing of keys.

The Church Representation Rules have been completely re-written. Significant changes affecting us are: APCMs can now take place up to the end of May. Deanery Synod Representatives can now serve 2 terms before they have to take a break. There is no minimum number of PCC meetings required per annum. The PCC cannot be majority clergy and are only quorate if the majority are not clergy. PCCs in benefices held in plurality or within Groups and Teams can now form joint councils while retaining their own PCCs.

Following the APCM in April 2019 the PCC had 16 members. In September 2019 one member resigned from the PCC and as a Deanery Synod Representative. This left 1 vacancy on the PCC and one Deanery Synod Representative vacancy.

During 2019 there were 4 weddings and 21 baptisms. There were 10 funerals held in church (2 sadly of babies) and 4 funerals were held at Worcester Crematorium for St John's Parish.

The PCC operates through a number of formal sub-committees and other groups/teams. Membership of the committees etc. (except the Standing Committee) is not restricted to members of the PCC. The Group Committee is currently in suspension.

When planning our activities, the PCC is aware of and takes into account the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion. The specific activities are reported throughout this document.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). Safeguarding information is clearly visible on the front page of the website.

Each meeting opened with a prayer and closed with all saying 'The Grace'

A summary of the minutes of each PCC meeting is placed upon the main church notice board and is published in the magazine.

Liz Edwards - PCC Secretary

REPORTS FROM CHURCH COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Standing Committee Annual Report

Every PCC has a Standing Committee with the power to act for the PCC between PCC meetings (as required by the Church Representation Rules).

At St John's, this function is most often exercised in relation to employment matters (which are explicitly delegated by the PCC to the Standing Committee), church maintenance and management of the parish properties.

A report of Standing Committee decisions and actions is provided to each PCC meeting.

Graham Evans

Safeguarding Report

The Church of England has had to look very closely at how they operate their Safeguarding. Because of this there have been a tightening of some of the measures undertaken.

DBS checks now can be started with a computer application with the actual checks on the applicants information checked manually. The process is much quicker and results are turned around in a matter of weeks not months. The renewal continues to be as full as the first application and it is hoped that this may speed up in the future.

As always, at St Johns we take safeguarding seriously and rely on the congregation continuing to be vigilant and report anything they are concerned about regarding the safety of vulnerable children and adults. Safeguarding concerns everyone. Thank you for your support.

Jane Askew

Good Old Days and Coach Trips Report

The Good Old Days series of talks by Paul and Helen Harding from Discover History (www.discover-history.co.uk/) have continued to grow over the past year and we have increased our attendance from about 60 per meeting at the beginning of the year to around 100 by the end of the year. We have had to increase the helpers and set up 2 refreshment points to get everyone through during the break.

Over the past year Paul has regaled us with a wide variety of topics including: the 1920s, Queen Elizabeth First's visit to Worcester, Victorian Surgery (definitely gruesome!), WWII rationing and the Home Guard and Cromwell and Christmas. We also went for a very informative walk around the centre of Worcester where Paul told us about some of the 400 Ale Houses, Inns and Coaching Houses that used to be in Worcester.

Unfortunately, Helen Harding was taking very ill before Christmas, which entailed time in Intensive Care at the Worcester Royal and so a couple of talks were cancelled at the beginning of this year. She is well on the road to recovery and we all send her our thoughts and prayers for the continued recovery.

These talks continue to reach out to other areas of our community. We get people from all 4 West Worcester churches plus individuals and other groups from the wider community. The talks are free, but donations are welcome, and these generally cover the cost of the talk.

The talks will be continuing in 2020 and a full program has already been arranged.

In addition to the talks a number of coach trips were arranged during the year which were well attended by people from across the community, including:

- Trentham Gardens and shopping experience in September
- Cardiff for the Christmas Market in December, which turned out to be a real experience as the authorities closed the pick-up point, after we had arrived, and we had to re-direct everyone to the new one at the last minute.
- Cadbury World in March of this year where we stopped at Webbs of Wychbold on the way for refreshments before doing a tour of Cadbury World, afternoon tea and then a guided coach tour of Bournville.

Trips to Oxford and Lacock Abbey have already been arranged for later in the year so why not join us for one of these trips.

Colin Nash

Pastoral Care Group

Pastoral care meetings were put on hold during the winter period, but care and concern was still maintained within the church. Due to the pandemic pastoral care has mainly been emails and phone calls of which there has been a steady flow.

Sadly, Monica Vale died during the pandemic Irene Allen managed to get to her funeral so in a sense represented the church. I have kept in touch with the lady I take communion to monthly.

It seems we will not be back to 'normal' for some time, but we can at least be there for a comforting chat when needed.

Pastoral care team. Sylvia Render, Janet and Walter Hart, Sue Bale, Sue Hussell, Yvonne Hardwick and Ruth Reeves.

Report from the Charities Committee

The charity committee comprises: Revd Sarah Cottrill (Chair), Margaret Rutter (Treasurer), Beth Broadway (Secretary), Luise Horrocks, Margaret Morris, Barbara Willis and Graham Willis.

We meet two or three times during the year with the very pleasant task of giving away money to help others!

Over the twelve months since the last APCM we have supported:

Our Mission Partners in Peru, Penny and Juan Carlos
The Holiday Association
MAGGS
Walsall Acorns
Food Bank
Street Café
Angel Tree Project

We have also responded to an individual request for help in the face of personal financial difficulty.

I would like to remind everybody that this committee is able to give up to £100 to any individual needing our help and all requests are treated with complete confidentiality. If you know anybody who might need this sort of help, please do encourage them to ask.

Sarah Cottrill

Friends of St John-in-Bedwardine

This year we have had a few new members but have lost members as well. Some members felt that they would be able to offer their financial support to the church in a better way than through the Friends and unfortunately some members have passed away. We joined Christopher Whitehead again for their Christmas Fair and raised £206, which was an increase on the previous year. We had a supper evening to say thank you to those who support the Friends. Invitations go out to all the members, but not everyone attends. It was nice to meet, in person, one of the new members. Last year some of the funds raised were used to help the organ repairs. The amount the Friends have are included in the overall financial report.

The aim of the Friends is to have financial assistance from those who are not members of the congregation but feel the church building is important to them, perhaps for the history of the actual place or a memory of times when the church has been used by themselves or family members. Therefore, all funds raised through the Friends are used to support, financially, the upkeep of the building. It was hoped we would be able to promote and raise awareness of the organisation and increase the amount of members we have, by taking an active part in fundraising events where there would be people from the community involved. A change in how funds are raised has meant we have not been able to do this. The Christmas Fair at Christopher Whitehead did not seem the right place, as the event was to raise the profile of the school.

Although we have said it is for people outside the church, we would also welcome members of the congregation to become a Friend. An old historic building such as St Johns is, can never have too many Friends.

Sue Bale

Communications

The website is now being regularly used, although it still does not have masses of users, we have had just under 3000 separate users come to the site in the last year. We tend to get about 30 active users a day. Most areas of the website do not change much during the year and the majority of the updates are in the Worship, News from the Clergy and reports from events that the church is associated with.

The St John-in-Bedwardine Facebook page is also used regularly and is used as a referral point to the Website. All stories go on the website and then a link is created to the website from the Facebook page. The vast majority of our website users are referred there from Facebook. There is a strong core of people who follow us on Facebook.

I am always happy to put news and photos about events on the website and/or Facebook so if you have anything you can either give it to me in church or send it to me at colinnash528@btinternet.com

We are looking for ways to expand the use of the website and Facebook so if you have any ideas then please let me or Liz in the office know. *Colin Nash*

Churchyard

During the year, when it wasn't too wet to work, I have continued to try to make the grounds of the Church a pleasant area for those passing through or spending time on one of the benches. I have noticed that many people do stop to look around, especially when the daffodils are out as they are a splendid site. These have been increased over the years and now cover most areas of the grounds.

The key areas tackled this year have been trying to keep the car park tidy, especially during the autumn, and the development of a wildflower area, various wildflower seeds have been sown about a third of the way along the wall from the arcade entrance down towards St Johns Road. I hope to slowly work down to the road with a narrow strip of wildflowers to add some colour at the back of the churchyard. Various other plants have been donated and these have been added in around the churchyard.

I have done some more research on the burials in the Churchyard and have now identified that between 1558 and 1774 4647 burials took place in St John's church and as far as I can work out burials continued for nearly another 100 years before the St John's Cemetery opened.

The wildlife area has continued to be allowed to grow untamed to provide shelter and food for the local wildlife. It has been reported by the owner of the Birder Store in the arcade that he has seen a Red Kite, a Hobby and a pair of Ravens flying over the church in the last year.

If anyone is interested in helping me on a Wednesday morning, then please speak to me.

Colin Nash

St. John's Flower Arranging Team Report

Last year, 2019, was a rather disappointing year for us all. We had very few church marriages and no orders for church wedding flowers. We all enjoy doing the flowers for weddings and even more so for our great festivals. Maybe this was due to the uncertainties of Brexit or just one of those years. However, thanks to the generosity of many people we have managed to keep financially afloat and have tried to keep the church looking beautiful.

The coming year looks more rewarding! We are fortunate to have such a faithful team, with Mrs Dorothy Little and Mrs Ann Everitt joining us. Also, Mr and Mrs Miller have helped with the Christmas Crib and Remembrance displays – all helpful, cheerful members keeping our parish church looking beautiful.

Vey sadly I have to report that Mrs Margaret Rowberry, one of our most gifted members died on 4th March 2020, very suddenly with leukaemia. A very dear member of the group for many years, always helpful, kind and good company. We shall miss Margaret greatly and send our sincere condolences to her family.

I must say a special and personal thank you to Mrs Jeanette Davies and Mrs Sue Hussell who have kept the flower arranging group together and looked after everything willingly and kindly as I have been unwell for several weeks.

The flower arranging team meets each Friday morning at 9.15, except during Lent and Advent. We love to welcome people into the church and there is usually a tea/coffee break!

Thank you for your support over the years.

Eileen M. Cantrill

West Worcester Churches Young Adults Group

Young Adults is still thriving. It is a fun social group for those aged 18 to 40 who worship in the West Worcester Group of Churches.

Meet ups during 2019 haven't been as often as in previous years as we all seem to have been extra busy but when we have met, we usually have between half a dozen to a dozen people at events. During 2019 we enjoyed meeting up for example for pancakes; evenings playing board games; meals out; picnic and discussion sessions during Advent.

New members are always welcome and attendance at events is not compulsory. Just pop along to what interests you! And members are always welcome to suggest ideas!

For more information speak to any one of us.

Regular updates about events are posted on our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/groups/westworcesteryoungadults/

Contact us via email at young.adults@westworchesterchurches.org.uk

Organisers: Beth Broadway, Philip Evans and Alice Evans

Children and Youth

Children's worship had a very successful year in 2019 with 7 regular attendees of Diddy Disciples and 1 for Explorers. We also have around 6 other children who come less frequently. The children have really been enjoying the Sunday groups with activities tailored to their ages. We had lots of successful events including our Light Party which we will be expanding into the community in the future. The Nativity was a definite highlight of the year with around 20 children from church and the community putting on a fantastic performance! At Christmas the children also enjoyed taking part in the Passada and there are lots of cherished sheep around St John's now! The children have also been heavily involved in the 2nd Sunday services and have loved sharing their developing faith with the rest of their church family. Children from Little Lambs have also been involved in making props for the services which is a lovely link for the group.

Little Lambs had a very successful 2019 with between 20 and 40 children with their various adults attending each week. There are a dedicated team of helpers who keep carers supplied with tea and coffee and help to set up, pack up and entertain children. It's been lovely to see Little Lambs families at events such as community breakfasts and the barbeque. We have lots of encouraging comments from families as to how much they enjoy this outreach. There were a couple of dates where we couldn't run a Little Lambs sessions or Children's worship due to low volunteer numbers so this is something we need to work on.

Amy Rees

Baptism Report

Since 2010 I have been sending out anniversary cards numbering between 35 and 45 each year. During 2018 the number fell to 25. In 2019 the number was 21.

Anne Sherratt

Organist and Choirmaster's Report

I began as Organist and Choirmaster in October 2011 when I inherited a small but dedicated choir of five voices. My main aim from the outset has been to build up the choir both in numbers and in the amount and range of music that they sing. In this way they provide a growing lead and support to the congregational singing whilst offering more choral music in worship.

We have 19 regular members. During the year one member left, having moved to Southampton and another has joined. We can call on extra singers for special services or where the music selected is particularly demanding. We fielded 32 voices for the Christmas Carol Service.

We meet on Thursday evenings at 7.00pm for 90 minutes including a short break. We have a 10.00am warm-up practice on Sunday mornings. Morale is high and we enjoy our rehearsals where we work hard but also have fun.

The choir sings on most Sundays at the 10.30am Eucharist and twice a month at 5.00pm for Choral Evensong. We also sing at major festivals during the Church's year. The choir is available for Weddings.

I choose hymns and other choral and organ music for the services and publish a Music List each month. Taking the seasons, themes and readings of services as a starting point, I try to reflect these, where practicable, in the music.

My wife, Luise Horrocks, writes a regular column, Notes from the Choir, for the Parish Magazine.

We continue to build, and I am always delighted to hear from singers interested in joining the choir.

I thank the clergy, the choir and the people of St John-in-Bedwardine for their friendship and support.

John Brierley - Organist & Choirmaster

Annual Report of Music Group

The Music Group's principal involvement with the Parish in the past year has continued with the All Age Worship service on second Sundays and the Wholeness and Healing service on fourth Sundays. Our other regular Sunday morning commitment in the past year has been on the third Sunday of each month at Café Church in Rushwick Village Hall.

We do also have occasional commitments elsewhere in the west Worcestershire area, notably at St John-the-Baptist parish in Suckley and other one-off services such as the World Day of Prayer on Friday 6th March – which was a very well attended service with people from the other Westside Churches and denominations.

Sadly, the measures taken to address the coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic has had the effect of stopping our work with the cancellation of all services and large gatherings. At the time of writing this report there is no indication of when normal worship practices will resume – something that will, no doubt, be reflected in all the PCC Annual reports. *Peter Yates*

Bell ringers' Report

Before writing this report I sat and carefully read the report from last year. What a difference a year makes!

You won't hear words like 'trepidation' or 'struggle' in this year's report as our membership is now an embarrassment of riches. This week our practice evening was standing room only, with 15 ringers all trying to get some rope time.

It started with two ringers from Christopher Whitehead school who had a link with church. The school participates in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and bell ringing is a good skill for them to use for this. From there the influx started with 3 adult learners and another young ringer from the congregation and we have had two returners to ringing. Personally, I have found this to be the most rewarding experience of my year as Tower Captain.

I did say I wouldn't use the words struggle but that was a lot of people requiring training, but what teamwork? What an amazing group of ringers that rose to the challenge and 'learnt to teach'. Not an easy thing to do but we now have a large pool of ringers and teachers for Church needs and a thriving, happy tower.

As for our beautiful bells our Steeple Keeper has kindly informed me that our 8 bells (tenor 15-1-16 in F) continue to perform well and the belfry remains dry despite rain and gales.

2 new ropes bought from Malcolm Brown Bellropes in Chedworth, Glos. Malcolm is over 80 and has a holiday-home north of the Arctic Circle in Norway (as you do).

Aside from routine maintenance, the worn clapper bearing on the 6 was taken to Whites of Appleton and replaced 'while-you-wait' (in the pub).

Some frame movement was noticed during last year's dry weather. John Slater is not too concerned but some of the vertical tie-bars cannot be tightened as the bottom nuts are inaccessible due to the false ceiling and sound insulation.

Architectural drawings of this work have been borrowed from Brian Askew to see what can be done to gain access.

Tracey Ward – Tower Captain

Women's Breakfast Meeting Report

Women's Breakfast continues to meet in the Blakefield Room on the second Saturday of the month from 8.30 to 10am. 2019 was another good year with lots fun, fellowship and good food.

The speakers were inspirational, challenging and encouraging helping us with our discipleship and spiritual journey.

Many thanks go to Sally for cooking, Anne for preparing the room and all those who help in a variety of ways to make women's breakfast successful.

Margaret Rutter

Café Church Report

Cafe church is on the 4th Saturday of the month and we have between 15–27 people come for coffee and Danish. Thought for the day has had a good response with questions being asked of the speakers who share their Thought for the day with us.

We have had a variety of speakers coming to share with us including Margaret and myself. My thanks go to Margaret for supporting cafe church with me, plus all our regulars who come for a coffee and chat, or to read the papers.

Thank you.

Jenny English

Community Breakfast Report

5/10/2019. Breakfast was served to 127 people, 10 took food away for later and we have no idea how many folk came for tea and toast. I seem to remember that we were very full and we had to put more tables up in the Blakefield room to cope with the overflow.

After costs we paid into church Acct £41.66. We were also donated 100 eggs, plus the milk and marmalade.

7/03/2020. In March this year we served 143 Breakfasts and after the very generous donations we were able to pay into the church Acct £259.33. This was the largest gathering of people coming to share breakfast with us and the team of helpers and chefs worked really hard that morning. Thank goodness we had the Blakefield room again for the overflow of breakfast takers.

Thank you to everyone who supports these events and to all the servers. My thanks also go to Judy and Rob who do a brilliant job with the cooking and to Catherine for all the washing up. Without all the help we would not be able to put on such an event for the community of St. John's. My thanks also go to Mr. Narraway, who provides at cost, all the bacon and eggs.

Jenny English

Parish Magazine Report

The Parish Magazine continues to be produced eleven times a year (monthly except August). Our monthly sales are about 140 through subscriptions and 35 from the back of church. Our subscription numbers have, sadly, declined since the same time last year, mostly due to people moving away or passing away.

The magazine is a valuable form of outreach and communication to the church family, and we encourage all to promote the magazine if ever they get an opportunity.

If you ever think that it would be valuable to give someone a free copy of the magazine, whether for outreach or promotion, please feel able to do so by taking a copy from the back of church.

Financially, the magazine (through sales and advertising) more than covers its costs and makes a net contribution to the church's income.

Creating and distributing the magazine takes a lot of work. Compliments are always appreciated, and we also welcome suggestions about how we might do things better.

A big thank you to all our writers, distributors and back office team.

Graham and Sue Evans, joint magazine editors

Fourth Friday Friendship Group Report

In November 2019, we celebrated our first anniversary with a "Bonfire Night" style meal (sausages and beef burgers), sparklers and a birthday cake!

In the now 17 months that Fourth Friday Friendship Group has been meeting we have enjoyed a vast amount of fun, laughter and some fiercely fought battles over games of Snakes and Ladders or cards! New friendships have been forged and, along the way, money has been raised for some excellent causes. Although the event is free, the generosity of those attending has enabled me to send an average of £50-£60 to national charities such as Cancer Research, Dementia UK and RNLI as well as more local ones such as hospice and hospital.

Anybody is welcome to join us so look out for the sign-up list at the back of church.

Sarah Cottrill

REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Churchwardens' Annual Fabric Report

The following doubles as an Accommodation Committee report. It incorporates text from Brian Askew, our Estates Manager, which provides a review of the fabric work that was carried out in our church during 2019. The Churchwardens are happy to advance this verbatim as the substance of their own official report.

We would add that:

- The Car Park lock, having been vandalized, was replaced and new keys were issued. The opportunity was taken to review the list of key holders, and hopefully reduce the number of unauthorised parkers who had been using copies of the old keys.
- The church windows were cleaned, and a periodic cleaning regime was established for the Gallery.
- The Heron Close property boiler was persistently malfunctioning. On advice it was replaced with a new boiler.
- There has been no change in 2019 to the inventory of church ornaments.

Once again, we offer our thanks to Brian for his energetic work in ensuring that our buildings are maintained in good order.

We would also again like to thank Colin Nash and helpers for their continuing work in maintaining and enhancing our churchyard.

Gordon Templeton and Joy Job, Churchwardens

Estates Manager's Report

- The testing of our portable electrical appliances (PAT testing) was completed without any issues. The rules have recently changed whereby IT equipment only needs to be tested every 5 years which will save us some time, effort and money.
- All of our fire safety equipment was tested and as mentioned previously, over half of the fire extinguishers were replaced. We now have the situation where our extinguishers need their annual check at different times of the year, so I am delaying some checks and bringing others forward to get everything back in sync.

- As in previous years, we have the bells safety checked every six months, by John Slater. Some minor issues have been identified, but John is happy that our bells installation is still in good condition.
- During the year we had some quinquennial work done to our roof and guttering mainly on the north side of the church. We also had to do some repair work to the roof above the flat. The normal routine cleaning of all the rainwater goods has been carried out.
- The church heating system gave us a couple of headaches during the year. Firstly, the boiler kept randomly tripping out – with no obvious reason – causing the church to be intermittently cold. A lot of detective work was needed to pin down the problem to a faulty gas valve – which was replaced for a mere £1,500.

Secondly, it was noticed that the automatic pressurisation unit for the heating system was running much more than it should have been. This indicated that the heating system had developed a leak. Despite more detective work the leak could not be found and it was feared that the leak was under the concrete floor – a cause of possible major disruption. However, the brave decision was taken to pressurise the system to twice its working pressure – and listen for the hiss of escaping water. The plan worked and the leak was found – under the north aisle just as the pipes disappeared under the concrete into the Muniment Room.

The Blakefield Room boiler also decided to give us a problem. The pressure vessel failed and had to be replaced.

All the gas safety checks are up to date and satisfactory.

- As mentioned last year, the exterior stonework on the tower needs some serious restoration as some pieces of stone have fallen off, many stones are in a poor condition and much repointing needs to be done. If all work was carried out at the same time the cost is estimated to be something in the order of £150,000. As I said last year, the difficulty in doing the work piecemeal is that more would be spent on access equipment than on the repairs themselves. So, the PCC are still considering how to tackle this work and whether any external funding can be obtained.

Despite the above, the church is in a good of state of repair. The only large job in the pipeline is that the church electrical system will soon need its five-year safety inspection. This is no small task, will take about a week and cost something in the order of £1,000 to £1,500.

Brian Askew

Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod 2019-20

Representation

This parish is entitled to have three lay representatives on the Deanery Synod (the number depends upon the size of the parish electoral roll). Graham Evans and Margaret Rutter are our current representatives plus a vacancy created when Bill Amos moved away.

Representatives are elected every three years - this year, 2020, is an election year.

Meetings

The Synod meets three times a year. Each meeting is divided into two sections. The first half looks at a particular topic of concern or interest, often with a visiting speaker:

- (May 2019) Mr John Preston, the Diocesan Secretary, spoke on his role and the development of the Diocese for the future in relation to the current financial situation. He highlighted the decline in church attendance in our Diocese and that donations are not index-linked, leading to a corresponding decline in income. There is also an aging population in churches. There are currently four priority areas in the Diocese to try to halt this decline: Children and Young People, Developing Discipleship, Buildings for Mission and Strengthening Stewardship.
- (October 2019) Alison Maddocks, Diocesan Stewardship Officer, gave a presentation focussed on giving. She said this deanery has the full range of types of parish showing the challenges to stewardship in our churches. She suggested that the hardest work of stewardship is articulating what it is that the church does that justifies giving to the cause. She talked about giving as a response to 'the generosity of God'.
- (February 2020) Mark Wild, the Diocesan Surveyor and Environmental Officer, talked about Eco-Friendly churches. Worcester Diocese introduced its Environmental Strategy in 2005 'to encourage and enable churches and church people in this diocese to develop visionary and prophetic ways of celebrating and safeguarding God's creation'. There are six main themes: Land, food, energy, design construction & development, waste & water and transport. Mark spoke about 'A Rocha' an organisation that supports and promotes Eco churches.

During the second half of the meeting, the Synod conducts its business, including receiving reports from Diocesan boards and committees and voting on Diocesan-wide and National matters.

The lack of progress on the implementation of our team has been raised at Deanery Synod, although with no visible effect yet.

Graham Evans
Deanery Representative of the Laity for the Parish of St. John-in-Bedwardine



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