

St Andrew's Church, Ombersley

Churchwardens' report 2016 - 2017

1. Worship, mission and outreach

This report covers the second full year of Derek's ministry with us and his departure, and so reflects a relative period of stability, but change features in the latter end of the period.

Derek had six parishes plus ours to look after. We are keenly aware of the hard work he put in to tackling what is a difficult, time-consuming and tiring job. Satisfying all the parties vying for his attention was a mammoth task, and we are most grateful for the successes he achieved. One clear success for him was to complete the official formation of the united benefice with a service in January. This service included the licensing of Richard Jeynes and James Homer as readers across the benefice. We are now in a period with an interim rector and Rev Sheila Banyard will be working with us for 18 months to support and guide us as we seek to appoint a permanent rector to the benefice.

The lay input to our worship life, which is increasingly essential continues. This has involved both organisation and liturgical aspects – members of our own congregation organise and lead services, read, lead intercessions and give Sunday talks. The Churchwardens are immensely grateful to everyone who has supported us and the church in this way.

We have maintained our usual pattern of services and church events. A development has been the Breakfast services. There have been four of these and they have been welcomed by many, including some who don't often come to a 'normal' service. Once a month there are joint services with other churches in the 7 Parishes and on fifth Sundays the whole benefice comes together. Church inspired occasions included the enjoyable and profitable annual fête, Harvest Supper, carol singing in the village and a particularly moving series of commemorations during Holy Week culminating with the Good Friday reflection and the Easter Bonfire.

Links with Ombersley Endowed First School continue to be strong. The school uses the church as a teaching resource and for Christmas and Easter services. Members of church form the 'Open the Book' team and visit school on a fortnightly basis to lead assemblies. Year 4 children visit the Holy Week reflections and also climb the tower on Ascension Day (with appropriate safeguarding/risk assessments in place!).

A new development this year, has been to link with the Alzheimer's' Society in making Ombersley a dementia friendly village. This has involved initial training and an action plan which is being led by Robert Thornton.

Handbells and Active Coffee are groups that attract people who might not necessarily see themselves as churchgoers. Handbells have 'performed' with the Malvern Priory group, both here and at Malvern and have made two visits to the Westmead Care Home in Droitwich.

We have also staged a number of high profile events which have entertained and benefitted the church and the local community. The Brexit debate enabled the community to hear the views of both sides of the debate and to ask questions. The Big Paint brought people of all ages into church for a very successful event. The quiz in the memorial hall was also successful and both events contributed to OSCA funds. A 'thank you' tea party was held in September particularly to thank Mary Ann Garrard for her years of service as a 'Holy Duster', but it also enabled us to thank all those who support the church in so many different ways.

The church continues to support 3 charities on an annual basis from the regular collection. A further charitable connection this year has been the twinning of our toilet! For details visit the toilet in church and see the certificate with the GPS details!

3. Church Fabric

A success in the last year has been the refurbishment of the Food Preparation Area. Many people were involved in making this happen and it is a much cleaner, tidier and fresher place to 'work' in.

In the summer a new noticeboard on the railings replaced the one which had done sterling work, but was becoming increasingly dangerous and damp. In the autumn 3 signs were installed to reinforce the fact that the church is open and where the entrances are.

The east windows of the church are still in a poor state of repair. The two unsuccessful bids for Heritage Lottery funding dampened our enthusiasm for pursuing this project. However the project has been revived, with an acceptance that we must seek support from other organisations. The two west windows are to be added into the project as there are many panes of glass missing which contributes to the icy cold of the Food Preparation Area in winter.

The annual inspection of fire appliances was carried out, the light was replaced in the FPA and also the problems with the circuits addressed so that there should not be a problem with the electrics to the fete. The safe key has been repaired

Last year's report mentioned the possibility of a refurbishment of the toilet. Nothing has been done further about this at the moment.

Sadly, as the report is being written, lead has been stolen from the roof and this will necessitate hard work to a) try to prevent further theft and b) to ensure a suitable replacement covering. The financial implications also add to our need to fundraise

4. Church inventory and fittings

The re-working of the church inventory is complete and available on the One Drive. This has included scanning the 1999 National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies' 300 page catalogue of church items and cross-referencing them with a digital inventory. The last task is to create an index. Many thanks to Robert Thornton for undertaking this work.

5. Parish finance

St Andrew's has again paid its Parish Share in full this year.

During the autumn of 2016 we undertook another anonymous income survey and this has resulted in a slightly better outlook for us as regards the Parish Share. However it still increases and full payment may cause us some difficulty in the future.

6. People

The Churchwardens' Report always contains a traditional ending. The fact that it is traditional and oft repeated does not lessen its essential truth.

Many people contribute to the well-being of St Andrew's and the church community – indeed too many to name individually.

So, again, the churchwardens express their heartfelt thanks to all those who spend so many hours working hard for, organising, running, and supporting church activities, whether in leadership roles, or quietly behind the scenes. This generosity underpins our church's very existence. Our very special thanks are given to Basil Lamb, with his able assistant, Diana, without whom most of what happens in this church would be immeasurably harder to achieve.

Jenny Batelen
Andy Horn

April 2017