

CHURCHWARDENS REPORT For APCM Thursday 24th March, 2017

This year has once again been full of exciting opportunities culminating in the appointment of Clare as our Benefice Priest in Charge following the interview at the end of September. We have continued to see growth within our Church community, not necessarily in vastly increased numbers but in the variety and depth of our services and the lay participation that has once again been so inspirational. The number of people who are willing to prepare intercessions, participate in, and lead services has continued to grow which enabled us throughout the interregnum to continue with the weekly pattern of services. This would not, however, have been possible without the immense support that we received from Phil Collins and the Arle Valley Team, to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude.

We have continued to include children and young people wherever possible and have again held several workshop sessions which have been well attended, throughout the year. Clare's appointment, will, we are sure gradually bring people of all ages into our Church community.

We have maintained our strong links with the school and have continued to lead the collective worship on a weekly basis and given support through our representatives on the Governing Body. As a Benefice, with the help of the Archdeacon of Winchester, we prepared the Benefice Profile and advertised the post of Priest in Charge. Interviews were held in in September and we were delighted to offer Clare the position which we are so pleased that she accepted. We were extremely grateful for all the support that we as a Benefice received from Bishop David, the Archdeacon, David Chattell, Patrick Whitworth who is our Patron, Jane Hammond, Anne Carter and Margaret Thomas and for the continued prayers of so many people during that time.

We were pleased to welcome Clare, James, Toby and Hettie when they joined us in January and a huge thank you to everyone who made the Licensing Service at Bishop's Sutton such a special occasion.

Doreen, who is now happily settled into her new home in Germany, has been an absolute stalwart of St Peter's for so many years and she will be greatly missed. She served as Churchwarden from 2009 until 2017 and worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of both the services in the hall and the churchyard in addition to dealing with the aftermath of the fire and

working towards the rebuilding of St Peter's. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude.

As we all know a Parish doesn't run itself and there are so many people who make our church work here in Ropley, Alison and Barbara who play for us each week, selecting wonderful hymns that we can all enjoy singing, Rodney who transports and sets up the keyboard every week, Fred, Jason, Roy and Shirley our sides people, who make sure that everyone feels welcome the minute they come through the door, John for being so willing to help out with services, Julie and Sarah for working so imaginatively on the All Age Services, Margaret, who even during the time that she was incapacitated ensured that there was always someone to provide wonderful flowers which certainly enhance the hall and those who very generously create the arrangements for our services, those who help organise the Coffee after the services, the members of the PCC who have worked exceedingly hard to ensure that everything runs smoothly, Julie for doing the most brilliant job as PCC Secretary, Ken, for not only being our Treasurer and keeping a strict eye on the finances, which is not an easy task, but also, as Vice Chair, for leading our PCC meetings over the last year, Humphrey for continuing in the role of Stewardship Promoter, Keith and Margaret for representing us on the Deanery Synod, Alison for keeping the Electoral Roll up to date, Ron for continually updating the website, and all those who continue to mow the grass in the churchyard, whatever the weather, especially John Morgan, and everyone who week by week helps with the services by reading, preparing the prayers, administering the chalice, leading the service, clearing up and by just being there.

We continue to owe a huge debt of gratitude to Andy for working tirelessly on our behalf on the Church rebuild, we know that we are so fortunate that he agreed to take this project on, he has been, and continues to be, amazing, and John Alexander, our architect, who has created the most stunning plans for our new Church building, which have now been submitted for planning permission. Linda and Margaret are both stepping down as full members of the PCC this year, they have both brought clear and thoughtful wisdom to the PCC over many years along with a great deal of hard work and we are extremely grateful to them for everything that they have done.

In our report last year we said that we could look to the future with confidence and this is certainly the case for 2017/2018, Clare has already ensured new enthusiasm and commitment amongst our Church community and this will soon filter out into both the Village

and the Benefice as a whole. We thank her for coming to us and very much looking forward to working with her over many years.

Norma Day Churchwarden