

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT 2010-2011

Our report is intended to provide a record of the major events that have occurred in the life of our parish in the past year and focuses most especially on the fabric of our buildings. We would firstly like to thank the deputy wardens, Ian and Lesley for their unstinting support and help throughout the year.

As is usual, maintaining and looking after our church buildings has meant a busy 12 months, undertaking general day to day repairs and refurbishment. We were very pleased earlier on in the year, when the replacement flat roofs to the church hall were finally completed satisfactorily. No major works were planned for this year, although redecoration of the main hall has been undertaken, following installation of emergency lighting and fire sounders.

The burden of statutory requirements, inspections, risk assessments et al, continue to brighten up our lives! The ever changing regulations and 'guidance' are a considerable challenge, and financial drain on our limited resources. The members of the Fabric Committee work tirelessly in this regard, and we are grateful for all their hard work and enthusiasm.

Over the past few years we have been considering how best to approach the replacement of the main and secondary church roof coverings. The need for these works was highlighted in the last Quinquennial Report, prepared in 2007 and further slipping tiles means that the time for action has now come. This will be a significant project and is likely to result in some disruption to our use of the Church building and car parks. The project has now moved forward, with the appointment of Chartered Surveyors and other consultants to draw up specifications of work and address the significant Health and Safety issues this type of work poses. As you read this, we should be in the process of reviewing tender results, along with dealing with the challenges of obtaining the relevant permissions from the local authority and church bodies.

We were blessed many years ago to be the beneficiary of a substantial bequest, which has funded a number of major capital projects within the church, and others supporting the wider aims of the Church abroad. It is envisaged that the roof replacement project will finally see the remainder of this fund exhausted, and leave us with no further substantial reserves. We would however highlight the long-term benefit that this legacy has provided to us, and would encourage you all to prayerfully consider a bequest, to ensure the longevity of the church in your Parish.

Our day to day financial situation continues to cause some concern, and a fresh approach to Parish Giving has been introduced. We thank Lesley Richardson and John Borthwick (Stewardship Chairman and Stewardship Recorder) for taking on the responsibility and challenge of their new roles and we hope for a positive response to our Parish Giving programme introduced in February.

Churchwardens are legally responsible for maintaining a safe, welcoming and reverent environment in which all can worship. The ever increasing numbers in the congregation, most especially at the 9:30 Parish Communion service, has provided us with the pleasant challenge of accommodating all age groups. We are most grateful to the members of our Junior Church and Little Gems for the active part they play in our worship. With everyone's support we hope to continue to provide the respectful and friendly environment, in which all members of St John's family are included and encouraged.

Although the number of attendees at our major services is increasing, it is still sometimes difficult to find members of the congregation to take on some share of assisting in the many facets of parish life. We appreciate that the pressures of modern life are demanding and time consuming, but sincerely hope that any who offer of their time and skills will find that a deeper involvement in church life can bring many rewarding blessings. Please do come and let us know if you would like to be more involved.

The two major social events of the year were well attended and very successful. We celebrated our Patronal Festival in the Vicarage garden (thank you Philippa) in glorious sunshine and enjoyed a splendid barbeque. The weather was not so kind for our harvest hog-roast but the heavy rainfall spoilt neither the entertainment nor the food. A new social committee has now been formed under Jane Joseph's guidance, and we thank the retiring committee members and Jo Klein especially, for all their hard work over the last few years.

We are pleased to report that Little Gems, Junior Church, Bedrock and the Youth Group continue to thrive and our gratitude goes to all who support them in any way. The time and commitment needed to organise the teaching, nurture and guidance of our young people in the Christian faith is very much appreciated.

St John's role as a training parish has continued over the year. Melanie Crowley was ordained as deacon in the Abbey in July supported by many from our congregation and Lucy Davis continues her ministerial training. We are now looking forward to the arrival of a stipendiary curate, Amanda Duncan, who will be joining us in July. Our prayers and encouragement must go to all who take up their calling to the priesthood and also to those whose teaching, counselling and guidance support them throughout.

We were privileged and delighted to support David Nye as he was installed as an Honorary Lay Canon in the Cathedral in October. This prestigious and well-earned honour was accepted by David with his usual quiet self-effacement and we would like to thank him once again for all he has given of himself to both St John's and the Diocese over the years. We again visited the Cathedral in February for an evening pilgrimage when we were guided prayerfully around a hushed Abbey, the visit culminating in a candlelit service of Compline.

A most successful Spirituality Day led by the Rev'd Sarah Burrows was held in November when we were able to share in a morning of teaching, discussion,

contemplation and prayer – a quiet, beneficial few hours away from the ‘busyness’ of our lives. A further quiet day is planned for April.

As ever, we are grateful to all in the Ministry Team, for all that they do both during services, and participating in the life of the parish. Particularly so this year, as many have been actively involved in supporting other local parishes who at present, do not have full time clergy.

The conclusion of our report gives us the opportunity to thank all who contribute to the life of St John’s in every way, the members of the PCC, group leaders, cleaners, music makers, flower arrangers, servers, gardeners and to everyone committed to sustaining and ensuring the work of this church.

We are greatly encouraged by your continuing and loving support.

Matthew Barter

Margaret Creighton

March 2011