

Great Brickhill Annual Parish Meeting, Tuesday 1st May 2018

Parochial Church Council Report

As usual this evening's meeting comes very soon after the Annual Church Meeting, which was held on 17th April.

The formal part of that meeting commenced with the elections. Julia Turner was re-elected as Church Warden. The Rector thanked Julia Turner for all her help during the year and looked forward to working with her in the year ahead.

Phillipa Cook, Mary Maley, Angela Northen, Margretta Smith and Joy Wilson continue as members of the PCC. Jeremy Hopkinson will serve the second of his three-year term as Deanery Synod Representative.

In presenting the Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31st December 2017 the Treasurer highlighted a few points:

- The Accounts are now prepared on Receipts and Payments basis, which avoids the strict regulations from the Charities Commission
- There was a deficit for the year of £457
- Total disbursements to charitable causes represents approximately 9% of Income Received
- The Parish Share payment to the Diocese for 2017 was paid in full, £24,098 (a 5.0% increase). The Parish Share for 2018 will be - £25,615 (a further increase of 6.3%)
- The daily running costs of the Church are currently in the region of £91 per day, excluding any major restoration costs.

There then followed a photographic review of all the events over the last twelve months.

The Wardens' report followed – Julia thanked all those who lead the services. The general attendance at services is low, the average is 21 but the Family Services are well attended. The church was full for the Christmas Carol Service and the four High Ash School services. Three special services were held:- the May Family Service at Brickstock in a marquee on the cricket field, the Harvest Family Service at Rectory Farm when the Archdeacon of Buckingham, Guy Elsmore attended, and The Nativity at The Old Red Lion.

Thanks were recorded to the 80 plus people who help with various tasks around the church and churchyard, and give their help with the various fund raising events. In addition to the annual events we were delighted to be the recipients of a portion of the funds raised at the highly successful Brickstock event and would like to record our thanks to the Cricket Club. The Auction of Promises in the autumn was particularly successful. With the help of celebrity auctioneer, Charlie Ross, we were able to raise £7,000.

One source of revenue that has unfortunately come to an end is the collection of newspaper and cardboard for recycling. The price of waste cardboard has declined such that Cawleys decided it was no longer viable for them to pay us for the collection of the cardboard. We are very grateful to all those who gave supported this venture over many years.

During the summer months our time was spent dealing with the effects from the theft of lead from the roof. Although the roofing contractor had fitted a waterproof membrane after the lead had been stolen, the rain came pouring in. Plastic sheeting was placed on the roof but water came in each time it rained. Buckets and plastic sheets were positioned all down the south aisle and the vestry, and at other points within the church. We were very concerned the plaster from ceilings could fall down given more rain.

The local roofing contractor laid a temporary covering of roofing felt. This has given us some time to obtain the plans and raise the money to fit a permanent covering of terne coated steel.

On a more positive note, to create a safer area for making the refreshments we have moved this area to the back of the church beyond the font. We intend reordering this corner of the church, to develop the refreshment area and create a welcoming gathering area. This will also give more space around the font for Baptisms. To this end new architects have been appointed to take this and the toilet facilities project forward.

The Rector gave thanks for all the help and support that he and Pauline receive, this is very much appreciated. He reflected on the Bishop of Oxford's initiative "Called to be Christ-like, a call for Christians to be contemplative, compassionate and courageous". The recent Lent course focussed on this theme.

The Rector reflected on the loss that so many of us felt on the news of Clare Amies' passing. Clare touched the hearts of all who met her and she is sadly missed both in this village and much further afield. We are currently holding an 8-week Bible Course – the author of the course and presenter on the DVDs is Andrew Ollerton, a friend of Clare's who some of us were privileged to meet at Clare's funeral.

There are two midweek groups held in the church:-

- A new Weekly Prayer Meeting on Thursday mornings, meeting for tea and coffee at 10.30am - an informal gathering in the Lady Chapel, which is open to all.
- The ever-popular Happy Cup Coffee Club on Monday mornings during term time, the child-friendly drop-in coffee morning for parents and carers of young children.

On a more serious, mundane matter - GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). The new regulations come into force on 25th May. Some changes will be introduced to make sure that we are compliant.

I will finish by saying that we have a rota of people to lock the church and it is open every day at least between the hours 10.00am and 4.00pm. A recent look in the Visitors' Book revealed visitors from Italy, Ireland and Peru – I did look closely to see that the message was not signed "Paddington" calling in for some marmalade! Often there is a message of appreciation for our lovely church, for keeping it open, and for the comfort and peace that is found there.

A copy of the full Annual Report for 2017 including the Accounts, can be collected from the bookcase just inside the main door of the church, or can be downloaded from the Benefice website:- www.brickhillschurches.org.uk. This report will also be posted on the church website and a summary will be forwarded for inclusion in the June edition of the Parish Newsletter.

Phillipa Cook
(Great Brickhill PCC Secretary)