

CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT ANNUAL MEETING – JULIA TURNER

Tuesday 9th April 2024

Good evening,

I am going to begin by thanking Phillipa for producing the Annual report. For those who have not read it is indeed a comprehensive account of life in our church. Thank you Phillipa.

This year seems to be breaking all records weather wise, there have been times when we thought is it ever going to stop raining? we were always wondering where the water would come in next, and every time I opened the door, my heart sank at the damp patches on the north wall.

Phillipa has done an amazing job applying for grants, any grant, that we might be eligible for, to raise the amount needed to replace the ageing roof felt with terne coated steel. The quotes sought, a contractor appointed. The grants successful. The contractor, The Leadworks said they could start the work in February or May. We jumped at the chance of getting the work underway as soon as possible, it can still rain a lot in May!

They have made good progress despite the weather, the south aisle roof was relatively smooth going. I think we suspected there may be problems with the north aisle judging by the ingress of rain water on that side. Sure enough it became apparent that there were problems with the lead gutter. Further inspection revealed not only a split or cut in the lead but some plastic sheeting had been left in the roof space, and this was filled with water.

We had to make a decision to repair the gutter or have a new one made of steel. A new gutter and the contractor would guarantee the work, but it would cost around 11K, bang goes the reserve we had hoped to use for repainting the walls, and of course we have yet to find out how many ceiling panels need to be replaced. The internal scaffolding is due to go up tomorrow.

The contractor has sent weekly photographs showing the work they are doing. Phillipa has made a short slideshow for you to see a bit later.

The defect work on the extension doors has been done as well as other minor problems. The 5 year electrical test has been carried out, just in need of a new cable to the boiler room. The Quinquennial is in the diary for the early part of July.

I would like to thank Marcus Feinhols for sponsoring the new notice board by the gate. It is really good to have somewhere dry to display the notices. We hope to renovate the old one in due course.

The DAC visited to see the new facilities and servery area, and I think they thought it was done well. We love it and feel it brings so much to the church, from the Monday morning coffee club (thank you Debbie and Diana), to the Snowdrop Walks (our thanks to David and Sally Duncombe), and of course a chance for a coffee and a chat after the services.

One of the grant applications was made to the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation, and they have awarded our church the silver chalice for successfully completing the project that met the Foundation's criteria for Grant Aid. This will be presented at a special thanksgiving service in October.

I must of course thank our treasurer, Neil, and the members of the PCC for their continued support. I would like to thank Joy Wilson for her valued support over the years, and wish her well as she steps down. I would like to thank Sophia Walmsley for the ongoing work she has undertaken regarding Safeguarding within our church.

Music forms an important part of the church, from organ playing and the choir (thank you Jerry), piano and guitar (thank you Andrew and Margretta), and Sophia, and to the bells (thanks to our tower captain, David and all the ringers).

It is lovely to welcome the children from the High Ash school for their various services throughout the school year. Three classes from year 1 came down one afternoon to find out about prayers, services, and the church building. The children were delightful and showed interest in all aspects of the church.

Most of you will know that Phillipa does a huge amount as secretary as well as the more mundane cleaning and preparation for the services each week. The Palm Sunday Procession was a highlight. I am sure she is looking forward to completion of the works as much as anyone.

Lastly I must thank John for taking our services, bible studies and Lent courses to mention just a few of his many commitments across the Benefice. I am sure I speak for us all when I send him off on his Sabbatical with warm wishes for a happy and inspiring rest. We look forward to welcoming him back in the summer.

Julia Turner
April 2024