

St Andrew Walberswick

Annual Parish Meeting

Review of the Year 2021

2021 was a year again affected by Coronavirus. Between late January and Palm Sunday worship in church on Sunday was not possible. Between Easter and mid July we were able to meet in church but not sing or serve refreshments. These restrictions affected our church life during the year. Unlike 2020 however we did continue to meet on Wednesday mornings for mid week services, while on Sunday's the whole Sole Bay Team church family worshipped together via Zoom. We did this because it was felt that it was important for some people to meet others, for worship and conversation. Mid week services provided an important opportunity for these things, but with smaller congregations than on a Sunday the issues of cleaning, safe distancing etc were easier to manage. Consequently our Wednesday services grew in numbers attending, and that increase has continued all year and has brought new people into the fellowship of St Andrews.

Another change from 2020 was that churches could remain open each day for individual private prayer, subject to a suitable cleaning regime being in place. With thanks to Joanna Saunders, who took on the responsibility of organising a cleaning rota, and who did much of the work herself, St Andrews was open every day. We know from comments in our visitor book, and from the things that have been said, that this was much appreciated.

The effects of coronavirus lockdown have had a negative impact on our income for a second year running. However, despite these setbacks we were able to pay 100% of the £17k asked of us towards Diocesan costs, to complete payments on the porch repairs and to meet all our other costs. Thank you to everyone who has supported our church financially. We thank Kevin Murphy for his magnificent work as our treasurer.

From July onwards we gradually returned to more normal life.. We held excellent Harvest Festival and Christmas services, although fears of Omicron impacted attendance figures. Nevertheless we thank Julia Joseph and the choir for an excellent carol service. Evensong has continued to be beautifully sung on the second Sunday of each month. We thank the choir and Julia for this. On the fourth Sunday of each month our family service resumed. Post lockdown we have not drawn the same number of children as pre lockdown, but the service does bring together a number of adults who are not so regular at our other services. This is a positive thing. We have a planning team that includes Stephanie Anderson, Sally Anne East, Julie Winyard, Penny Buncombe, Christine Fisher and Rev Simon. Together we choose a theme and aim to prepare interesting and enjoyable services.

Church members have been very generous in the support of the community foodbank. The churches of the Sole Bay Team all contribute to the foodbank. During lockdown the effects of loss of income and rising unemployment hit hard in East Suffolk, with some of the most vulnerable families being impacted. Current increases in the cost of living will only make life harder for many. Demand for the foodbank will continue to be at a high level, and the support of local churches enabled real needs to be met.

Our church has been beautifully decorated all year by our team of flower arrangers. Erica Donnellan has moved away from Walberswick after years of generously leading our team of flower arrangers. We record our thanks to her, and to Inger Edwards for taking on the role.

On Sunday 5th June at 10.00 there will be a Songs of Praise service in the church ruins to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. Everyone is invited.

Simon