

Report to Walberswick Parish Meeting 18 April 2019

Saint Andrew's Church

Some notable events have taken place in the life of St. Andrew's Church this last year.

Bishop Mike Harrison, Suffragen Bishop of Dunwich, visited us on that glorious summer day in July to bless the restored ruins and it was wonderful to welcome so many to share in the celebration, the cake and fizz as well as be blessed by the Bishop with his enthusiastic sprinkling of water! This event was so special in the gathering of the community, in the special arena of the ruins, that the PCC is planning to hold a summer event there each year. Look out for more news.

Archdeacon Ian Morgan came to a Choral Evensong service last October to licence the Rev. Judy Miller as Assistant Priest to the Sole Bay team to join our rector Simon and our team vicar Alan in their ministry.

Last year we set out the first of the family@St. Andrew's services to reach out to all the children and young people of the village and we are pleased that this short service, on the fourth Sunday of the month, is now set firmly in the worship calendar. The theme for this year is individual characters and their stories from the bible and is an uplifting and joyous experience as the children dress up in the theme and take part in the bible reading and prayers, as well as enthusiastically join in the music with assorted instruments. Do come along at such a happy occasion and join in with the witness of the future generation, hopefully, continuing the life of our church in Walberswick. You might be lucky to get a breakfast pastry if you come early at 1045 before the service starts at 1115!

The restored ruins and well cared for churchyard continues to attract visitors and holidaymakers that come and seek-out the 500 year history story. We estimate that as many as 6000 people are now visiting in the year, this being a 30% increase since the ruins restoration in 2017!

Last October the Harvest Supper, organised and run by the PCC, was well attended as a packed Village Hall celebrated the occasion by enjoying a social time whilst sitting down to a cold buffet and entertained by the local music group 'Jippy Jappa' with lead vocalist, Karen le Roux.

As mentioned last year, our next pressing project is the restoration of the South Porch and we have made progress by our church architect having drawn up plans and a specification for the tendering process. From four submitted bids, the preferred contractor, based on cost and past performance, is R and J Hogg who carried out the work on the ruins.

The total cost of the works is likely to be in the region of £70,000 and whilst St. Andrew's have some reserves to contribute towards the cost, after several years of prudent financial management and some generous donations and legacies, further grant applications are currently being made to make up the shortfall.

If enough money can be raised the works should begin, hopefully, at the end of the summer.

Following a successful year of Tower openings we have planned six openings this year beginning with Easter Saturday which couldn't take place without the enthusiasm of Wayne Hazelgrave at the top of the tower. From a record attendance last year we raised nearly £800. These funds were donated to Friends of Vellore, a traditional beneficiary of St. Andrew's, which supports the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore, India.

Our work and mission would not be possible without the support we get from those who regularly come to our services, from those of our church family that clean and decorate the church with flowers, often donated in memory of loved ones, from those 'angels' that carry out general tidying and maintenance work and the provision of the 'welcome tray' of refreshments and to all those visitors and holidaymakers that visit us.

We thank you all.

Our thanks also go to our churchyard contractor, Richard Kett, who takes pride in his work to keep the grass and hedges neat and tidy to showcase our beautiful historic church.

We give special thanks and huge appreciation to the Village Fete Committee who gives us half of the profits from the village fete which significantly and critically helps us to pay our Parish Share and annual expenses. We acknowledge all the work and effort that so many individuals put into ensuring the Fete's success.

Also, grateful thanks to the Walberswick Common Lands Charity who donates money to assist us in the upkeep of the churchyard.

We cannot thank you both enough.

Our church makes a major contribution to the well being of our community life. Spiritually, in joy with weddings and baptisms, and in sorrow at many funerals as well as playing an important part in the cultural life of our area.

We look forward to the year ahead and for all the blessings that we discover along the way.

John Simpson
Churchwarden
April 2019

