

## **CHURCHWARDEN REPORT FOR 2016 presented to the APCM on 30 April 2017**

To begin with a very warm welcome to Mike on his first Sunday at Christ Church. We are absolutely delighted that you are finally here and very grateful to you for chairing today's APCM on your first Sunday. As Mike's only been here for three days, there's no separate vicar's report this year.

It's been a very busy and interesting year for us both!

Little did Sal and I know what being a churchwarden would mean during an interregnum, until we read the Diocese' document 'So your vicar is leaving' which brought home the enormity of the task we were facing.

Richard told us both in March that he would be leaving mid June. In typical churchwarden fashion, we panicked for about three days and then got down to the business of working out what we needed to do, what support we needed and what support we needed to give to other people. It is only because we get on well together, and work as a team, that we have managed to get through the year. Oh and the chocolate has helped too....

As well as managing the interregnum and recruiting a new vicar, all the usual "routine" church business had to continue. The year began with us arranging a new safe for the church silver and registers to be installed in the inner vestry in January. That was the year's first faculty.

The installation of a new heating system (the year's second faculty) commenced mid June, on the day after Richard left. The work took four weeks and we were delighted that we were able to use the church throughout, including holding two funerals. A cleaning party took place after the heating system was installed, and many of us spent a couple of hours giving the church a really good clean one evening. A group was formed to organise the re-planting of the gardens along the west wall following the laying of new gas pipes, and the border is looking well established and better than ever. But the year hasn't all been plain sailing.

Six weeks into the interregnum, at the end of July, the Diocese delivered the news to some members of the building development committee, that the Diocese were no longer proceeding with the building project, for financial reasons. I think we all knew then that we were going to be in for a tough few months. For this to happen so shortly after our vicar had left and at the point that contracts were about to be signed, left us all feeling quite shell shocked and let down. But, in typical Christ Church fashion, we all took a deep breath, taking stock, supporting each other and considering our options. It is thanks to the dedication and hard work of both the building development committee and the PCC that we are now in a position, under Mike's leadership, to begin to consider the best way forward.

Ever practical, once we knew Richard was leaving, we began to arrange a rota of visiting priests from, ensuring we had priests for both the 8am and 10am services on every Sunday of the interregnum including all the extra services at Easter, Christmas, where Simon Gates our Archdeacon took Midnight Mass and Christmas Day, Bishop Richard taking our Carol service, Ash Wednesday, and Mothering Sunday services. The priests came from across the Diocese, providing us with a wide and very welcome variety of worship. And a small but dedicated group ensured that evensong continued every Sunday.

Both of us – and the congregation – soon adapted to different styles of preaching and we were actually able to enjoy the interregnum. AND we know for a fact that a lot of you have enjoyed the interregnum, because you have told us.

We were told that an interregnum was a time for reflection, and would give us time to see how we wished CC to grow in the future. At the time, we thought no this can't be right, but actually it was completely right and we are proud that attendance at our Sunday services has not fallen and, in fact, has increased over the last 9-10 months, including the numbers attending junior church and stepping up church. Under Rich Hall's leadership, a new music committee has been established and we have benefitted from the very generous gift of a baby grand piano. All of us (PCC, office holders, everyone on our committees, teams and rotas, members of the congregation) have all really pulled together during the interregnum, ensuring Christ Church not just continued but thrived.....and we are so grateful to you all.

The first few Sundays without an incumbent, having visiting priests, sorting out junior church, making sure we could hear the sermons, were a bit 'trial and error', but we all adapted, and it is thanks to you all that together we have managed this.

We also wish to give our sincere thanks to everyone who was involved in the recruitment of our new vicar, including the whole congregation for helping us develop our detailed and thoughtful parish profile.

With the withdrawal of the Diocese from the building project and following the PCC decision to await our new vicar before moving forward (either in terms of refurbishment or development), immediate repairs were undertaken to what had become a run down and leaky hall. Urgent roof repairs were undertaken, gulleys and drainpipes were cleared and plumbing was checked.

Stefan Bown kindly agreed to take over the chairmanship of the newly formed hall committee. We are very grateful, not only to Stefan but to both the previous and the new hall committees. Lettings have restarted which is fantastic.

All our regular churchwarden duties have continued, including arranging repairs to the roof to the underground chamber [unearthed and damaged during preparatory work related to the previous development project]. As we write this, we have had a structural report carried out and an in depth survey of the chamber. The Chancellor granted us an emergency faculty at the beginning of January (our third faculty of the year) and the-Diocesan Secretary has agreed that the Diocese will pay for the security fencing, all professional fees and the repair itself.

All the regular checks are up to date (gas safety, electrical reports, lightning conductor, fire extinguishers etc), we have implemented all of the urgent and most of the less urgent recommendations from the last quinquennial inspection and ad hoc repairs continue (e.g. the inner vestry roof at Christmas).

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking you all. Without your tremendous support, practical help and good humour during the interregnum we would never have managed. Christ Church really is about its people. We are proud that we have got through the interregnum together and delighted to have Mike leading us over the coming months and years.

Sal Edmunds and Julie Grainger