

ST MARY'S PCC NEWS - MARCH 2024

Notes from PCC Meeting on 26th February 2024

General Topics -

- **Church Temperature** - The chancel infra-red heaters have been repaired and a heater installed in the ringing chamber. There are no further plans for heating provision. The Diocese insists that heating is provided for the people using the church, not the space around them!
- **The Electoral Roll** currently stands at 121 people with 3 new members and one loss.
- **Safeguarding Update** - A Safeguarding Sunday will be arranged close to the Mother's Union Modern Slavery talk on June 11th. A Safeguarding Report from Professor Alexis Jay, the former chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, was critical of safeguarding in the Church of England in general because protecting the reputation of the church tended to take precedence over care and support for victims. This report was presented to the General Synod on 24 February and will be followed by more consultation. The Bishop of Chichester emphasised that considerable progress had been made in this Diocese over the past 10-15 years.
- **Deanery Report** - Chichester Diocese has suspended training for new Lay Readers for the next two years, as cost for this training is almost £4,000 per person. The Deanery Synod expressed its disappointment at this move, bearing in mind the shortage of clergy and the role Lay Readers play in supporting churches.
- **A suggested Mission Action Plan** to give direction to the church was discussed. Once finalised, a one-page summary will be displayed in the church and porch as well as the website. There are 4 Strategic Priorities: - Growing in Faith, Outreach, Sustainability and Giving.
- **AGM** will take place in Church after the morning service on May 12th. All church members are invited to attend.

Finance and Budgeting -

- Although most of the invoices for major work have been settled, work recommended in the 2020 Quinquennial has yet to be completed.
- We are planning a short talk to the congregation promoting the Parish Giving Scheme around Easter and a fuller presentation of our financial needs near our Harvest Festival.
- There has been a large increase in our electricity bill for the previous year, partially due to using electric heating instead of gas, but due also to the huge price rise of electricity resulting from the war in Ukraine. No gas was used.
- The Treasurer will investigate the ethical status of our church investments.

Reports from Working Groups -

- **Children, Families and Youth** have planned an Easter Fun Day in Ringmer Village Hall on April 10th from 12.30 - 3.30pm.

- **Pastoral** - Care is continuing with monthly lunches on Friday and the usual contacts by phone and in person. The group had worked through the “in-house” Listening Skills course from Gloucester Diocese. Cards will continue to be sent on the first anniversary of a family’s bereavement. The group will provide information to the congregation about the Bereavement Journey course run by Trinity Church, Lewes.
- **Worship** - An outline plan of services has been made until September. The Licensing of Revd. Pat Brenton took place on Friday 1st March. The Eastertide Service on April 21st will be similar to the Advent Service with readings and hymns.
- **Welcome and Events** - Planned events include Mothering Sunday on March 10th; Easter Sunday Breakfast on Sunday 31st March; a Garden Party on June 15th; teas available in the church room during the Ringmer Open Gardens weekend on June 22nd to 23rd from 2.00 - 5.30pm and the Christmas Fair on December 7th. Ideas for future events include a Friends of St Mary’s event, a craft fair and a Wedding Dress or Flower Show.
- **Fabrics & Facilities** - The supports of the glass-fronted notice board on Church Hill will be repaired. The group will meet shortly to discuss the work required by the Quinquennial.
- **Eco Church** - Congratulations to all for achieving the Silver Award from A Rocha.
- **Parish Magazine** - Advertising space will be increased, with caution against overloading the magazine with these. The attractive front covers were considered to increase the popularity of the magazine, which was now produced and delivered more efficiently.
- **Policies** - The revised and combined Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was approved by the PCC. This will probably be the template for all the policies’ layouts.

These notes were compiled by Margaret Sweatman