

## **Churchwardens' Report on year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

### **St. Mary, Worlingworth Church and Churchyard.**

#### **Security.**

As of March 2017 our lead roof is fully covered by an alarm system installed by E-Bound AVX Ltd. This system is serviced every year and monitored 24/7 all year round. It is a very sensitive system and strobe lights are set off sometimes by birds lighting on the roof.

The Church has observed Government Guidelines to protect the public because of the Covid pandemic. The Church is locked from dusk until morning.

#### **Health and safety.**

Health and safety has been and will continue to be a priority. Government Guidelines and rules have been strictly observed regards Covid 19. Hand sanitising gel provided on entry and exit doors is still available as are masks. Risk Assessments are regularly made.

Access for the Disabled is provided on ground level through the Priest's door into the Chancel. A ramp enables access from the Chancel into the Nave. Warning signs alert visitors to steps and uneven floors.

We have a hearing loop integrated into an effective sound system and large print hymn books for those with sight challenges. Public access has been kept as safe as possible with vegetation kept under control with regular cutting. Bat droppings, especially in the porch continue to be unpleasant and are cleaned up regularly. Many thanks to Charles Plowman for being our H and S Officer.

#### **Safeguarding.**

Safeguarding of Children and vulnerable adults. The Church is very aware of the need to be vigilant and it is reviewed as an item on the agenda at every PCC meeting. We are guided by the Church of England and have adopted the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese Guide Lines and Policy.

Information and Notices with Safeguarding contacts are displayed on the Notice Board in the Church.

Lisa Crane serves as The Four Rivers Benefice safeguarding officer responsible for our parish, and any issues should be reported and considered in confidence with her. Jackie Turton at Laxfield, serves the eastern side of the Benefice and could be consulted if Lisa was not available.

#### **Church Fabric and Architect.**

Mr. Philip Orchard is our Architect at Whitworth Partnership. He carried out the quinquennial inspection of the Church in December 2021. The report contained many concerns with minor items and more serious repairs needed to the extent of estimated costs of £20,000. East Window and South Porch windows noted by the PCC as requiring substantial fundraising. Fundraising has been severely disrupted by Covid.

#### **Churchyard maintenance.**

Mr. Matthew Hammond agreed to contract the grass cutting on a reduced basis again this year. Larger areas were left as natural habitat, with only regular cutting on paths and lawns near the church. The very dry summer helped to keep growth lower than expected and the mowing was kept within budget.

We thank the Parish Council for a contribution towards the cost.

The heap of accumulated organic rubbish was cleared during the year and will not be allowed to accumulate in the previous manner again as it was an eyesore and a fire risk. Neighbours are aware that if dumping of garden waste in the Churchyard happens in future it will be regarded as an act of fly-tipping!

We note that pedestrians use the Churchyard as a shortcut, a safer route than using Church street bend where there is no public side walk. The walks in the Churchyard need surface maintenance to assist wheelchair access. Some levelling up/filling in of sunken graves has been done, where there was a lot of settlement during this drought year. Brambles have been cut and removed from within railings around graves.

#### **Services.**

Accounting for all services, 54 were held including 2 funerals. 26 were lead by Clergy and 28 by our Lay Elders, Bert Stanford and Val Swallow. Many thanks to our regular organist, Mr Charlie Abbott.

We have a 'Let's Celebrate' format of service, which we hold usually once a month. This is a relaxed type of service, ideal for anyone wishing to sample the experience of coming to worship and meeting our community. We celebrated our Queen's Platinum Jubilee with bell ringing and a special service when 67 people attended. Sadly this was followed in early September with 97 tolls of a bell and special services of prayer and reflection for the life of Her Majesty on her passing to greater glory!

The local Primary School here in Worlingworth decorate the font with such lovely craft and written work, decorations and produce at our festivals. Parents and pupils donated generously to the local Food Bank. Twenty-seven people attended the annual outdoor 'Act of Remembrance' with wreath laying at the Village War Memorial when the parish pays tribute to the fallen of two World Wars.

**Four Rivers Benefice.** About 7 or 8 of our congregation regularly joined the Benefice services on fifth Sundays in the month and supported Tannington Church when they had a service.

**Deanery.** Our representatives and Churchwardens have attended Synod meetings, meetings with the Archdeacon and training via zoom and normal meetings. There were special meetings to plan the advertising of the vacancy, then the interviews and selection of a new priest-in-charge of the Four Rivers Benefice following the retirement of Rev. David Burrell in April. The Rev. Enid Pow was selected.

Your Churchwardens appreciate your continued support in every aspect of Mission and Ministry.

Some fund-raising and social events were held this year, Open Gardens and an Angels Festival. We thank everyone who contributes to maintaining our wonderful medieval Church. Thank you to the small band of cleaners, Guild members and our PCC for making our Church available to the wider parish through the year. Thank you all very much.

*Herbert D Stanford and Ann Davidson. Churchwardens.*