

## Report from St. Mary's for the Parish Council AGM 19.04.2022

We are fortunate in having Rev. Canon Nick Garrard as our rector with his wife Rev. Helen Garrard, whose ministry with us began as Covid struck.

Services were and still are, held on line, on video and now back in church without masks and with singing! Through Lent and Easter week very moving and meditative events were held, lunches and suppers too. Nick visits the school and they hold services/celebrations in the church. Nick, Helen and the Youth Worker, Gary have planned and given activities to the whole school.

Through Covid needs within communities have become more apparent and it has been a demanding time for Nick but a variety of gatherings and links have been instigated mainly based on the Barn in Rockland.

Communities are responsible for the funding of ministry and the maintenance of church buildings. For ministry there is a quota system, each village within the Benefice is responsible for contributing; our share is £8000.00 per annum. It is a long time since we have been able to meet this figure. As a general trend inevitably this will lead to a reduction of clergy across the country.

St. Mary's Church: We have just had a quinquennial architect's inspection. Because of corrosion of the cross supporting beams we have been unable to ring the bells for some time. Derry Kelleher has been lead person for both caring for the bells and tower and for researching and applying for grants that will be needed to fund the more than one hundred thousand pounds cost of repairs. Some urgent work: pointing of the coping stones on the tower parapet will be commissioned by the PCC.

Maintenance was recently done on the church organ (a day's work) and the sound of it played by Martin is truly splendid. The church is simple, bright and has good acoustics, it is a community asset. It holds history from the fossils in the stones, the construction and materials and the changes made with each generation, in my time, the addition of 2 bells, the building of the extension and the adding of a sound system. Also of course are the histories of all the people of our community who are buried here.

The lychgate which is also the village war memorial needs repair and the Parish Council and Village Charity will contribute to the cost and arrangement of the repairs which we hope will happen soon.

St. Saviour's is a popular quiet place to visit and it is hoped to continue to manage that area for wildlife and peaceful visitation. Hedging has been planted (thanks to South Norfolk

Council, Cathy Terry and volunteers) and a naturalist survey is to be done to help plan management.

Our next focus is the Jubilee weekend. There will be a Flower Festival with a fun theme, with a quiz, a knitted tea party, real teas, books, plants, school display, and music too. It will be lovely.

Parking is a constant concern, difficulty and danger. We are wholly indebted to Angie and Dave for the use of the yard. I would like to outline some of the challenges.....

We would welcome anyone with interest in the future of our church in the community to our committee; particularly at this time with raising funds for the tower repair.

Pippa Thurlow

Church Warden