

Parish Council AGM 2023 – Report from St. Mary’s Church PCC

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) continues to support Rev. Daniel Harrison in managing and maintaining the Church of England presence in the village, including providing for the spiritual needs of the population and maintaining the historic building. In addition to our regular services the church conducts baptisms, weddings and funeral services when required.

Dan is responsible for 8 parishes in all. As a result, we perhaps don’t see as much of him in Somersham as we would like but his telephone number and email address are included on the back cover of the Link magazine each month so anyone can contact him if they want/need to.

Everyone is welcome at our services and we regularly hold 2 per month; a communion service at 9.30am on the second Sunday and a less formal ‘Family Service’ at 10am on the 4th Sunday. Details are published in the Link magazine. Attendance at the regular services is generally quite low but loyal and enthusiastic. Rather more people attend the ‘big’ services such as Harvest Festival and Carol Service and our Service of Remembrance which we share with the Baptist Church.

It’s not all about services and any church needs to be outward looking which we try to do in a number of ways. In addition to normal ‘Sunday collections’ we benefit from, amongst other things, gifts given at special services such as Harvest and the Christmas Toy Service. These are passed on to charitable organisations (in our case, usually the Women’s Refuge charity ‘Lighthouse’). In recent years, some members of the church have also tried to brighten Christmas for some of the most hard pressed families with a small gift. Further afield, we play our part in the annual ‘Christian Aid Week’ (this year’s is next week) when invitations to contribute to this very worthwhile cause are issued via the ‘Link’ with a number of collection points in the village.

We have also continued to maintain links with the school through our regular (weekly) ‘Open the Book’ sessions in which members of a team drawn from both St. Mary’s and the Baptist Church read and explain bible stories to the children. The children always seem to enjoy these sessions and we are grateful to the school for continuing to allow us to do this. This year, we also managed to organise an after school ‘Easter workshop’ which was well attended and enjoyed by those who came along. Children from the school are also welcomed into the church from time to time to support the RE curriculum.

We are very grateful to people in the village for the support that they give to our fund raising activities throughout the year. Even so, we continue to struggle to meet all of the costs of the day to day running expenses and are once again very grateful to the Parish Council for their generous help towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard. We hope that you will be able to continue this support in the future.

Every 5 years, the church is subject to a 'quinquennial' inspection into its physical condition and measures are identified to ensure that it remains in a good and safe condition. A number of repairs to items classed as 'category A' (the most urgent) have recently been completed and we are again grateful to those who have given financial support, including Suffolk Historic Churches Trust and the Russel Quinton Trust.

We are currently looking at the possibility of laying on water to the church, having raised a sum of money for the purpose. This will necessarily have to be done in stages as funds become available.

Steve Dines
7th May 2023