

# ALL SAINTS CHURCH LITTLE MELTON

**PCC Annual General Meeting** was held at the church on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. Following the election of the churchwardens there were reports on the activities of the church over the last year. Fund-raising for the tower repairs as well as support for the Ashcroft project has occupied much of the PCCs time. Financially we did not go into the red although that had been predicted. There were reports from Mothers Union, The Friends of Little Melton Church and Churches Together to reflect on the life of our church.

All members of the PCC agreed to continue in the role except for Mrs Betty East who decided to step down following many years of service.

A full copy of the AGM minutes is displayed on the noticeboard inside the church. Our next AGM is scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2017.

## **Services**

Weekly services have been held including a Family Service on the third Sunday in each month. In addition a prayer meeting has been held most Tuesday mornings. Joint services were held with Great Melton at Christmas and Palm Sunday. Over the last year there have been 7 funerals, 5 baptisms and 2 weddings. A further 2 weddings are booked for later this year.

## **Christmas**

The decorations at Christmas were based on painted jam-jars. Stuart Cable ran a workshop in November to start the whole thing off. We had a tremendous response and nearly 200 jars decorated the church at Christmas. Jars came from Playgroup; the Primary School, the congregation indeed from all over. Many were beautifully done and when all were put together provided a wonderful sight. Our thanks goes to Stewart Cable for all his hard work in making the Christmas decorations such a success. Stewart also provided the inspiration for the scarecrow theme at the Summer Fete.

The Christmas tree was provided by Great Melton Estates courtesy of the generosity of Sir Edward Evans-Loombe.

Christmas services were held for the pre-school and the primary school (2 services). There was a well- attended carol service on the 18<sup>th</sup> and a Crib Service held on Christmas Eve which attracted over 100 celebrants.

## **Giving**

The church has continued to support many organisations including:

The Ashcroft Project based in Wicklewood for women suffering from severe and enduring emotional distress and long-term mental health problems;

The Waluga Project in West Africa

The Bethesda Children's Home in India

The Norwich Food Bank

Christian Aid Week (£780.00 raised)

Donations of food and blankets have also been made to help refugees in Calais and a box has been made available for donations to the RSPCA East Winch Appeal

In addition at the summer fete we supplied a cream tea to all in the village, whether church goers or not, who were 90 or over in celebration of the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Tower Repairs**

During work carried out in 2014 it became apparent that urgent and very necessary repair work was needed to the Tower. With the exception of taking the final bits and pieces away and re-seeding the grass this has now been completed. The work has involved cutting out the flintwork in most of the upper tower and replacing the concrete with lime mortar; replacing many of the corner stones and re-doing the parapet. The finished result looks really good. During this time we kept the church open to the public. The funding for this came from the Friends of Little Melton Church who contributed an amazing £10,000.00 and The Listed Places of Worship Fund. Our thanks go to both organisations for supporting us in this. We would also like to thank the contractors, S & L Restoration Ltd who completed the work on time and to a high standard.

During the work contractors noticed that some of the tiles over the chancel roof had slipped. Investigation revealed that frost had damaged some tiles. Although not part of the original contract they were able to secure the tiles promptly preventing what could have been a serious leak over the winter months.

### **On- going repairs**

We have drawn up a maintenance plan for the year. Generally things are looking OK but some work has been identified including repairs to the chancel roof, some electrical work and investigating small patches of damp.

### **Church Opening**

A small team of volunteers open the church daily from 10 am until 3pm. There have been numerous notes of appreciation from people as far afield as New Zealand and America. Many people are re-visiting where they used to live or paying respects to people who are interred in the churchyard. Others have come for the peace that the church can offer for quiet contemplation and prayer. There are excellent free leaflets for people to read about the history of the church. A recent innovation has been to make the toilets available for visitors use and free teas and coffees as well as biscuits have been provided.

### **Churchyard.**

New churchyard regulations came into force in 2016. A copy is displayed in the church porch for people to read. They are not long but they are very specific on what can and cannot be placed in the churchyard. The Parochial Church Council are legally bound by these rules and are responsible for enforcing them. Anyone irrespective of creed or denomination is entitled to be interred in the churchyard.

Churchyard maintenance has been undertaken by volunteers at the beginning of each month tidying up, litter picking, general maintenance and cutting back weeds and other growth. The bulk of the maintenance though consists of cutting the grass and hedges. This is undertaken by a contractor and is funded by the Parish Council. Without this help we would not be able to pay for this. Our thanks and appreciation goes to the Council for their assistance.

The notice boards at the lych gate and the gates at the entrance have been replaced or repaired.

## **Finance**

The bulk of our funds have come from regular weekly giving with gift aid, collections during the services, fees for weddings and funerals together with certain fund raising activities: Summer Fete £614.00, sponsored cycle ride £226.20, Christmas fete £468.00 and January quiz £400.00. Our total income has been £17,684.00 and our expenditure £17,490.00, a surplus of £194.00. However, with the death or moving of some of our supporters this year we are looking at a shortfall of approximately £1800.00 at the end of this year.

## **Other activities**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March we had a visit from the Dereham branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A). Annetta Evans gave an enjoyable talk on the history and architecture of the church while Anne Carter discussed the medieval wall paintings.

The Mid-Norfolk Family History Society under the chairmanship of Tom Garland completed a survey of the gravestones in the churchyard. The survey includes the names, transcriptions of what are on the memorials and a plan of where they are. A copy has been presented to All Saints. We will be making further copies as soon as possible one of which will be kept in the church for visitors to use.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April the Anglian Singers gave a St Georges Day concert in the church for the Friends. There were a variety of songs ranging from the religious to a medley from Les Miserables. It was an excellent evening's entertainment.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of June Dr Iain Barr from the UEA as part of Norfolk Wildnights Project gave a talk on bats in and around the church. He began with a general explanation of how bats interact with their environment and why they like churches so much. He pointed out that we had a small colony of Natterers bats in the roof of the north aisle. He estimated that probably 700 species of insects lived in church yard including at least two rare species on the biodiversity list. He commented on our conservation area as an important contribution to the diversity of insect life.

On 16<sup>th</sup> December the Friends organised a concert given by the Norwich Salvation Army band.

## **Policy on Safeguarding.**

The PCC has adopted the Church of England guidelines on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and is now policy for the church. The Policy on Safeguarding is now displayed on the noticeboard in the church.