

2022 Churchwardens Report

Phil Goodfellow

The last 12 months has been very busy and challenging in a number of respects.

The development on the Scout Grounds has been a lot slower than first thought but the 6 town houses were all sold before their completion and here in May 2022 the contractors are finally finishing up and as we described at the last meeting the stairs are to be replaced and the area behind the church will be landscaped.

In June 2021 UES started to replace the heating system. St Anne's Room just above the old boiler house was selected and the install went forward. It was not without technical issues and proved to be quite challenging. On the 29th of that month they were seen commissioning and testing the system. All seemed to be OK initially.

Throughout the lock-down Fr Steve Hawkins was live streaming Morning Prayer, and we did start to hold a BCP Mass on a Friday in this month which proved very popular with those brought up with this style of worship. Fr Steve did a really brilliant job when the church was closed in streaming the Sunday Mass from Brentry.

On the 1st of July however the terrible news broke that my co-warden and good friend Nick Gibbs had died. It was not until Tuesday 27th July that we were able to hold a full Requiem Mass for Nick which was an incredible moving service for one of Holy Nat's family.

In August of 2021 Pete Daily was appointed to be Churchwarden and was sworn in by private service by the Archdeacon of Bristol, Neil Warwick in September due to restrictions. I value Pete's support during the last 12 months and more so after Fr Steve retired in October.

Fr Steve's Last Sunday was the 17th of October, and we had a small reception after the Mass to send him on his way. A very sad time for everyone and we were very sorry to see him depart the church where he came to faith and served brilliantly for 4 years.

Then the fun started to get cover for the Sunday Mass. Fr Stuart Boyd stepped up as well as Fr Anthony Everitt, Fr Stephen Spencer and Fr David Woodhouse. And I did manage to get Fr Robert Ward special permission to cover our Remembrance Day Service in November which was fitting as Fr Robert was a RAF Chaplain for many years.

In December the Bishop of Chichester was at Holy Nativity to say Mass and also to hold an Ebbsfleet Clergy meeting have been asked by the Archbishop to take West Country responsibility for Ebbsfleet Parishes after Bishop Goodall swam the Tiber to Rome.

Christmas was a joyful time but not many of the usual services were held but the important ones were covered. The church looked fantastic as usual with the flower arrangements and cleaning staff do a really great job.

With the advent of the colder weather a defect in the new heating system was detected and a massive leak started in the TCCW area and had to be repaired. On investigation however, asbestos was found, and work ceased for 4 weeks until that could be removed. It was cold, very cold but we survived.

Numbers at the Sunday Mass never recovered but Easter was a great from a attendance point of view. We could not hold the Easter Vigil this year but Fr Stuart did a fantastic job on Good Friday and Easter Day for which we thank him. Numbers have started to increase which is encouraging

I must thank everyone who work behind the scenes and do so much for the church – that must include the priests who come regularly to Holy Nat to help us out and the incumbents who work their rotas to accommodate us.

May he 5th saw the church being used as a Polling Station and the staff were again remarking on the beauty of the building and its very calm ambiance.

Thank you for your support as I start my 22 year as your warden! The record is 35 years by Edward Feltham!