Church Wardens’ Report for APCM April 2024

It has been a year since we (Paul and Bea) took on the roles of church wardens at St Peter’s. There has been much to learn and it is fair to say we are still both finding our feet somewhat. A big thank you to Teresa and Chris for the handover and ongoing support, and to Rev Paul and the PCC for their patience when we are perhaps not on top of matters.

It has been another busy twelve months with:

* Summer and Christmas Craft Fairs
* a wonderful flower and harvest festival, and harvest supper
* running a sweet tombola at the Chailey Bonfire Society St George’s Day event
* a hymns and tea service for the Coronation of King Charles III
* two glorious weddings last summer and a handful of Christenings
* a Remembrance service on the green with Chailey Bonfire Society
* an amazing concert with the Chailey school jazz band and other wonderful, local performers
* a superb Christmas concert by Andy and Jo
* School services for Chailey Primary
* Children building bird boxes in conjunction with Chailey Commons Society, and
* A jumble sale

And not forgetting the weekly possums, monthly lunch clubs and the Repair Café. How lovely it is to see children from the primary school serve at the monthly lunches. This continues a growing interaction with the school which included reading support on Friday afternoons and the wonderful Intergenerational Opera.

In conjunction with Ali we also started “Free @ Four” on Sunday afternoons and a mid-week Community Café. However, these were discontinued due to very little support, and we miss Ali’s enthusiasm after her departure for pastures new in November.

But we have welcomed some new, successful initiatives. The Lewes branch of the Citizens Advice Bureau hold monthly sessions at St Peter’s which are well attended. And Lee Buck, the youth worker, has started Duke of Edinburgh award meetings for the Diocese with seven young people.

The Pastoral Care Fund is well supported by donations and we have helped a number of local families overcome severe financial challenges and stress in recent months. Bea is looking at how we increase our pastoral activity in the Parish as this key Christian attribute is in ever increasing demand.

St Peter’s is clearly the centre of the Chailey community not only with many events organised by the church but with the use of the church by other organisations. This is how it should be. And perhaps because of this and the wonderful leadership of Rev Paul and the very welcoming Father Martin, we saw a significant increase in attendance at 2023 Christmas services.

The maintenance of an almost 800-year-old building is an ongoing task especially the issues with the flooring. We are seeking compensation from the original architect and hope to reach a settlement without recourse to litigation. Plans are already underway regarding a replacement floor which will address the recurring defects. And of course, our attention also turns to the roof where Andy gets a morning shower if playing in a rainstorm. Maintenance requires a constant stream of funds and the proceeds from the many events listed above are key to ensuring this continues to be available. But we are also very reliant on the generous giving of our parishioners.

The churchyards (yes, we have to manage St Mary’s in North Chailey too) get attention from half yearly clean-ups and many thanks to Ken Furmedge and his geo-cachers for the organisation and wonderful work they do. There is still much to do particularly at St Mary’s as some wonderful gravestones remain buried under rhododendrons and brambles.

The smooth running of St Peter’s and the success of the events is due to a great many of you who volunteer time and energy to this wonderful church.

* Special thanks to Rev Paul and Father Martin for their ministry, enthusiasm and support.
* Big thanks to Teresa for all the church office work and supporting the church wardens
* Thanks to all those on the Sunday rotas for reading, intercessions, coffee etc. And Chris Peskett and Olga for ensuring we are looking at the right slides on the screen.
* A special thank you to Liz Cullen who has stepped back from coordinating the flower ladies after many years. And thank you to Brenda Martin for picking up this task going forward.
* Thanks to the bell ringers who welcome us every Sunday, the choir and of course our wonderful Director of Music and organist, Andy Rees.
* Thanks to Anthony and Philippa for all the diligent work on the finances and to Jane von der Becke for being the safeguarding officer.
* Thanks to MaryJane for Possums and Lunch Club along with her merry band of helpers.
* Thanks to the soup makers for the wonderful Lent lunches we have recently been enjoying.
* And finally thanks to Brenda Ford for her fabulous work with St Peter’s Primary School which was appropriately recognised with her meeting the Princess of Wales.

We are very blessed at St Peter’s in having such a wonderful caring and giving community. We look forward to being your church wardens for another year of growth and development of our mission in Chailey.

Paul Corver & Bea Annis

22 March 2024