

Church Wardens Report 2024

Churchyard

The Churchyard being a closed churchyard continues to be managed by the Parish Council who work closely with members of the PCC throughout the year, carrying out tasks such as Topple Testing (movement of gravestones) monitoring overhanging branches of the trees and management of the grass and hedges.

A buddleia shrub was found to be growing in the steeple tower, an abseiling company was employed who removed the buddleia and repointed the brickwork loosened by the roots of the shrub.

The Notice boards near the front hedge and school side entrance have been replaced with glass fronted boards with a lock.

Incumbent

In early January 2024, what had been an exciting appointment in June 2023 of Rev Paul Clarke, due to ill health he was forced to take sick leave and try to recover from the effects of long-Covid.

Sadly in August he announced his retirement and to leave in October 2024. This placed us once again in Interregnum.

The Interregnum commenced with Section 11/12 meetings and the Benefice Profile being reviewed and adapted to suit changing Benefice needs.

We look forward to attracting a suitable candidate, for our Benefice of Haughley with Wetherden and Stowupland.

Service provision

Our very special appreciation goes to the Rev Stephen Snelling, who along with other visiting clergy has ensured that we have maintained the various services in the Benefice. Our thanks also goes to our dedicated and committed Ministry Team of Alison, Rachel and Kevin and also to Val our Organist enabling Holy Trinity Church to hold services, as well as supporting families with Baptisms and Funerals.

We welcomed Freeman CPS for their Easter, Harvest and Christmas celebrations a mix of songs, poems and readings all beautifully and proudly read and presented.

With the growth of many new homes in Stowupland we have had the joy of welcoming new members to our congregation.

For the Harvest Service, shared with the URC and the School, we provided food items for the Stowmarket Food Bank and or donation to Water Aid.

Advent services leading to Christmas, Christingle, Carols by Candlelight with the Stowmarket Brass Band, and the Crib Service, all very special.

Christmas "Carols in the Crown" a joyful evening of raised voices. Our grateful thanks and appreciation to the manager and all at the Crown for making this an enjoyable evening.

Social and Fundraising

We held both our Spring Craft Fair and Christmas Fair, once again both were very well attended and providing much needed additions to our Church funds.

In addition, through the Remembrance service, Christingle and Carols by Candlelight we were able to make donations to the Royal British Legion, Children's charity and the local Food Bank.

Coffee Cake and Chat continues to be a popular event on the 3rd Saturday of each month held in the Church Hall, lots of chat and the sampling of cakes and savouries.

Our Flower Festival was held in June, the church filled with colour, perfume and great imagination, all following the chosen theme of "Occupations"

We are grateful for all who willingly take part and offer their services and skills each year when the Flower Festival and other events take place.

Ann Doubtfire

Sue Hayter

Church Wardens