

Annual Report Swilland St Mary's Church

Electoral Roll

There are 7 names on the electoral roll with approximately 170 inhabitants in the village

Service Attendance

We have returned to a normal church rota of services with one priest led service per month and a lay led service every other month. The latter service alternates between our Church and Ashbocking and hence the alternate months. It is proposed to change that so that there is a lay led service every month in the coming year subject to agreement from Katrina our incumbent and after discussion with Linda Pollard the other contributing Elder from Ashbocking.

Last year we had 198 attendees at services. This year we have had 301 attendees, a significant but understandable increase in number.

The visitors book shows we had 39 visitors compared to 9 in the previous year. Several of the entries just named a family so it is likely that there were actually more. Normal daily opening continues with a rota of 4 families key holding and providing the opening service. Thanks to all those who participated.

Joint Benefice Council

During the last year the Benefice has obtained the agreement of all the nine parishes to start a Joint Benefice Council to oversee the administration of our Benefice thus everything can be done at that level, with the information trickling down to all in the Parishes. This has the advantage of reducing the multiple duplication of effort that the incumbent has hitherto had to endure and simplification of such things as parish policies, safeguarding etc. One representative from each parish attends a monthly meeting and our Church warden is our representative.

Elder.

We now have an elder commissioned alongside other elders of the Benefice (both new and recommissioning) at Grundisburgh Church in January 2022. By having an elder we are increasing the number of services available to parishioners. Katrina our rector has provided a framework for these services with a Benefice lay led service format. Elders don't give sermons but facilitate a reflections slot in which a passage from the bible is discussed with all in the congregation. To date there have been some interesting discussions and there has been some good feedback from parishioners, so we hope there will be increases in numbers as time proceeds and the word gets out. Please come along on the alternate first Sundays of the month and participate in our friendly local village worship and discussion

Kitchen/Toilet Project.

This project continues to progress at snail's pace. Readers will be pleased to know we obtained planning permission in 2022 after bureaucratic delays the previous year and that a visitation by the Diocesan committee agreed to the project subject to faculty application (Church permission). The faculty application to the Diocese during the summer encountered problems in that a Schedule of Works is necessary prior to granting of the faculty, but to provide this required further financing.

Discussion within the PCC and with the architect, who needed to provide the relevant paperwork resulted in the PCC agreeing to fund the cost of the Schedule of Works at about £13k with half the cost of such being provided by an anonymous donor. After a meeting between the CW and the Architect in December, a format was discussed and agreed, with the architect proposing to provide such to progress the faculty in the Spring of 2023 but we haven't got it yet.

To obtain overall funding for this project we need both the faculty and the planning plus approximately half the capital cost (£122K total *before inflation took off*) for big charitable institutions to entertain us, so it is a long road. We continue to be eternally grateful to the Moon and Mushroom our local pub for the financial support afforded us unstintingly by Nikki Gavin and her band of people in raising funds for this project. We have received money towards the project as a result of her super car show last summer, the Autumn festival, all the quizzes throughout the year and in future events including more of the same and her exciting proposed dog show hopefully will enable us to see our target amount drawing a bit closer. To date we probably have about £20k earmarked towards the actual building project.

We also need bat and archaeological surveys. Approaches to suitable bat experts have so far met with no success with 3 experts all claiming they are too busy. So anyone who can offer advice or a survey please contact Brian Williams

Lastly, but absolutely not least, we are so grateful to all parishioners both in and out of Church who give money to the church to pay our Parish Share of approximately £4k. The Parish Share is the money that all Parishes pay to the Church Authorities towards the costs of our priests and the Diocesan Administration. Without this contribution so generously provided by our own people the Church would be in very severe straits. Thank you everyone for all your understanding and support