

## Annual Parish Meeting Report April 2024

This review of the year records the activities of the Parochial Church Council of St Peter's Levington for 2023 - 2024. The PCC in co-operation with the Rector has responsibility for promoting, throughout the parish, the mission of the church: pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical.

Those on the electoral roll numbered 32. Our congregation averages 18 and the only young people attending are the grandchildren of those who worship in the congregation. During the year there were two weddings, a service of blessing, one baptism, one funeral service and one committal into the churchyard without a church service. Just a reminder, anyone resident in the village can be buried in the churchyard – with, or without, a service in the church - and anyone with a 'qualifying connection' to the village can be married or baptised in the church.

We retained the pattern of two services a month, one Morning Prayer and one service of Holy Communion with a Benefice service on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, whenever it falls. On the Sundays with no service in Levington, parishioners, if they choose to do so, can easily go to a service in one of the neighbouring parishes.

The PCC comprised seven members and they held meetings four during the year.

The PCC continues to work alongside their 'Aims and Purposes' document. Health and Safety and Safeguarding are agenda items at all meetings. It is now mandatory for PCC officials to undertake Safeguarding training.

St Peter's pays its parish share in full. Direct debits and standing orders were less than last year but donations meant that we ended the year with a small surplus. The introduction of a card reader for the church is on the wish list. We continue to work on our plans for gentle re-ordering at the back of the church to create a space for serving refreshments after services and a small area of informal seating for holding PCC meetings.

The church welcomed people of the parish for the national Remembrance Day services and we will play our part in the village D Day commemorations for the in June 2024.

In March 2023 items of brass were stolen from the church, including a book stand, a collection plate and two brass candlesticks locked in a cupboard,. The door of the cupboard was forced open. Despite this theft we are determined to keep the church open on a daily basis. Generous people within the church community kindly donated replacements which are now kept off site. We were victims of a spate of burglaries from rural churches in Suffolk.

We had to cancel our big summer event - a patronal festival at the end of June 2024 - because the pub is expanding fast and can no longer grant churchgoers car parking spaces in their car park. The Parish Council refused our application to allow parking on the village field for special services. This was a big disappointment. Facilities for parking in our village are dire and we now have an urgent and expensive problem to resolve over car parking for services. There will be more mention of this in the Friends' report.

We welcome all newcomers to the village and visitors regularly write complimentary comments in the visitors' book. At Christmas we continue to have our illuminated star on the church tower and our angel joined the star for a short while shining in the darkness until she slipped her moorings and had to be taken down for treatment to a battered wing. Our Harvest Festival concentrated on

collecting donated foodstuffs and produce and we supported both FIND and Basic Life Charity food banks.

For the Coronation of King Charles III, we had an enormous golden crown hung from the crenelations of the church tower. We held a most successful flower festival and art exhibition over Coronation week-end which raised almost £500 for the Friends. Some villagers who had lived in the village for decades came into the church and said that it was their first visit.

The first part of the year 2023 was dominated by preparation for the retirement of the Reverend Ian Wilson at the end of May. We were a 'Benefice in Vacancy' from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023. Dealing with the tortuous process set out by the C of E to find a successor was demanding and exhausting for the Churchwardens and PCCs of the Benefice. In many ways we were fortunate. Our new priest, The Reverend Nick Williams, was installed, inducted and instituted on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023 so he was with us for Advent and the Christmas services. This Easter he introduced us to a 6am sunrise service on Easter Day. A congregation of twelve, drawn from across the benefice braved the fog and the very early start time.

Warm thanks are offered to all those who work so hard in the church to make it an attractive place for worship and fellowship. Peter Bumstead, our organ builder, plays the organ for our services and occasional offices and he deserves much thanks for his service to our worshipping community. His voluntaries and his accompaniment of our singing form a very important part of our worship.

An ever shrinking band of people serve on the PCC. We are very appreciative of all those who look after our financial affairs, help to clean the church mow the grass, arrange the flowers, change the lectern falls, wash and iron the altar cloths and look after the silver and brass. Thank you to you all.

Margaret Angus  
Churchwarden  
April 2024