

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH REPORT TO THE VILLAGE ANNUAL MEETING 2021 to 2022

2021 and the beginning of 2022 have seen many challenges for the church as we have had to make frequent changes to our patterns of worship and fellowship. At the start of 2021 the surge in Covid infections meant that we were back under lockdown restrictions, but this time churches *were* allowed to stay open for private prayer. There were no services in churches apart from funerals where numbers attending were severely restricted. The funeral service for Eileen Leach was the first of these. As restrictions were eased there were more services in churches with an opportunity to catch up with weddings and baptisms. Zoom services continued for those people who were unable to join gatherings in church, but overall numbers attending church services have fallen as people are still cautious about returning to worship.

The focus for PCCs at the moment is on the retirement of the Revd Canon Graham Hedger and the complicated task of finding a replacement for him. He celebrated his final service with us yesterday. The service included the recommissioning of the elders from each village who play an important part in leading services when no clergy are available. They will be supported by retired clergy and by Martin Crane from Brandeston, who is a lay reader in London with permission to serve in this benefice too. Following yesterday's service there was a presentation to Graham and Sue at Parham village hall.

One of Graham's achievements was to ensure that the seven parishes of the Orebeck benefice work very well together; they are currently working to create a benefice profile which will be used to advertise the post for potential applicants. The debate that needs to be considered is whether we can afford to pay for a full-time priest or accept that we will have a part time post. Finances as always are a challenge. We did well to raise money, with the village hall committee, from the fete and from the plant sale. The Christmas fair was very well supported by the village and raised a record amount of £1700.

Highlights of last year included the fundraising events which were even more appreciated this year.

Framlingham College Prep School continued to use the church for services every week including the lockdown periods. We are very grateful to the college chaplain, Revd Brynn Baymann, for all that he does.

We were delighted that this year's holiday club was able to take place; everyone was very happy to see each other. We continued to work with the elders from the Earl Soham benefice, an arrangement that works very well. The club moved this year from Charsfield school to Brandeston Village Hall-a much better venue for our purposes. It was very well supported by local families with all the 24 places being filled on all 3 days. The children impressed us with their energy and creativity.

We were able to hold our Remembrance Sunday service in church this year. 61 Adults and 20 children were present. We welcomed members of the Deben Valley Scout Group with their families; the young people were able to take part in the service - an important feature if we are to pass on the important message of the day to future generations.

We finish by expressing our thanks to Graham. During the time that he has been with us we have grown together and grown in our faith.