

## **St. Mary's Riverhead with Dunton Green Annual Churchwardens' Report – 2018**

It has been another busy year!

The sudden death of our good friend and Quinquennial Architect Chris Rayner in June was a great shock to us all. A good friend and colleague for many years, he is much missed by all who knew him. On a personal note this has left us without his help and guidance. He had produced a schedule of repairs that we have to address, set out in his Quinquennial Report of January 2017, and he had even approached builders on our behalf. We therefore decided to go ahead with the tasks we felt we could manage through volunteers, and to proceed with the urgent, more professional jobs through Vince Tarling of The Royal Tunbridge Wells Building Co. and Chris Dellow of Archway Building Co. We are very grateful to Robert McIntock, Martin Perry and Alison and Simon Bull for their handywork and painting skills during the summer, and despite the rather difficult winter, work has now started on some of the major quinquennial tasks. Alison and Simon have also helped with clearance work in the churchyard.

The 5 yearly Electrical Testing of the Church and Hall has been carried out this year. This provides us with an electrical condition report as is required by our Quinquennial Report, and relates to all the fixed wiring, sockets, distribution boards etc, confirming they are all safe and functioning correctly. Again, Robert McIntock gave valuable guidance with this work.

The resurfacing of the churchyard path was at last undertaken this year, and we are grateful to the Sevenoaks District Council for achieving this.

The long-awaited pillar light in the car park was finally installed and has shed helpful light on an area which was previously rather dark and gloomy.

The installation of new lighting in the Nave has, we feel, been very successful, despite showing up the inadequacies of the lights in the Chancel and Sanctuary, which we hope to rectify before too long. As you can imagine because of the heights involved the actual installation process takes some doing, but we are working on it!

We have recently installed handrails from the Nave to the Chancel, and we feel that these are a necessary and long overdue addition to the church. We trust that they will be well used and appreciated by all.

There has been little progress with the proposed conversion of the organ loft for use as an office or by young people. There are considerable safety issues with this, which is another project that was put on hold due to the sudden death of Chris Rayner.

We were very grateful for a legacy left to us by our very well loved choir member Jean Knaggs, and this has been used to provide us with our new hymn books. We are also grateful to all those who have contributed with their book donations. There is still an opportunity to contribute and sponsor a book or books so please let us know if you are interested.

In the churchyard the Tesco's Bags of Help scheme came to an end in December with the planting of a new hedge along the southern border next to the White Cottage. Earlier we took delivery of some splendid new garden tools which are kept in the crypt. We also received a new bench in the Garden of Remembrance and held a Midsummer Fun Day in June. We were greatly assisted throughout by the staff of the NW Kent Countryside Project who made some bird boxes and one day planted wildflowers with the help of children from Amherst School.

Kathryn Woodward continued to undertake regular cleaning of the hall this year and also managed the hall bookings. We are very grateful to her and to Margaret Nicholas for their efficient work in looking after the hall.

John Curtis stands down at the APCM this year after five years as churchwarden. He will however continue, together with Margaret, to look after the churchyard and to endeavour to keep it looking neat and tidy.

As always, the Churchwardens are very grateful to the many people who work often unseen behind the scenes. In the past we have tried to name everyone who has helped us, but it is far too easy to leave someone out. Consider yourselves thanked! We will however make an exception with Robert McLintock who continued his valuable work with the Fabric Committee, especially on electrical matters, and also of course manages the website in his usual calm and efficient way.

We also extend a very big thank you to Martin and Maggie for everything they do throughout the work of the parish. We are lucky to have you both!

Churchwardens  
March 2018