

April 2013

PARISH OF RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN Churchwardens' Report 2012/13

Compared to the last few years 2012/13 has been a quiet year – so far! Despite the very snowy and icy weather we have experienced this winter there has been no significant disruption to our services and activities in the church or hall. For this we have been extremely grateful.

We were delighted and somewhat relieved when July 12th brought the interregnum to an end, with the induction of Martin and the arrival of both Martin and Maggie to the parish. It was very fitting that they were here in time to witness the Olympic torch speeding through Riverhead on its way to the opening of the Games. Two momentous and memorable events in the life of our parish, in the blink of an eye!

With regard to the fabric of the church and the maintenance of the churchyard, the main focus of interest and expense was the rebuilding of the steps to the church from Riverhead Square. This took place during April/May and we were delighted that it was completed in time for the “wedding of the year”, the Queen’s Jubilee celebrations, the Olympic torch procession, and the arrival of our new vicar. This project was made possible, of course, by the receipt of a grant for £10,000 from the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust.

As reported last year, the Quinquennial Inspection in October 2011 did not show any major problems in the fabric of the church, and the matters of a minor nature which were flagged up are gradually being addressed. The question of slippery and uneven surfaces is now under constant review, and quotations are being sought for the provision of a railing outside the church hall, and a faculty will in due course have to be sought for that, and for repair to the paving. The faculty will, we hope, also include other necessary safety features in the church, including a handrail on the ladder up to the bell tower. A 5 yearly electrical inspection of the church and hall has also now been carried out, and no major problems have been found. The minor matters arising are similarly being addressed.

We are still awaiting installation of lighting on the slope and car park. Although we have obtained a faculty for the work to be undertaken there has been a delay in the provision of funding from the District Council to the Parish Council, and we are entirely dependent on them for this. The Parish Council are unable to proceed with contracts until the money is secured, but they (and we) are hopeful that it will be settled soon.

The church roof, although reasonably sound, does succumb to heavy rain from time to time, and we suffered a slight leak during a particularly heavy downpour. We are awaiting a site visit from a builder to see if we can avoid trouble in the future, but we do not anticipate any major expense at this time. One of the cast iron down pipes has recently been repaired and replaced and we will need to keep a close eye on any future deterioration of the other down pipes. Some of you may have noticed that the clock chime has been malfunctioning from time to time - no pun intended!. This was apparently due to the wooden frame in the bell tower becoming warped due to the very wet weather we have experienced during the year. Adjustments have been made

which we hope will solve the problem. Although what happens if the reverse occurs and we have a prolonged dry spell is any one's guess!

The responsibilities and duties of the Churchwardens are always made much easier when there is a strong team at work in the congregation, and, as usual, we have been very fortunate in this respect. We are most grateful to all the visiting priests who officiated during the interregnum, in particular Peter Flynn, not only during the interregnum but continuing. Our grateful thanks go to Margaret Nicholas for all her hard work and dedication in so many areas of church life, to Robin Tonge for his publication of the mini mag with all its complexities, to Janet Sharpe for her continued dedication to the musical life of St. Marys, and to the choir and music group. Doris Gosnold, in her role of Christian Listener, has been an invaluable member of the ministry team, and has strengthened that role by her "doorman's" duties during our Tots and Toddlers sessions! Our thanks also go to Audrey Bernardi and Martin Berry for their continued help and support in ministerial duties, and to John Curtis for his valuable input in this respect. Also thanks to all the Servers for their dedication (more volunteers urgently needed to make the tasks of the faithful a bit easier!). and to Bennet Smith for also taking on the task of seeing that the candles shine out every week, and that vestry supplies are maintained. Those who undertake Sacristan duties, and who regularly clean the church go largely unnoticed by the general congregation, but our thanks go to them for all their hard work lovingly undertaken week by week. More help is, as usual, needed in this area. Thank you also to all those who prepare intercessions, read lessons, administer the chalice, perform as sidespersons and generally contribute to the worship as St. Mary's. Thanks go to Rosemary McLintock for the duties she undertakes in her role as Parish Disclosure Officer. Similarly our thanks go to those who help to maintain the churchyard and Garden of Remembrance, especially Robin Tonge and John and Margaret Curtis. Our general clean ups in the churchyard have been well attended during the year, and once the spring really does decide to make an appearance, will be a necessity once again. We can always accommodate more volunteers!. Grateful thanks again go to Robert McLintock for all the valuable assistance he gives us in connection with all things electrical, and for his unstinting help in general maintenance. He has now added the administration of the new website to his list of duties, and we thank him most sincerely for all the time and energy he devotes to it. Thanks also to Geoff Holland for making sure the clock keeps ticking – even if it has caused him a few headaches this year with its irregular chime! The Sunday School team led by David Holmes has been especially successful this year. Thanks to them and to the Tots and Toddlers team, to Ann Straight for her hard work with the Traidcraft Stall, to the Events Team led by Margaret Curtis and to all the Lunch Club cooks and helpers, as well as the after-service coffee makers. Thanks also to the flower arrangers who decorate our church so beautifully. Thanks to the PCC, and in particular to Ronnie Todd the Secretary, and to Elaine Hanham our departing Treasurer and Stuart Wigley our new Treasurer. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to Martin for accepting the call to come to our parish, and for fitting in here so quickly and so well. And, of course, to Maggie who has already become an invaluable member of the congregation! We hope we haven't forgotten anyone in this long list – but we are truly grateful to YOU ALL.

Barry Sharp/Diane Williams