

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN

Churchwardens' Report 2019/2020

Team ministry

As of December 2019 the benefice of St Mary the Virgin Riverhead with Dunton Green, the benefice of St Luke, Sevenoaks and the benefice of St Mary, Kippington were joined together and the benefice West Sevenoaks Team Ministry established.

The three parishes will remain distinct but will work collaboratively with incumbents of each parish. The Vicar of St Mary the Virgin is to have a focus on mission with a Team Rector based at St Mary, Kippington to focus on unity and oversight.

We are very pleased that Revd Mark Bridgen has been appointed as the West Sevenoaks Team Rector and will join us in July 2020.

The PCC have worked very hard on our Parish Profile and will be ready to advertise as soon as we are able.

Interregnum

We have now been without an incumbent for a little over a year. Services have continued, babies have been baptised, couples married and we have taken funeral and thanksgiving services. We owe a huge debt of thanks to many people who have helped ensure that the church continues to be a welcoming presence in Riverhead and Dunton Green. Daphne, our wonderful Licensed Lay Minister, has worked ceaselessly to ensure that services have continued. We have been blessed with the support of a number of clergy and retired clergy who have been willing to take services for us.

The Coronavirus crisis has added to the challenge. Since mid-March, we have been unable to worship in our beautiful church. We have been thankful that we have been able to host Sunday services on Zoom, as well as mid-week Compline, Bible Study and Team Prayers. We have been blessed that Daphne has been able to lead these services as well as a number of other clergy. Janet Sharp has done a great job in providing music for these services. We thank all those who work together with us to deliver a church presence during this difficult time.

Fabric report

During the lockdown, our church has been closed. We have had to turn off most of the electricity except for the circuit which enables the heating so we could maintain an even temperature in church. We have checked the perimeter of the church to ensure security. We have much to do when lockdown is eased, including cleaning and ensuring social distancing.

The Faculty for the clock regulator has been granted. As soon as we are able, we will arrange installation of the regulator.

As soon as lockdown is eased, we will be able to move forward with the lighting and painting in the Chancel, as well as cleaning of the mosaics and paintings. This will entail a Faculty (or a number of Faculties) and we are hoping to put together a team to work on this project given the scale and complexity (not least of which will be the scaffolding needed).

The 5-yearly inspection of the church (the Quinquennial) is due in 2021. In the absence of a Quinquennial Architect we have been progressing slowly but steadily through our last inspection report which was undertaken by Chris Rayner, now sadly deceased. Our

replacement Architect was regretfully taken ill before she could assist us meaningfully, but we are confident that the work listed as being urgent or highly desirable within the report has mostly been completed. Due to the closure of the church during the lockdown period a complete audit will no doubt have to be undertaken of the church and churchyard, so that we can be confident that all is in order and no other difficulties have arisen. We still have a considerable problem with the roof in the area of the organ vestry, but we have kept in touch with our builder who will be on site as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. We will be asking him to also inspect the rest of the roof to ascertain if any slates are looking doubtful, and to make sure the gullies are clear. We have also been in constant touch with John Bailey from Thomas Ford & Partners who are chartered architects and surveyors, and who likewise will be assisting us as soon as safety allows.

Thank you

As always the churchwardens are very grateful for the many people who give up their time to work for our church, seen and often unseen. We won't try and list everyone for fear of missing someone out but please consider yourselves very gratefully thanked! We will make a few exceptions however. John and Margaret Curtis who look after the churchyard and the Garden of Remembrance. Robert McLintock who manages the website and whose knowledge and expertise are invaluable together with Diane Williams for all things to do with the Fabric of the church. Geoff Holland has as usual paid tireless attention to the wellbeing the church clock. Diane Williams and Margaret Nicholas for their unstinting support and guidance over the past year. Margaret Holman who manages the hall booking and Kathryn Woodward who cleaned it prior to lockdown. Our huge thanks go Daphne, our wonderful Licensed Lay Minister for all her encouragement and enthusiasm, especially during this difficult time.

Safeguarding

We consider that safeguarding is a matter for everyone and work closely with our safeguarding officer. We follow safeguarding procedures and guidelines set out by the Diocese and have undertaken the DBS checks and training required. Safeguarding is a standing item at PCC meetings (the members of which have all been DBS checked and are encouraged to undertake relevant training) and details of how to raise concerns are included in our weekly pew sheets.

Plea for help

This is YOUR church and YOU make it what it is. So a special plea to every member of our church family, new and not so new – please do offer yourself in some way. You would be more than welcome and will find it fascinating and fulfilling to take a role, no matter how small, in a place that means so much to so many. Please think and pray over the next few weeks about getting involved, we would be happy to answer any queries or discuss with you any support you can offer us.

Churchwardens

June 2020