

Report to Parish Annual Meeting 2019

ALL SAINTS CHURCH REPORT FOR 2018

On behalf of Rev'd Ruth Farrell, thanks are extended for the invitation to the church to be represented at the Village AGM. She sends apologies that she cannot be here herself.

Church services

In 2018 there was a change to the previous pattern of services, with the 8:00am Book of Common Prayer (BCP) on the first Sunday of the month being dropped, but keeping the BCP service on the 3rd Sunday. There is a main service at 9:30am on all Sundays except the 1st Sunday of the month when there is Me, You & Breakfast 2 (see later). Where there are five Sundays in a month the 5th Sunday has been a shared service with St. Mary's, Woolpit, alternating between Woolpit and Drinkstone.

In 2018, St. Mary's Woolpit and All Saints acquired a curate with the ordination of Mike Birt to full priest in June 2018; he has taken a number of services at Drinkstone as well as continuing his work as a part time chaplain at the hospice and running the Men's Meeting once a month in Woolpit, which is attended by Drinkstone men also.

Service attendance has risen slightly in the year with a very good congregation at the Remembrance Sunday Service on the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1. Both the amazing display of poppies, organised by Brenda Elphick, knitted by people both in the village and further afield and sewn on by lots of people under Sue Medcalf's supervision, and the displays researched by Robin Sharp, made it profoundly moving.

The home group for Bible Study under Barbara Pashley's leadership continues to flourish.

Young people:

Me, You & Breakfast 2 has continued to be our main opportunity to reach younger people within the village and it continues to be popular and successful. The team who plan each month's program are creative and hardworking and MYB2 continues to develop to meet the needs of the young families who attend. All families with small children (up to about age 9/10) are welcome to come for breakfast, story and creative and fun activities at 9.30am on the first Sunday of the month, in the church.

Community:

All Saints Church has continued to reach out to the community in a number of ways. Then church is not just a building – the people are the church. Through these people we try to put into action the love of God for all people, especially those in need of any kind. The monthly Drinkstone Lunch continues to be well supported, and the Harvest Supper was again very popular. A wide range of other successful fund raising activities took place – all of which enabled interaction both ways between church and community. These included a very successful Christmas coffee morning, the Murder Mystery and Wine and Carols. The Shelley family opened their gardens for the National Garden Scheme twice in the year, inviting All Saints Church to provide refreshments. This proved successful in the links made as well as the fund raising achieved.

We continue to publish a very successful Parish Magazine, published ten times a year and taken by about 90% of the homes in the village.

Fabric of the church:

New heating was installed at the beginning of the year, making All Saints a much more comfortable place to be in the winter months! New pew cushions, running the full length of all main pews has made a big difference too, thanks to the generosity of Sue and David Medcalf. And the bellringers acquired a renovated pew up in the belltower as welcome seating for ringers when not on their feet energetically

ringing! The seat includes storage for the handbells. Bells continue to be rung every month on the second Sunday.

In the report to the Village in 2017, we noted that tenders were going out for restoration and conservation of the church windows and associated masonry. 2018 was the year a great deal of hard work went on to ensure funds were made available for this work to happen. Happily, the funds are all in place and the work will start in September this year.

Churchyard

The churchyard is a valued green space in Drinkstone so it is important that it remains a pleasant place for walkers and people visiting graves.

Since we have an open church yard the cost of maintenance doesn't fall onto the Parish Council - which it would otherwise. We pay for TOP Garden Services to mow the grass but also need to have occasional working parties to maintain the area. We are very grateful to Peter Holborn, the Village Tree Warden, for his expertise and time in acting as our Churchyard Tree Officer also! He regularly updates the tree survey and advises on any necessary maintenance. Working parties, under Peter's guidance have removed two dead trees overhanging the road adjacent to the footpath gate and cleared other overgrown areas. This has improved both the appearance of the churchyard and visibility along the road.

Safeguarding

Sue Birt is the Safeguarding Officer for both All Saints and St. Mary's Woolpit. She has continued to ensure that Safeguarding training has been provided for everyone who needs it – much of which she has done herself – while also working with Lynne Woodward to establish a database which will enable us all to keep up to date with our training.

And finally – thank you

All Saints is a small village church with an average Sunday attendance of about 18 to 20. However, it is a *little* church with *big* ideas. The above should tell you a lot about the huge amount of work that goes on. Our small congregation could not carry that load.

We are hugely indebted to a large number of people from the community who pull out all the stops to ensure that the work goes on. It is a long list: those who help in the churchyard, who clean the church, arrange flowers, create and distribute the Parish magazine, those who visit and support people who are unwell or lonely, support the church financially, ring bells, help with the Village Lunch, help to plan and arrange events, make cakes and quiches and all manner of goodies, and everyone who supports our fund raising events.

We extend a huge thank you to every one of you – and also the Parish Council and Village Hall committee for their co-operation in enabling many of the things we do.