

All Saints Church Milton Keynes Village – Churchwarden's Report 2020 – 2021

The response throughout 2020 to the Global Pandemic Coronavirus has been remarkable, from the early Government led lockdown in March and closure of church for services, through the easing of restrictions in the summer to further lockdowns and revised guidelines, each stage has caused us to evaluate and consider how to 'be church' in our community and more widely. Whilst our beautiful building and calming ambience is a focus for our area, the love, caring, sharing and growing ministry that binds us together and emanates from the teaching of Jesus is realised in so many diverse ways.

Rev'd Matt Trendall swiftly initiated services, study groups, prayer time, social meetings, quizzes, formal and informal, to share with the congregation online and these virtual gatherings have multiplied throughout the weeks. The instant success of these opportunities has progressed throughout the year continuing during times when the church has been open for simplified Sunday services and contrastingly embracing a much wider congregation. Matt's skill to involve the expertise and talents of members from All Saints and St Mary's has included personal testimony, encouraged younger members and drawn on the creative talents of many to engage and contribute to the church we are becoming. A wide selection of music and song has broadened the experience and added a new dimension to our worship, helping to compensate for the loss of live singing during worship. Twice weekly emails, hard copies of the weekly service sheets for those not able to access the internet, maintain contact with the congregation. In addition the church website enables a wider coverage. Further positive support has been fostered by the telephone links to individuals and families encouraging pastoral care to our church members and wider community. Thank you to Gloria and her team for the floral gifts that have also been so gratefully received this year. Stewards meeting have continued throughout by 'zoom' and enabled valuable discussion for the progression of our church.

When the church has been open for services from early July to the end of October social distancing regulations have applied limiting guest numbers for weekly services, weddings, baptisms and funerals. Risk assessments and guidelines for accessing the church have been followed and regularly updated. Weddings were much reduced in 2020, just one in September and then happily in December we celebrated the marriage of Wayne and Pauline. Similarly two baptisms were celebrated during the year, one in August and one in September (RC). Three funerals were held during the year, one in January and two in December.

Our Dorcas group, coordinated by Sylvia with regular updates, has continued throughout the year to produce blankets and toiletry goods for the work of MK Act. Sylvia has also expertly refurbished Altar Frontals this year.

Some quinquennial works remain to be completed, namely pointing on the belltower west facing aspect, finishing to the pinnacle south facing and painting of downpipe and gutter north facing. **Routine maintenance and repair works** inside and outside the church have continued with the dedicated team of stewards and mowers to ensure the building and churchyard are in good order. We are grateful to Wayne for ensuring the maintenance of the church clock during the seasons both time changes and temperature changes. Also thanks to Paul for brightening the way in to church with the addition of LED bulbs to the outside lamps. David Monk our close neighbour has continued to mow the outer verge to the church and keep a check on the bin collections each week ensuring that

the entrance is always welcoming and inviting. Brian Quentin has skilfully continued his role of co-ordinating the mowing team and equipment and has welcomed new volunteers and helpers to this vital task ensuring that a thorough mowing programme is undertaken by the dedicated team of mower volunteers. Two churchyard working sessions in the Autumn encouraged a number of volunteers, socially distanced, to assist with maintaining the churchyard, clearing ivy from the church and churchyard walls, weeding graves and maintaining the path.

Annual health and safety requirements have been addressed through the year:

Lightning conductor inspection and test completed December 2020, Annual fire equipment check and portable appliance testing completed November 2020, Fire and safety assessment, and Safeguarding Policy reviewed. Most importantly the necessary safety repair works from the 5 year fixed wire electrical inspection 2019 were carried out in January 2020 and a further electrical fault in the outside light by the war memorial identified and repaired in August 2020.

For reassurance and legislative compliance there is confirmation of the maintenance of the formal areas required recorded in the documents below:

- the terrier – a list of land belonging to the church
- the inventory – a list of all the items belonging to the church
- the log book – a detailed record of all the alterations, additions and repairs carried out in relation to the church, its land and its contents.

These have all been maintained to ensure the day to day functioning of the Church and are available as hard copies in the church. The Church Deanery Inspection of these documents, registers, policies, certificates, churchyard records, and church contents plus review of issues in the parish including the current Parish Mission Action Plan and various other papers relating to church life is re-scheduled for later this year.

As we look forward to the way out of lockdown, meeting in person once again, hearing our church bells and worshipping with song once more, we pray for guidance to build on the new areas of church life that have enhanced our worship and community life through this very different year and for the inspirational leadership from Matt and our clergy team to be sustained in this growing parish.

Patricia A Sawyer Churchwarden March 2021