

Report on the parish of All Saints Stibbard, 2023

The Churchwardens and PCC have been greatly encouraged by the support from the village and wider community for the appeal for funds to pay for the new LED lighting installation and for the replacement of the rotten flooring on one side of the chancel, which were both carried out during 2023.

The fundraising table, where goods are donated and paid for by donation via an honesty box, has proved to be extremely popular, and we continue to receive donated items regularly. This is now our only source of fundraising, as we are unable to organise large events as we have in the past due to dwindling numbers and age. We now have a contactless device in the church, subsidised by the Diocese, which has made it possible for people to donate without cash, and is very helpful.

Our funds remain slender – we do not have any income from land, nor have we received any legacies, so All Saints exists purely out of income. Neither the Diocese nor the Government fund parishes – each church must support itself, fund repairs, running costs and its share of the cost of providing a priest. We were able to pay our full parish share of £2,900 in 2023, and we are very proud of that. Our insurance was £94 per month in 2023, and has risen this month to £98 per month; but without insurance, we cannot even unlock the door. Electricity and other running costs were around £1,700 last year. We are grateful that we have managed to pay our bills this past year, but we are concerned for the future, especially as we are also responsible for the car park, churchyard, church walk and lime trees. The Parish Council grant of £250 towards the cost of grass cutting is greatly appreciated, and covers around half the annual costs.

A donation of £500 earlier this year from a supporter enabled us to have the work carried out on the church walk, but we are mindful that most of our financial support comes from a very small number of people, who are all in their later years.

On the positive side, we are very grateful for the commitment of our all our volunteers – those who open and lock the church every day of the year in all weathers, the person who ensures the church porch is cleaned and tidied each week, those who ensure the drainage gullies are kept clear, the flower arrangers (and flower providers, as there is no budget for flowers), those who quietly do little maintenance jobs or work along the church walk or in the churchyard. We couldn't manage without any of these wonderful people,

because the actual congregation is tiny, and we always welcome new offers of help to look after the building.

Don Seed continues to ring the church bell at every service, which is greatly appreciated; he also participated in a 15 minute national bell ringing event to celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III. Thank you Don – the bell was silent for many years until he offered to do this.

We are very sad that the Terracycle/Colgate dental product recycling scheme, for which we were the local official collection point, was discontinued in January, but are so proud of what our small village achieved. We recycled 203.3kg over 4 years – 32 stone 2lb – all saved from landfill. We achieved our Bronze Eco-Church award in 2023 – the first in our Benefice to do so, and we are really proud of that too.

We have two Sunday services every month – Holy Communion on 1st Sunday of the month, and a lay-led service on the 2nd Sunday. We only have our Team Rector, Revd. Sally Kimmis to look after all 13 churches in the Heart of Norfolk Benefice and are still seeking a part-time Vicar to cover Stibbard, Wood Norton, Guist, Guestwick and Foulsham; until that time we will continue to have retired clergy on a service-by-service basis.

Susan Moore,
PCC Secretary & Churchwarden
14th May 2024