

Churchwardens Report

Reflecting back on the past year, we are once again reminded of the diversity of events and the challenges faced, and are grateful as always for the help and support received from within our wonderful St. Andrew's Church family.

The year commenced with our Away Day which took place within the beautiful building and grounds of All Nations College Easneye, a wonderful day of praise, fellowship and discussion. We were also privileged to have the expertise of Chrissy who gave a talk on her family history and ancestry associated with the building.

The day was organised largely by Chris Seward, and we now realise that for most of us this was the last time that we saw Chris who became ill and sadly passed away after a short illness. Chris was a great supporter and mentor to us in his role as Deputy Church warden and we miss his sound advice and wise council. Chris also organised so many fund-raising events, among them the ever-popular Folk gigs and Beer festivals. We are grateful to Forbes for stepping up and forming a committee to take on this role, one which Chris had somehow managed single handedly.

At the end of the Away Day, we wished Alan well as he commenced his three-month Sabbatical.

During this period Bill and the ministry team worked hard organising the services, we also welcomed Scott to the team. Melanie and Geoff produced some different and most enjoyable All age services and Archdeacon Janet also presided at a parish communion.

In July with the help of the charity 'Hearts for Herts' the Defibrillator was installed in the porch, making it accessible to not only the church but also the wider community.

The Quinquennial report was carried out in early November and we received the Architects Report in February; it has now been reviewed and there is a plan for all of the items raised as Category 1 of the utmost urgency.

Some of the issues highlighted have already been rectified, there was a serious leak above the Slype corridor which has been repaired. Some broken windows have been repaired or have ongoing repairs, and the broken grate on the

Southern side of the Aisle has been replaced at zero cost as spare grates were discovered!

However, the outstanding works we anticipate will be very costly and will involve high level access to roofs and guttering, this includes the gutter above the North Aisle which is causing intermittent leaks in the office. Following advice from the Diocese Standing Committee we have instructed our Architect to prepare a Specification which we will send out to three companies asking them to Tender to complete the works required.

The faculty has been granted for the Soakaway to the South of the church and we hope that work will commence in the next few weeks, thanks go out to Rod who has volunteered to complete most of the required work himself.

We have had contact with the Town Council and they have replaced a dislodged stone at the base of the Plinth in the North boundary wall. The works manager has agreed to meet with us in the near future to review all issues raised in the Quinquennial report, including a recommendation to cut back the Yew tree.

A Heat Pump is due to be installed in the St Andrews Centre during the Easter break.

The Audio-Visual system has now been in situ for a year and we are enjoying its benefits as well as exploring ways of increasing its use in weekly services. It has just had an annual service and the contractors used their ladders to kindly replace some of the high-level light bulbs for us.

There have been a number of collections during the year including coats for the homeless which we collected on behalf of the Rotary club, a collection for Ukraine, the Bishops Harvest appeal as well as our usual charity collections at Christmas services. The coffee mornings continue to raise funds for the church and for selected charities, they promote fellowship and outreach and always generate a welcoming atmosphere.

There has been good attendance at services and we continue to welcome new faces to St Andrews, the Christmas and Easter Services were especially well attended and this has caused us to review the sidesman's role in directing the congregation receiving communion.

Our thanks go out to many unsung heroes, but especially to Phil and Carol who make our role so much easier, and to Julie Frazer who keeps the church so clean.

Lesley and Julie