

Manningford PCC – churchwarden’s report 2023

Services and attendance

We had a total of 26 services during the year, which included one baptism (with 43 family members and friends attending). Numbers for our Easter Day service were down compared with previous years (21), but this may have had something to do with those wishing to take holidays with fewer Covid restrictions.

The annual pet service was held outdoors in the village hall field in September - a return to its previous venue. It is a much more central location for the village and if continued, could be a catalyst for attracting new members of the congregation.

Otherwise our attendance numbers held up very well, with significant increases for Remembrance Sunday, the Carol service and finally a record number at the Christmas Day communion service. Our overall average attendance across the year was 21, although this was a reflection of the weighting of the above services. Without them, the average was 14 – a small increase over 2022.

There were 44 parishioners on the electoral roll which was also a slight increase over 2022.

My thanks to our organist Genevieve Benest, who has played at virtually all of the services during the year. We are also lucky to have our stand-in organist (Ian Postlethwaite) who played a number of times, including Christmas Day.

I would also like to thank all clergy and lay readers who have taken services at St Peter’s during 2023.

Finally my thanks to all those who have cleaned and decorated the church; it is greatly appreciated, as well as demonstrating what a wonderful community facility it is. The quality of the floral arrangements has been outstanding and it is encouraging that new recruits have joined the team.

PCC meetings

The PCC met three times during the year (May, August and November). Issues covered included planning for forthcoming services, financial issues and maintenance to the church and churchyard.

Inventory

There have been no major changes to the inventory in 2023, apart from a few minor additions (a copy is available in church). As reported last year, it is essential that the PCC keeps a careful track of all valuable items to prevent a repetition of the avoidable loss of the two items of valuable 18th century church silver. Further enquiries were made during the year to track them down, including Barclays and Lloyds banks. The only possible further avenue would be to enquire of the late Robert Ferguson’s family as the silver was stored in a wooden box made by him. An up to date copy of the inventory should be signed at the APCM as being accurate.

Special events

Once again, the PCC assisted with the Manningford inter-village rounders competition in September.

Projects

Fabric

Approval has been sought from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) to replace missing tiles from the north roof slope and to erect an internet aerial within the bellcote. The works are planned for early 2024.

The overdue test of the electrical circuits was delayed due to a misunderstanding with the electrician. It is planned to replace the switchgear prior to the test which should have been completed by the time of the 2024 APCM.

The overdue quinquennial report on condition eventually surfaced during the year and there are a number of works required to external pointing of walls and decorative surfaces which will need to be undertaken during the current year.

Churchyard

Maintenance work continued with the removal of unsightly laurel shrubs and other undergrowth. A working party from the PCC spent a morning in October dealing with the above, together with internal cleaning works, as advised via the above report.

The survey of the churchyard graves has yet to be completed as part of the national burial ground survey, but it is hoped to be commenced in 2024.

Cashless donations

There has been only limited use of the QR code facility, but it is hoped that this could be improved greatly if and when internet access has been achieved. A card terminal has been made available at nil cost from the diocese.

Visitor guides

Originally it was intended to re-publish the guide, but recently a significant (out of date) supply has unexpectedly surfaced and these are now available for visitors to either take, or purchase via the QR code in church.

Parish reference manual

In accordance with good diocesan practice efforts should continue to provide a single place for important documents to be held, probably in a secure place in church or held by the churchwarden at the time. These include certifications, the signed inventory and annual budgets etc.

John Thompson-Ashby April 2024