**St Mary’s Chediston**

**REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1st January to 31st December 2016**

The PCC met on 25th February 2016, 28th April (APCM and first meeting of the new PCC) and 25th May 2016, 12th August 2016 and 8th November 2016. Veronica and Graeme also met occasionally as Churchwardens to organise matters before special services and events. We are grateful to all members of the PCC who have given their time and commitment in supporting our village church.

Mrs Veronica Downing and Mr Graeme Williams were elected churchwardens at the Annual Meeting and attended the Archdeacon’s Visitation Service at St Edmund’s parish church Southwold on 19th May 2015. Also elected onto the PCC were Ann Williams, Bobbie Brooks and Jonathan Carman as members. The Rev Vic Hopkins, who has retired to the Halesworth benefice has also attended and supported the PCC at meetings.

Veronica Downing has continued to act as PCC secretary for 2015 for another year with the assistance of Ann and Graeme Williams. Their help and support has been greatly appreciated.

The following took place in 2016:

The funeral and burial of Doug Cady on 25 February.

Another member of our congregation, who passed away but whose funeral and burial did not take place in Chediston, was Don Basinger

The marriage on 26 November between Tom Marjoram and Rebecca Nunn

There were no Baptisms

There was one internment of ashes – Doug Cady

The situation is as last year with regard to the Electoral Roll. It should be noted that although there are 25 names and addresses on the Electoral Roll, the Electoral Roll is not representative of the worshipping congregation at St Mary’s. Fewer than half are regular worshippers and we also have people who do attend services who are not on the Electoral Roll. As the numbers on the Roll are used by the Diocese to help determine the Parish Share that we are required pay, in addition to the general attendance figures gathered by the Diocese for the month of October each year to gain knowledge of parish statistics, I believe that this is a matter which should be raised with the Diocese.

**Worship**

In 2016 the cycle of worship has continued as in the previous year with one, 2 or 3 services a month depending on the Team Rota and Team services. Chediston along with the other village parishes in the team does not have its own regular Evensong on the second Sunday, but parishioners are invited to attend

the shared Team Evensong, with the service rotating around the Team. On the fifth Sunday there is always a Team service and Chediston has hosted the Evensong and 4th Sunday team services. As has been long standing now, parishioners are asked to attend the Team Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month at St Mary’s, Halesworth, and Chediston is always represented. The Team Choir, which meets regularly for choir practice under the very able direction of Karen Evans sings at the Team Services.

Edward continues to be the priest responsible for Chediston, but our services are taken by all members of the Blyth Valley ministry team and occasionally led by me as an Elder and Churchwarden. The ministry team comprises Edward as Team Rector, Jan Bunday as Team Vicar, and other clergy who have the Bishop’s permission to officiate as retired priests. We are very fortunate to have the number of such clergy living in the Benefice. I also have the bishop’s permission to assist the priest with administering the chalice at Communion. Chediston shares a service with Linstead on the third Sunday, either a Eucharist or Morning Prayer, alternating between the churches. Chediston has a Eucharist on the fourth Sunday unless there is a major festival and thus Team Service.

Our average attendance has been 9 to 12 on Sundays with visitors and members of Linstead’s congregation joining us for the village service every other month. New people moving to the village have been welcomed and informed of services.

Morning services are generally held at 9.30am which is the favoured time for most of Chediston’s congregation, even with the occasional clash of services falling at the same time on Sundays as other churches in the Team. Ringing takes place before services and I continue to be grateful to Sange Wilson from Rumburgh who has made it her job to organise ringers for our Sunday services. With ringers from neighbouring villages helping us on a regular basis, the bells have been rung for all services on 2016.

Special services are held in the Team and by the village parishes. The Mothering Sunday service was followed by coffee and Simnel cake. Chediston’s Harvest Service took place on 2nd October followed by a harvest lunch in the Church School room. This was well attended, as was the Remembrance Service on 8th November when the bells were rung half muffled.

Congregation numbers for these services average between 24 and 40 but there is a decided lack of children and young people attending, even at our traditional Chediston Christmas Carol Service on Christmas Eve with about 80 people, who were welcomed with mulled wine and mince pies at the start of the service.

**Churchyard**

The care of the churchyard continues to be a shared responsibility. Viv Burton and a team of helpers undertake the maintenance of the churchyard to the east and north sides with the ‘meadow area’, older graves and the laurel walk. Viv also writes an annual report for the APCM. Ralph Warren continues to keep the area for current burials mown and tidy.

Grateful thanks are given to all who contribute to the care of the churchyard, the gravel path and approach to the church and to the maintenance of the road and car park, the use of which is shared by both the church and residents neighbouring the church.

**Church Fabric**

We continue to be indebted to David Mantell for his support and professional advice on matters of Church fabric and repairs and also the Church School Room. David has prepared a separate report on the Church Fabric for this APCM.

**Church School Room.**

Groups including the Carpet Bowls, ‘Knit and Natter’ or Craft and Table Tennis continued to meet at the Church School Room, which is owned by the church, and made available for village use. The PCC thanks Yvonne Watts and Joan Williamson for continuing to run the room for bookings and for ensuring its maintenance and upkeep to keep it a valuable asset for both the church and village community.

Plans to investigate the feasibility of extending the Church School Room to increase its facilities and capacity as a village and community resource were considered last year and were put on hold until it can be determined whether or not the village and community would like to proceed with the project. This remains as it was last years.

**Bell Ringing**

Bell-ringing practices continue to take place at least once a month, usually on the first Thursday and occasionally on the second or third Thursday of the month. Chediston’s bells continue to be sought after by visiting bands of ringers from around the country, who pay both compliments to the bells and donations.

Bell-ringers continue to be in short supply in Chediston and we would welcome new interest from villagers in learning to ring, but like all skills, it takes some practice and commitment. We have four members of the Suffolk Guild in Chediston, Graham and Veronica Downing and Graeme and Ann Williams.

We have been able to ring regularly for the Sunday services at Chediston with support from ringers of neighbouring villages; Wissett, Rumburgh, Cratfield, Huntingfield and sometimes ringers from Halesworth.

**Organist**

We are grateful to John Quine for his continued loyalty and playing at our services during the year, although due to his own health we have sometimes required the assistance of others. The PCC extends sincere thanks to John and to Florence O’Kernahan, Jason Busby and the occasional visitor who has stepped in.

**Others who help**

We are also very grateful to everyone who helps in keeping our church open and attractive. Thank you to the church cleaners and in particular to Sally Aldous, Joyce Gregory, Bobbie and Dave Brooks and Ann and Graeme Williams who clean the church on the Fridays before Sunday services.

**Ministry Team**

We also extend our thanks to the Blyth Valley Ministry Team, our Rector, Edward Rennard, and our priests, Jan Bunday, Vic Hopkins, David Sochon, Bill Mahood and Malcolm Walkey, all who regularly lead our worship at St Mary’s. As ever, we are very lucky to be part of the Blyth Valley Team of churches and to have such a talented ministry team when it comes to preaching and making worship enjoyable and relevant to our daily lives. The message remains the same that regardless of where your faith is on life’s journey, the reflection, insight and inspiration gained from listening to what our spiritual ministers have to say is uplifting and enlightening and it is sad that so few are there to benefit from our own local “Thought for the Day”. We are part of the Blyth Valley Team of churches which is committed to being an inclusive church, and extends a warm welcome to anyone wishing to use our church for shared worship, or private prayer and as a quiet space for refection.

# EVENTS

## The Christmas Fair this year was held on the first Saturday in December. This annual event is very much a Chediston tradition and once again our thanks go to Sally Aldous who organised the team of volunteers to run stalls, raffles and service refreshments. As well as being a community event, this is also a significant fundraiser.

**Conclusion and Future**

It goes without saying that the Churchwardens and PCC hope not only for continued support from those already giving their time and talents to the care and life of our village church, but hope for new support, however small and in whatever way, to ensure the future of our local place of worship that has been used by generations of people in Chediston. The survival of our village church will depend on increased support and interest in its activities and worship.

We need to encourage interest in our village church which belongs to the community and there are some small steps of progress taking place and in the pipe line for 2017. We have organised a community event for 1st May – The Chediston Dog Show and we look forward to hosting and welcoming more people to church and village activities in the coming months.

Veronica Downing

Churchwarden, St Mary’s Chediston