

St Mary's Chediston
REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1st January to 31st December 2017

The PCC met on 6th February 2017, 27th April (APCM and first meeting of the new PCC) and 26th October 2017. 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 in the neighbouring deanery at St Peter and St Paul's parish church, Aldeburgh. Also elected onto the PCC were Ann Williams, Bobbie Brooks and David Mantell, specifically for his role advising on the church fabric. The Rev Vic Hopkins, retired priest, and frequent visitor to Chediston also attended and supported the PCC at meetings.

Veronica Downing has continued to act as PCC secretary for another year with the assistance of Ann and Graeme Williams. Their help and support has been greatly appreciated. We are also delighted that Carol Penrice-Jones responded to our appeal for a church treasurer and she has willingly taken on this responsibility.

We record that the following took place in 2017:

There were 4 burials; Joan Cox, Katie Titchiner, Roly Carter and Robin Groom.

There were no marriages and there were no Baptisms.

During 2017 four of our Sunday services were undertaken by stipend clergy; 2 village Eucharists, 1 team Eucharist and our Harvest Praise service.

The situation is similar to last year with regard to the Electoral Roll. It should be noted that although there are 24 names and addresses on the Electoral Roll, the Electoral Roll is currently 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. The numbers on the Roll are used by the Diocese to help determine the Parish Share that we are required to 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.

Worship

In 2017 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 and visitors and members of Linstead's congregation join us for the village service every other month. Over the past year we have endeavoured to welcome new people moving to the village to inform them of our services with a complimentary copy of the Blyth Valley Times. The coffee and chat after the service has become part of our social gathering and church fellowship. Making *real* coffee has helped too!

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 2017.

Special services are held in the Team and by the village parishes. The Mothering Sunday service, when we had three families with young children, was followed by coffee and Simnel cake and a visit to Bridge Farm to see the lambs. Chediston's Harvest celebrations took place on 24th September with an evening service of Harvest Praise, accompanied by the Backwoods Band and followed by a harvest supper in the Church School room. This was well supported, as was the Remembrance Service on 12th November when the bells were rung half muffled.

Congregation numbers for our special services average between 24 and 40. This year our Christmas Eve Carol service was very well attended with about 100 people including some children and we had to put out extra seating. People were welcomed by the bells, mulled wine and mince pies at the start of the service.

Churchyard

The care of the churchyard continues to be a shared responsibility. We have been grateful to 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. However, at the end of 2017, Viv and John moved from Vicarage Cottage to Walpole and they have therefore resigned their interest. We are of course grateful for their input in

the care of the churchyard and their particular interest in a conservation approach to churchyard maintenance. 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 updating 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.

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

It is with sadness and regret on both sides that due to ill-health John Quine has had to resign as our organist. We have therefore required the assistance of others. The PCC extends sincere thanks to John for his many years of service and musicianship over the past 13 or 14 years. When we first came to Chediston John was directing the team choir and we have good memories of performing Stainer's Crucifixion at Chediston for Easter as well as memorable carol services with 4-part choir.

We also thank Florence O'Kernahan, Jason Busby and the occasional visitor who have helped us out.

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, Ann and Graeme

Williams and Julia Wilson who has joined the happy band 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 and Malcolm Walkey and Readers, 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 reflection.

EVENTS

A Dog Show was organised by St Mary's for the May Day Bank Holiday and took place on the Community Field. The weather was bitterly cold with a chill wind, but the show was well supported by people from Chediston and surrounding area, and side stalls included hot refreshments. Hollie James and John Ibbott were excellent judges.

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 and Jonathan Carman 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.

Veronica Downing, Acting PCC Secretary
Churchwarden, St Mary's Chediston