

The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Wickhamford

PCC Secretary Annual Report for the year

1st January – 31st December, 2022

Covid restrictions for worship remained in place for the first months of 2022, restricting some of the activities taking place at St Johns. However, services of Morning Worship took place throughout the year on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 9.15am. Services were held to celebrate Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest. Remembrance Sunday and Christmas.

The WI carol service took place on December 10th and a late afternoon carol service held on Christmas Eve proved to be very popular indeed with St Johns filled to the rafters. The format of carols, readings, pass the parcel and mince pies was very well received.

The times and dates of services were advertised on the Benefice website, on noticeboards in church and at the junction of Manor Road with Golden Lane and through fliers handed out to the congregation and available in church. Attendance at Morning Worship has remained steady with approximately 10/12 attending.

In 2022 the church was open for visitors every day of the week from 10am – 4pm for most of the year. Key holders took it in turn to unlock and lock up. Several visitors took the time to sign the visitors' book and their comments were appreciative of the beautiful, peaceful church. Visitors also left donations and bought secondhand books, generating a little income. However, the burden of unlocking and locking every day has become too onerous for the small group of keyholders and a decision has been taken to restrict opening to Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday in 2023. The opening hours are advertised on the noticeboard and the website. Of course, groups are welcome at any time by arrangement.

Following the fall of plasterwork from the ceiling in October 2021 a Faculty was sought to place temporary netting under the chancel ceiling. This was granted and a local firm netted the ceiling free of charge, an offer that was gratefully received. The Faculty permits this temporary arrangement for 18 months after which we may reapply for a further period.

An estimate was sought from a local building firm for the repair of the roof and, following consultation with the church architect, it was apparent we would require at least £250,000 to repair, refurbish, create a disabled toilet facility, create a kitchen area and provide heritage information boards. A campaign was started in late Spring under the title 'Raise the Roof'. A letter explaining the need for repairs and the cost implications was delivered to every property in Wickhamford and information sessions were advertised and held in the church. Fundraising events including a raffle and social evening were held to raise funds. An application was submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Scheme and a meeting held with officers from the scheme to discuss possibilities. Unfortunately, the size of the project

meant we were not invited to make a full application. The project would require a huge, long-lasting commitment from the PCC, in terms of time and energy. We are looking at other, more manageable, options to make the church safe and secure for the next generation.

The PCC met 6 times during 2022:

Date	No. of attendees	% attendance
12 th January	6	86%
9 th February	6	86%
27 th February	7	100%
25 th April	6	86%
5 th September	7	100%
24 th October	7	100%

Thus, average attendance at PCC meetings is 97%.

Coffee mornings were held on the first Saturday of the month from April to November; in the churchyard when the weather was clement. These social events have become increasingly popular with the wider community as well as members of the congregation and are an excellent way for locals to meet up, keep in touch with church news and events and present an opportunity to raise money for church upkeep.

The Spring and Autumn/Christmas Fayres were reintroduced in 2022; both events were very well attended. As well as the usual stalls – refreshments, raffle, tombola, books, white elephant – raffles and games to raise funds for the roof were included.

Other social events held in 2022 included a Fish and Chip Supper with quiz and a Harvest Supper. Both events were very well attended and enjoyed by all. Thanks are due to Shellie and James Ward for providing entertaining quizzes.

The Drinks and Nibbles event held in July to raise roof funds was very successful and included the Grand Raffle Draw. Again, thanks go to Shellie for gathering such interesting raffle prizes.

The social events could not take place without the hard work and organisation put in by members of the PCC. Special thanks to Carole Collis for catering these events.

The annual church spring clean was carried out on June 27th. The cleaning and flower rotas work well and thanks are due to those who arrange the flowers so beautifully and make St Johns such an attractive and welcoming space.

In conclusion, 2022 has seen a welcome return to near normality following Covid restrictions. Numbers attending services has remained steady with excellent attendance at special events. The condition of the roof remains the chief focus of attention and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Jackie Knight

PCC Secretary