

## St Andrews Kettleburgh - April 2017

### Parish Meeting Report

Like every village activity and committee, the church could do with more support either by people attending its services or by financial support from those who simply may not wish to attend services, but who value its historical legacy, and beauty as an ancient building at the heart of their village. As people age and numbers attending church fall help from the wider community will become increasingly essential in order that the church remains vibrant and 'open for business'.

The church community is very small, few in number but devoted, and they are supported by people who travel from Wickham Market to attend the regular Choral Evensong's. St Andrew's is most fortunate in having an extremely committed experienced Churchwarden in John Bater, a Lay Elder - Jackie Clark, and rarity these days an organist of their own which is a gift indeed.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) are still working hard to improve disabled access and to provide toilet facilities, this is a project which has been many years in the planning, but which continues to frustrate, and is plagued by delays. But the PCC are determined to see it through to a satisfactory conclusion one way or another.

The seven parishes for whom I am currently Priest in Charge legally became the new Benefice of Orebeck on 31<sup>st</sup> January. We needed a name for ourselves and Orebeck was the one chosen from all the suggestions received.

ORE as the river runs through Parham, Hacheston and Marlesford, B for Brandeston, E for Easton, C for Campsea Ashe and K for Kettleburgh. So we are a group of churches who share their clergy and work together to pay for one. But it is something which actually makes little difference in how each of them operates at the moment.

Currently St Andrews has a service on week 2 and 4 each month and on weeks 1,3 and 5 there are united services which move around all the parishes in turn. This enables the people that want to, to worship as part of a larger congregation. And I remain committed to these 'combined' services as they are in my view, the way to help secure the future, we are stronger together than 7 small individual rural villages, with very few people in their local congregations trying to be church on their own. Though despite the reasonable attendances at these 'combined' services there are many people who still remain totally focussed on their 'home' parish, and it is this that will be difficult to sustain in the long term.

We have 7 beautiful, unique church buildings, and we will continue to use all of them, but the Church isn't just a building, Church is all about people, people in community. And in order for St Andrews to be an active church, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, and reaching out to their community to people in need, by welcoming those who come to be married, to baptise their babies, bury their dead, or pay their last respects to friends and neighbours it needs the help of the wider community. The assistance of the Parish Council in response to a request for help in keeping the churchyard grass cut is a prime example of Church and Community working together and the PCC is grateful for this help so that the beautiful church of St Andrew, in its most scenic location, will be there for generations to come to use and admire.

The Revd Deirdre West

Priest in Charge.