

PCC Report to Annual Parish Meeting 26 April 2018

During the past year, the life of the Church has seen some major changes.

Firstly in January, we joined the newly formed Orebeck benefice as one of seven churches. The name was chosen as the River Ore runs through the parishes of Parham, Hacheston and Marlesford, and BECK are initials of Brandeston, Easton, Campsea Ashe and Kettleburgh. As a result, we share some services with the other churches, in particular on the first Sunday of each month.

Secondly, in July Deidre West retired as our priest, and we were anticipating a long period of interregnum without any permanent clergy. Happily this was not to be, as, following the production of various Action Plans and a swift interview process, the Rev Canon Graham Hedger was appointed to become priest in charge of the Orebeck benefice. Graham currently lives in Charsfield where he will continue to reside. I have known Graham since he was a curate in Walton near Felixstowe. He is very much looking forward to meeting everyone once he becomes our priest on 16 May.

Thirdly after many, many years, planned work on the church building was finally agreed by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (the church's planning authority). When Graham Vellacott was our priest, a project to make some alterations to the church building was proposed. The plans included a toilet and storage area to be built behind the church, accessed from the north door; new doors to the porch; and some alterations to the back of the church, creating a level floor and making the space flexible, so that it could be used in different ways. In consultation with the PCC, our architect drew up plans which had to be submitted to the DAC. Months, then years elapsed whilst the proposal was studied and commented on by bodies such as Heritage England, the Church Buildings Council, archaeologists,all had their say and the plans were subsequently modified. In order to progress we split the project into three phases. The current phase is to make level the floor at the back of church so that there is a level access from the porch, and to reposition the three back pairs of pews, so that there will be a flexible open welcoming space around the font. These six pews will be moveable, mounted on castors, so that they can be used in a variety of ways, including in their original positions. This work is currently in progress and should be completed by the end of May.

As far as providing a toilet – that is likely to be phase three, with plans for new doors to the porch and repairing and opening the north door as phase two. Thanks are due to our Secretary, Jackie Clark for her perseverance in pursuing this project.

The Church finances remain on an even keel. We paid £9000 to the Diocese as our Parish share in 2017. In the coming year we have the major expenditure of the building works. This is being paid from our fabric fund together with grant aid, although further contributions are always welcome. We continue to be grateful for generous contributions from the Fete and Autojumble, as well as fundraising activities such as the twice yearly quiz.

Information on other activities such as Bellringing, Flower and Cleaning Rotas are given in the Church's Annual Report which is available on the Village Website. In particular I should mention the contribution of the Parish Council, who now pay for the Churchyard maintenance, and John and Anne Bater, who as Churchwarden and organist do so much to maintain the welcoming atmosphere of St Andrew's.