

APCM 2019 Report from Revd Tonya – Rector

I have based this report on the Parish Profile written by the Benefice.

I arrived with you in March 2019. My licencing service was one of joy and celebration and I was met with much welcome. I have been with you now for almost eighteen months. It has been a period of settling in and getting to know everyone. There have been so many moments of pure delight, and there has also been moments of conflict and challenge. Both are to be expected, when people come together there will always be highs and lows.

Below are four statements in bold which I have taken from the profile, these are the main areas, that you as a worshipping community felt were important to the new rector. And it is these I have been addressing throughout 2019 and beyond.

» The Braydon Brook group of churches is seeking to continue to work collaboratively through effective leadership.

- I continued to build on what is already happening within the Benefice. Church Wardens and I meet regularly, discussions centre of worship, what is happening in each parish, finances, future of our churches, etc.
- I meet regularly with the ministry team for prayer, reflection and the planning of services.
- I work closely with our Administrator and together we have begun to develop the 'Braydon Brook Brand'. We have revamped the website, created posters advertising services and events, written policies and many risk assessments.
- When I arrived I said I would listen to the parishes and peoples stories for my first six months, to gain an insight into these communities. This I did. It was a joy to hear and then reflect. Thank you to everyone who got in contact with me.
- Towards the end of the year I began some visioning work with the benefice. Everyone was invited to come to Crudwell Church and here we looked at the past and the present and we began to dream dreams about the future. The main learning that came from this I believe is the willingness for the parishes to work together for the greater good.

» Our key priority is to reach out to the younger members of our communities and to refresh our church life through the participation of all age groups.

- I am a regular visitor to all the schools. I have taken Collective Worship and on occasions been invited into classes to teach and share. Classes have also come into church.
- Planning took place in 2019 at Crudwell to introduce a new Friends and Family Service once a month in church. This was launched in January 2020. I believe this service not only reaches out to young people, but it also refreshed the church community in Crudwell.
- Planning also took place in 2019 to launch an after school club at Crudwell School. This was launched also in January. My thanks to Helen Dawson and Jo Nettleton for assisting.

- In early 2020 Sarah Wyman had planned on beginning a 'Song & Chat' afternoon for our senior members of our parishes. Due to Covid 19, this has been put on hold.

» **We need strengthening in our approach to evangelism, prayer and pastoral care.**

- Planning in 2019 began for a new informal 'Chit-chat' group. Meeting in a pub to discuss, very gently any faith matter of the groups choosing. The first meeting was held in February 2020 at the Horse and Groom Inn, Charlton. It is currently paused.
- Advent Peace and Lenten Peace was offered in Crudwell Church, offering a space for people to 'be' and to reflect during these penitential seasons. 30 minutes of quiet in a candle lit church.
- Pastoral visits were many and shared with some members of the Ministry Team.
- Home Communion is a regular feature of life in the Benefice.
- End of life care given.
- Time spent with the newly bereaved.
- Time spent with our wedding couples.

» **We are looking for a Rector who is comfortable in a rural environment and values the Anglican tradition but who is not afraid to promote new ways of doing things.**

- I have been ordained 11 years and have always worked in a rural environment.
- I am a traditionalist and adore BCP services.
- There has been some changes since I've been here:
 - Monthly Benefice Service now includes all of the parishes
 - Introduction of the Advent & Lenten Peace
 - Refreshed many of the services, brought in new liturgy
 - At Christmas we offered new services in some of the churches, eg, Dressing of the Christmas Tree Service, new look Christingle Services, new look Carol Services.
 - Pancake Party in 2020 at Crudwell Church, saw us overflowing with families.

Covid has meant that some of the planning and initiatives have either not happened in 2020 or are currently paused.

My links with our schools has been limited. Though I have taken Collective Worship via Zoom in two of the schools and worked with the year 4s at Crudwell School. We have given chocolates to staff as a way of saying thank you for all that they have done this year.

At the end of term Bibles and a 'Get ready for Secondary School' book were given to our year 6's in Oaksey and Crudwell School. (Minety do something different).

Covid has forced us to offer church differently. Zoom and YouTube have been embraced and we have widened our congregations.

A weekly quiz has brought people closer together!

The future...

- To build on what we have done so far and reflect on the Hopes and Dreams sessions
- To create a new service rota, using the questionnaire as a basis
- To open up all of our churches - safely
- To build a pastoral care team
- To work closely with our schools
- To look at our buildings and ask the question: Are they fit for life and worship today?
- To reach out to our communities

To do this...

- A Benefice response is needed
- I cannot do it alone
- Encourage everyone to look at the big picture and not just your own parish – we are stronger together
- To encourage people with using their gifts
- To become a more prayerful community and seek God's will for the work he would have us do

In 2019, we had weekly services in most of our churches, many baptisms, 2 confirmations, weddings and funerals. Without your support, without your faith, without your contribution to the Parish Share this would have been less. So I thank you.

I am also part of the vocations team, where I journey with those who are exploring a call to ordination. Without your contribution to the Parish Share, these vocations could be missed.

I also thank you for your welcome to myself and Mark and your kindness since we've been here. The coffees, meals, drinks we've with you have allowed us to feel like we belong, like we have come to the right place. Thank you.

I see God in you all. Each Sunday when I'm with you, either face to face or on zoom, I see God. I think we could do great things here, we are God's beating heart in the villages where we live and I hope and I pray that we will continue to grow together. We are on a potentially exciting journey. I look forward to where 2020 and beyond will take us.

Revd Tonya Nixon