

HOLY CROSS CHURCH HANKERTON
CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT FOR 2017

The Church is an important part of the village. Services on the first and third Sundays are supported by a small but steady number, whilst the congregation at services for Easter, Carols and Christmas were high. There are also regular group communion services shared with the other five churches in the Braydon Brook Group. There was one baptism and one wedding. A short Morning Prayer service is held twice a week at one of the group churches. The numbers are small but it is a peaceful and contemplative start to the day.

The rector, Phil Daniels, was absent from July to January through illness. He has sadly now tendered his resignation and the Bristol Diocese will shortly be advertising for someone to replace him. We must thank him for his enthusiastic approach and for giving us fresh ideas. We wish him a speedy return to good health. We must also thank the other clergy, particularly Sarah Wyman, for taking on a huge range of additional tasks during this time. She has been supported by Richenda Milton Daws and other visiting and retired clergy. We also thank Heather Goodwin and Christopher Daws as our regular organists.

The number of villagers making regular bank payments is 24, for which the church is extremely grateful. Income tax is recovered on this, as it is on any sums put in the gift aid envelopes in each pew. The usual fund raising events were held throughout the year, including the Spring Supper, Strawberry Tea in the churchyard and a Harvest Ploughman's Lunch. As usual, there was an Advent Sale. All these events were well supported by the villagers and visiting family. The proceeds from the Lent Lunch were passed on to The Great Western Hospital for their radiotherapy appeal and the collection from the Christingle service was donated to The Children's Society.

Various fabric repairs to stone, roof and wood were carried out, following the Quinquennial Survey. In the churchyard, we removed a second dying and dangerous chestnut tree, which had some hollow branches. The churchyard is not as tidy as usual, due to badgers, moles and rabbits, whilst the church has swallows in the porch as well as bats and mice inside. God's creatures are welcome but they don't clear up after themselves! The "Living Churchyard" project on the north side, under Steve Davies' direction, continues with a splendid mix of wild flowers. The churchyard grass has been regularly cut, including extra trims ahead of special events such as the Street Fayre.

There has been continued use of the North Aisle by the History Group and the Parish Council. It was used as a polling station for the general election and the local council election. We thank Chris Betts who continues to coordinate the Saturday morning "Coffee and Chat", where all are welcome. The North Aisle fund raising continues, with the main event being the Street Fayre in August, which involves many "community minded" villagers. There was also an excellent Mexican evening in the North Aisle. We also thank those on the flower and cleaning rota for all their hard work in keeping the church looking lovely.

The church and churchyard are well maintained with the help of village volunteers. The North Aisle is an important facility for the community. Like many churches, our congregations are mostly small, so we must continue to try and find ways to draw in people of all ages, for communion in its broader sense. It is not only a peaceful place for worship but also to meet and talk with people of all views.

Philip Carter and Valerie Durnford, April 2018