

Parish Church report for Parish Council 2020/21

This has been a difficult year for the church spiritually, structurally and financially as it has been for many organisations. We have only had one wedding. No funeral services have taken place in the church itself since lockdown began although funerals have taken place either at the crematorium or at the graveside.

Our clergy have adapted to keep the church available to all through Zoom services and services sent out in paper form in the post and for a while in the summer we were able to have socially distanced services in church. Our new Rector arrived just before the lockdown and has not been able to make as much contact with people as she would have liked. Jassica, our curate, has been a great help and we all feel for her because this has been her last year as curate and her learning experience has necessarily been curtailed. She has been helping out in Telford for the past 6 months and at the end of her curacy in June may well find a team post there. We have also been ably supported during the times that we have been open by Rev Robin Martin who has helped with services.

The church has had to adapt in its relationship with the school because of the Covid regulations. Recorded assemblies via Zoom and You Tube have been offered and Messy Church has been adapted with take away bags containing various crafts and activities being made available to families. We also made provision for each class to engage with Advent and Lent activities. Being a church school it does have a clergy person as a school governor and Jassica has performed this rôle in the last year. The church has donated over £1000 towards school requirements as advised by the headteacher and this year the contribution was allocated to literature purchase. In addition the PCC Treasurer has lobbied the Diocesan Director of Finance and the Diocesan board of education to use some of the money obtained from the sale of school house to be used for school improvements.

Fundraising events were severely curtailed as expected, but we did manage to hold a Harvest Festival in church, though not a Harvest Supper. Together with the school a Scarecrow hunt was staged resulting in a further £250 being donated to the food bank.

The Bishop of Lichfield visited St Chad's in the summer as part of his pilgrimage around churches dedicated to St Chad's in the Lichfield Diocese. Unfortunately his visit had to be confined to the building since earlier in the week an adder's nest had been disturbed in the graveyard, fortunately without harm to man or serpent. Nevertheless it is a warning that adders are active in Shropshire.

The church estate itself has had a busy year. The heating was eventually repaired with interruptions due to the Covid restrictions. We have also had plaster detach from the North side of the East wall of the church which will need repairing. Peter Sturgess has done a marvellous job in repairing the church clock. The graveyard is maintained by the County Council. There are some areas which need tidying and discussions are presently underway about whether the council will do this or whether a working party needs to be assembled.