

# St Margaret's

Hemingford Abbots

## Year in Review 2022 - 2023

### St Margaret's Church Hemingford Abbots





## Dear Friends

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The contributions that follow in this year's Review, cover comprehensively the activities, achievements and successes of the last year so in my opening remarks, it is not my aim to cover any of them but I would like to say two big "Thank you's",

Firstly, to everyone who contributes to the smooth running of our church. The numbers and diverse activities are such that it would take a great deal of space to try to mention them individually and in any event, I would be bound to miss someone and cause distress.

Secondly, you will see from the comments of our Treasurer, that our finances are in good order and our books balance. This is excellent news and is a result of the very generous giving of our congregation. Most, if not all of you, will be aware that the Church of England is not able to contribute to the running costs and upkeep of its churches and so this needs to be the responsibility of each individual church, along with covering the costs of the Priest. The Diocese does however use its income to cover the cost of a whole range of services which we receive such as Safeguarding Training etc. Thus, our Church is

dependent on the generous giving of all of us and the income from any fund-raising events. So, I want to thank you all for your ongoing support of our church family.

Whilst balancing our books, we also manage to support a wide range of good causes & mission partners outside the parish.

Looking back over the past year, there have been many highlights and we continue to develop and grow. The closer relationship with our sister church in Hemingford Grey and the resultant flow of members of each congregation between the two churches for various services, is a very encouraging development as is the joint worship each weekday evening by zoom of Night Prayer. There seems now to be an increasing tendency for people to stay after Sunday service to enjoy refreshments and conversation and along with this comes the sense that we not only enjoy each other's company but that we derive a real sense of joy from our joint worship and signals that we are a truly Christian family.

So much of what we have become and achieved owes a debt to our past Vicar Peter who retired last year. We have much to thank him for; not least the way that he worked with both parishes to

enable a bond of real friendship to be forged.

Sadly, since our last AGM, our Patron Lord Hemingford has died. Over very many years he and Jenny contributed much in so many ways to both the village and the church. We also owe them a great debt of gratitude and the way that I see that we can repay both these debts, is to continue the work that they began and continue down the path that we seem so joyfully to be following.

Looking to the future; at a recent away day the PCC started to formulate a plan to take our Church forward into the next decade. More of this will become known as we roll out the various aspects of the Development plan. Finally, can I extend my personal thanks for all the love and support that Margaret and I have received as I seek to Minister to and lead the parish until a replacement priest for Peter is appointed.

May god bless you all.

*Brian - Priest*

## Churchwardens

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2022 was a special year for our nation and our church: in June we celebrated alongside the village the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth

II. On Sunday, which was also Pentecost Sunday, we organised a Civic Service with the church beautifully decorated by the Flower Guild, which included a special display in the Prayer Corner. We decided in October (as per expert advice) to plant a tree (gingko biloba also known as maidenhead tree) in the churchyard, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy.

Sadly three month later in September, alongside a saddened nation, we had to say goodbye to our Queen. We organised a Vigil service the evening before the funeral, flowers, a special display and a Condolence book in the Prayer corner.

The bells have been specially rung on both happy and sad occasions. Led by Tim Weatherfield, after the Matins service in October we planted the tree and said prayers of thanksgiving for the life and reign of our late Queen and prayers for the nation and for Charles our new King who will take forward her legacy. Special thanks to Pearl, Dave, Mike and John for organising this planting. 2022 was special for something else: Peter retired in September, after being our vicar for 19 years. His last service at St Margaret's was at the Harvest Festival on 5 September. We then organised a Harvest Lunch as a farewell party



for Peter and Rosie. It was a joyous occasion, well attended; we thanked them for everything they have done for us during their many years here and presented them with our gifts – amongst these a beautiful photo album produced by John and Judith, with snippets of our rich church life and activities, with many familiar faces in it, as a way for Peter and Rosie to remember us.

As usual the collections of both the service and the lunch were donated to our mission partners and the gifts presented in the service were shared between the Food bank and the Salvation Army Hostel in Abbots Ripton.

Although Covid was still present in the community but with fewer and milder cases, we removed the restrictions in church – no masks and seating in all pews. The coffee and biscuits after service came back making people happy, allowing us to better bond after services. Pearl has taken on the organising of the Coffee rota, with many new volunteers joining.

We have kept our service pattern, even after Peter leaving, with the help of Brian, Judith, Tim, Liz Pinnock and a few invited vicars, with the full involvement of the choir, the Choir masters and

organists. The usual attendance has stayed at 40-50, higher since the pandemic but we have seen the church even fuller at some special services: recently 60+ on Palm Sunday and 70+ on Easter Day. On Remembrance Day the church was full - 85 adults and 45 children This included Brownies, Scouts and their families, more villagers plus our regulars.

We had our first Christmas Carol service since the beginning of the pandemic and it was a real joy hearing and singing together our favourite carols, and indulging in mulled wine, mince pies and friendly chats afterwards. 163 people attended, including 22 children.

Christmas day brought 72 people to church, including 11 children, for more jolly carol singing, after a short communion service.

The PCC has produced and delivered to each household Christmas and Easter cards, with greetings and a full schedule of services during the festive seasons. We have organised special Easter trails for children. Both before Christmas and Easter, Catherine has welcomed us in her home and led us in prayer courses. The magazine continues to be circulated electronically apart from

those few who do not have email access. St Margaret's presence in the village community, with all its events, has been actively advertised on our web pages, posters and the board outside the pub. Special thanks go to JoAnne for doing this. The Churchwardens and PCC have been rather busy preparing the Parish Profile. We worked closely with the churchwardens from St James to produce the common Profile, including the adverts to find our new incumbent. We conducted one interview at the end of March but unfortunately we could not recommend the appointment of this candidate. Work to find our next incumbent will continue. The two PCCs expressed again their desire for the two churches to stay united as part of a plurality with one incumbent.

We want to thank all the ministers, all volunteers, groups and their leaders, all who work hard for our church, in all aspects of worship and day to day life: the choir, the organ players, the flower guild, the readers, sides persons and intercession leaders, the bell ringers, the cleaners, the coffee group, the gardener, Rachel and Jo in the office, Catherine for accounts, the Friends of St Margaret's, the deputy churchwardens and the PCC.

At this moment in time we are all busy and looking forward to the Coronation weekend which will see the village come together in joyful celebration, including our special "Sing for the King" Songs of Praise service. Following this we will turn our full attention to the Flower Festival, which will bring visitors from far and wide, admirers of our church, gardens, village and its beautiful people.

*Daniela Spilca and David  
Wordsworth, Churchwardens*

## Family Service

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Family Service is held on the second Sunday of the month and has good attendance from several families and continues to be supported by much of the church family. The service is mainly led by Janine Hamilton with music on keyboard from Peter Allen. Di Bilton led the August Family Service. The youngsters help with readings and some musical accompaniment. Traditional hymns are mixed with more modern songs and talks are sometimes accompanied with crafts for everyone. We held a family Service every month including Remembrance in November and Christingle in December.

*Janine Hamilton*

## Lay Ministry

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In reporting, the Lay Ministers would firstly like to record our thanks to Peter Cunliffe who, throughout his time with us, was an inspiring leader, a kind pastor and was courageous in his faithfulness to the Gospel. He encouraged each of us in our various gifts and ministries and so we have been well-equipped to continue serving the congregations of both St James' and St Margaret's following his retirement.

In the Diocese of Ely, approximately 4,000 services are conducted by Licensed Lay Ministers each year, and approximately 2,000 sermons delivered. In addition there are many services conducted by Authorised Lay Ministers. LLMs also provide Teaching, Chaplaincy, Marriage and Baptism Preparation, Children's Work, Pastoral Care and so much more!

At St Margaret's our LLMs are Tim Wetherfield, Gerald Barrett and Liz Pinnock.

We have been pleased to continue providing Sunday, Wednesday and Festival services and sermons. Tim Wetherfield reflects that, *'motivated by a love of God, and taking our responsibility to the congregation very seriously, we aim as individuals and as Church family, to understand the Bible*

*more, get to know the heart of God better, try to apply faith to our everyday lives and communicate how being a Christian makes a difference.'* To that, Liz would add that we aim to encourage everyone to grow deeper in their faith and acts of service at whatever stage they are on that journey. Consequently, we each undertake rigorous Safeguarding training at Leadership Level, we study, we undertake continuous training offered by the Diocese as well as attending Seminars, Conferences etc. on diverse topics e.g Dementia Awareness, Ministry among Seniors, Liturgy Old and New and Creative Retreats to mention but a few provided by other organisations. This brings us into contact with Ministers from around the region and beyond, all of which sharpens our minds and practice and inspires us.

Upon Peter's retirement, we are especially thankful to Ben who has restarted our weekly Team Meetings in which we dwell in God's word, pray together and plan services at St James' whilst ensuring our availability to assist at St Margaret's.

Special mention should be made of Judith Bolton who has stepped up despite having retired and with difficult family circumstances.

We have provided festival services at Christmas and Easter and some special occasions such as All Souls. We are particularly grateful to the choir and organists, who diligently select hymns and prepare to lead sung worship. Similarly the Churchwardens and Brian Atling who provide so much support to ensure the smooth running of services.

We cannot fail to mention the many members of the congregation who read the scriptures and lead intercessions with such devotion, the Sidespeople who welcome and make coffee and Rachel and JoAnne who provide all the admin support with such cheerfulness. For all your kind encouragement to us we thank you all.

We miss Peter's kindly wisdom and guidance but look to the future and the new things that God is planning for us.

*"For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland."* Isaiah 43:19

*The Lay Ministers*

## Music in Worship

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We have been fortunate this year to have had a consistent group of singers in our choir who have shown great commitment to practices and services, which has brought stability after the Covid pandemic of the last few years. A big thank you to all of those who participate regularly and also to those who join us for special services now and then.

We would especially like to thank our organists Bruce Garner, Elaine Gunn, Pete Allen and Alwyn Frost who faithfully continue to support the worship and choir at St Margaret's week by week.

We meet each Friday from 5-6.30pm to practise and start with tea and cake, which have become a regular feature and a time when we can catch up with each other and have fellowship together. We are now taking it in turns to provide the tea and cake.

**WE ARE ALWAYS OPEN TO HAVING NEW MEMBERS JOIN US, SO PLEASE COME ALONG IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.**

The Music Team of Charles Beresford, JoAnne Rutter and Liz Booker has been working well, sharing the planning, leading of practices and administration and we all benefit from the support we give to each other.

We have responded to various events over the year in the following ways:-

- Solidarity with Ukraine after the war started by including a Ukranian Kyrie in our Communion services and sharing news of and praying at the start of practices for some Ukranian refugees who have a link with one of the choir.
- A Civic service on 5<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee where we sang an anthem written for the occasion 'In our service ' by Thomas Hewitt Jones
- Leading a service of Remembrance on the late Queen's death
- A special service for Harvest festival to say farewell to our Priest in charge Peter Cunliffe on his retirement, which included his favourite hymn and the Rutter anthem 'Look at the world'
- Participation in some Family services including the Remembrance service in November with uniformed groups.
- Advent and Christmas Carol services
- Good Friday service of meditation with music and drama

The regular pattern of services each month has different musical characteristics contributing to the worship, so there is variety in our worship ranging from hymns and worship songs at the Family service to traditional choral worship including anthems and chants at Matins and Evensong, with the Sung Eucharists incorporating some of both of these elements. There have been ongoing discussions in the choir about the wearing of robes and how often to wear them and after consultation with the choir, the decision was taken by the PCC to extend the wearing of robes to one Sung Eucharist service a month alongside Matins and Evensong. The discussion at PCC included issues such as disability, inclusivity and possible perceived barriers to participation in the choir and one Communion service without robes has continued for these reasons. The Music Team and Choir looks forward to continuing to serve the worship of our church over the coming year.

*Liz Booker and the Team*



## Flower Guild

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It was good to return to an uninterrupted year of regular flower decorations in the church plus the extra arrangements for the main festivals of Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. The Flower Guild members have clearly lost none of their talents during the long periods when they have been unable to practise their skills due to the Covid restrictions.

The year brought three major occasions to the village and the Flower Guild were closely involved with each. In June there was the much-anticipated Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The whole village came together to celebrate, and the church was one of the focal points with a joyous flower display based on the official Platinum Jubilee colours. Garlands of glittering baubles in purple and silver around the pillars, topped with froths of gypsophila, represented crowns with jewels and ermine. In the windows flowers depicted the emblems of the four nations of the United Kingdom. A large tableau of a wicker throne be-decked with flowers of the Commonwealth and nearby the Queen's robes and floral crown, plus a corgi (in flowers) in a basket made everyone

smile. At the back of the church the Hemingfords' Local History Society put together a fascinating exhibition of old photographs showing how the village had celebrated coronations and jubilees since Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

Only a few months later, the nation mourned the death of Her Majesty with great sadness. White and cream flowers along with a book of condolence and photographs were placed in the Lady Chapel. We hope they helped as people came to reflect, remember and pray for their Queen.

The funeral of Nick, Lord Hemingford, was held in early February 2023 and the Flower Guild were very happy to arrange flowers for him and his family. Nick had been part of so many Flower Festivals, ever ready with his Black & Decker, as his wife Jenny designed constructions and contraptions to hold wonderful flower displays up and down the church. He was one of us.

We are now looking forward - to a very busy schedule in early summer. First to the coronation of King Charles III. And then to the 2023 Flower Festival on 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> June. After a gap of four years since 2019, it is a challenge, and perhaps a bit daunting but, with

careful planning, we are confident that everything will ‘come together’! The theme is ‘The Light of the World’.

*Bridget Flanagan*

## World Mission

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We are so thankful for all the support from St Margret’s Hemingford Abbots over the years. For many years this support has been for our child support programme in the historically marginalised communities in Northwest Rwanda. It has been wonderful to see so many primary school aged children who did not previously go to school now benefiting from education. In 2022, SMHA generously extended this support to our work in the Odesa area of Ukraine. For many years our team have been running Children Bible Clubs in villages surrounding Odesa. This has been a low-key programme. Today, our work in Ukraine is the largest ever Mission Possible operation. Our team in Odesa have partnered with local churches in the war zones and also in villages around Odesa to deliver many thousands of aid packages to families and elderly people who have no other source of support. These packages not only include food but also Bibles and other

Christian literature. Our team is bringing hope in the midst of fear. In total nearly 20,000 aid packages have been distributed and in addition fuel has been provided during the winter months – much needed due to regular power cuts as a result of missiles hitting power stations.

We know that the congregation at SMHA regularly pray for Ukraine and our team would like you to know that this is greatly valued. They know people are praying as they are seeing miracles in the lives of people that they are serving. For example, most common childhood fears are things like spiders, monsters and the dark. But in Ukraine it is sirens, loud noises and missiles. When asked what is their greatest wish, it is not for a toy or phone. They want peace. That is why our ministry is so important. Our team cannot arrange a ceasefire, but our staff do bring the peace of God into the lives of people living on the edge.

So a big thank you for all your support

*Richard Wallis Mission Possible UK*

**Kylie and Bhim Bahadur**

“Our call: To help release people from the horrors of being

trafficked and to motivate and mobilise the church for social action.”

“Our role: Working with a team of local people who raise awareness in schools, churches and community projects on human trafficking and the issues related to it.”

Kylie and Bhim continued to train those partnering with their organisation. They were working their way through the safeguarding manual, training on the basics. Bhim has improved further his own training by attending a very interesting three-day course on more in-depth safeguarding issues. They had a special case of a girl being tricked and taken to a brothel. They supported the mother and with the help of Childline all ended well. Childline spoke with all the parties involved. Kylie and Bhim continue contacting and meeting with schools to try to establish more in-person training – both long-term and short-term. Unfortunately they had some less successful projects with rescue homes and with seminaries, which don't seem especially interested in making their staff and students aware of safeguarding issues, letting graduates out into the world as leaders ill prepared to deal with this type of issue. Kylie and Bhim were determined to persevere

though, and are hopeful they will have positive results with these projects as well.

Joshua, Kylie and Bhim's eldest son, had a few health issues last year, but luckily nothing as serious as the septic arthritis the previous year. He was still advised to avoid contact sports, rather hard for a very energetic 9 years old boy. He started school again after 3 years off, at a small local school and is very motivated.

Daniel, the younger son is “full of beans”, his mother says. He calls himself a gardener and loves to “look after” the plants nearby. He is pretty funny in Hindi as well as English. Josh definitely understands a lot more Hindi (he did not hear much Hindi when they lived in West Bengal) but is less confident to speak it.

Kylie reflected on the world and their faith: “With so many things changing locally, personally and internationally, it feels like you never know what's around the corner and we need to be ready to adapt to whatever comes. I think we can only do this when we are anchored well in the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. May we all seek our prayer closet more and more this year so that we hear his voice more clearly above all the other noises and voices that are around us.”

## Compassion UK

Our Family Service continues to support Boramungu who is 14 now. She is doing very well in school, especially in science, which she loves the most. We are happy that our modest contribution allows a young girl in Rwanda to be educated and achieve her dreams. Several members of the congregation also continue to privately support children, through Compassion. The family of one little girl, Promesse, wrote back that they have saved the two extra gifts received for her birthday and for Christmas and bought a cow. It is very touching and humbling to see that something trivial and easy to do for us can bring them such great help.

*Daniela Spilca*

## Deanery Synod

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There were three Deanery Synod meetings during the year. These were held on Zoom. If anyone would like to read the minutes of the meetings then please ask.

At the first meeting of the year on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022, we were informed that as all the churches had met their Parish Shares for the previous year, the Deanery was given a rebate of £23,341.04 – always

good news in anybody's language. As I had retired from the Standing Committee, a replacement for me was voted in.

The Deanery Development Plan was explained. It has been designed to help churches move forward with their own plans. Due to the amount of work required in getting ready to advertise for a new incumbent, St Margaret's Development Plan was put on the back burner but this year the PCC attended an Away Day to discuss it and move it on. Mike Booker led this day and gave us excellent feedback afterwards, which will help to carry us forward. We will discuss one of our aims at each PCC meeting going forwards.

At the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 Mike Booker, as acting Rural Dean, explained that he was avoiding making new decisions but stayed in touch with the Chapter and Standing Committee so that he could share news with everyone. The new Archdeacon introduced himself, explaining where he came from, and how he had got to where he is now. The Treasurer's report stated that 30 out of 34 churches had paid their Parish Share in full, leaving a shortfall of £24,000. Due to a gift of £5000

from Houghton, the Deanery will make up the difference and so, by paying in full, will be due a rebate of £14,000.

The last Deanery Synod meeting was held on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023 at St Mary Magdalene's Church, Brampton. The new Rural Dean, Duncan Goldthorpe, was introduced by Mike Booker. Duncan Goldthorpe, spoke at length about his vision for the Deanery. He told us to be excited about attending Synod meetings and being part of shaping the future. Mmmm.

There was the usual financial report and we agreed to make up short falls with the reserves in order to obtain the rebate from the Diocese.

There was more discussion on the Deanery Development Plan being the way forward. By getting churches to think of the future it would help them work out the best way to take the gospel into their communities.

The next Synod meeting is at Alconbury Weald or Hemingford Abbots. The Synod has not been to Hemingford Abbots for many years so it will be good to welcome them again.

*David and Janine Synod Reps*

## Tower

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Throughout this year 4 quarter peals have been rung alongside the usual ringing for Sunday services, weddings and sometimes funerals. In June we rang in rounds to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen and for the Sunday Civic service. This was later followed by a quarter peal. Then in September, following the death of Her Majesty, bells were rung fully muffled in memorial. Bells are only rung fully-muffled with the backstroke of the tenor bell, the heaviest bell, (ours is over 11 cwt), left open for the death of the Sovereign, the incumbent Vicar or the Bishop of the diocese. Along with other churches across the country on the 19th of September the tenor bell was tolled half muffled for one hour prior to the funeral service of Her Majesty at Westminster Abbey.

Regular maintenance of the bells has continued. At present the pulley blocks are being serviced and shims inserted to hopefully improve their running. After numerous delays the simulator has now been installed at St James's. This has several advantages and will help with training new ringers. For example we don't need a room full of ringers to ring the other bells



and the simulated bells on the computer ring in perfect time, so the trainee only has to worry about his/her own mistakes. We currently have 2 very recent learners but more would always be welcome!

*Sharon (Tower Captain) and Martin Williams (Steeple Keeper)*

## Finances

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Regarding St Margaret Church finances generally, the past year has seen a very positive picture. The budget that was set at the beginning of the year in January 2022 has broken even and the overall income for the year has shown a surplus.

The final year accounts will be available for viewing at the back of the church from 14<sup>th</sup> May, and anyone wishing to receive a copy of the accounts may do so by requesting a download from myself or the church wardens. I wish to thank Stephen Young for auditing the accounts prior to their being published.

Having very few skills in the area of finance I have surrounded myself with those who have that knowledge and expertise. In particular, thanks are deserving to

Catherine Keen for her invaluable work as the church bookkeeper. She has done a wonderful job, despite the fact that she is still learning “on the job”. She will soon be fully qualified and will soon be undertaking her final exams. May we wish her well.

A “sub-committee” has been established in order to advise on Church Investments and how best to deal with them in the future. This group consists of one of the church wardens, two members of the congregation who have extensive financial knowledge, Catherine Keen and me.

The investments have done very well over the past three years albeit a setback in fortunes due to a slump in the market over the past twelve months, attributable to global events including the pandemic and hostilities in Ukraine. There is, however, reason to be more optimistic for the coming year.

It is thanks to increased giving by members of the congregation, and legacies, that have resulted in a surplus of funds in the general account.

As usual we are indebted to the Friends of St Margarets for

providing financial support for many of the repairs on the fabric of the church building. The repayment of VAT from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme also helps to cover the maintenance and repair costs.

Due to the above-mentioned support this has allowed the church to fulfill its contributions to the diocese and repay St James Church for their administrative work in the Parish office.

Each year sees a year-on-year improvement in parishioners giving thanks to the Parish Giving Scheme, and Gift Aid provided by the government. There is an annual increase in giving keeping abreast with inflation thanks to many of those who contribute using the Scheme. The majority of those who give regularly do so by this method and there are now only a few who contribute using envelopes or the collection plate. There is often a card reader available during some services for giving by the “modern” generation.

We are also most grateful to the families of those who left bequests to the church. All these sources help to explain why the church finances are in surplus.

Thanks to our financial situation we are able to support several local charities, sponsor our CMS partners, Kylie and Bhim in India, and give generously to Mission Possible who perform such sterling work throughout the world.

Finally unreserved thanks are given to all who have contributed towards the church expenses during this period of time. For those who may wish to join the Parish Giving Scheme further information may be obtained from the treasurer or the church wardens.

*John Hyde - treasurer*

## Fabric

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As all the pointing of the church was finished by last April we turned to other things, which needed attention. The clock was very rusty although that couldn't be seen from the ground without binoculars, but when you were up in the tower it was plain to see. The problem was that there was a hole in the clock and the bees had made a large nest in there. We couldn't get at the nest so it had to be timed for when the bees had flown. The hole was then blocked and work on de-rusting and replacing all the gold leaf with new

was able to be completed. I think the clock looks amazing these days and when you get the evening sun on it, it really is a treat. At one stage I thought we should think about lighting it up but the way electricity prices are going up, that might not go down too well with those in charge of our purse strings.

The toilet got blocked and it turned out that the Allerton pump had failed. This pump was quite old, so old that the cover to the pump was under grass in the churchyard and took some finding by prodding the floor until we heard metal and then digging it out. The pump was replaced at a cost of £500. Unfortunately the pump that replaced it also failed so we had to wait until another pump was brought and fitted.

The boiler has been serviced and hasn't let us down more than on one occasion when 'Mr Boilerman' (aka. Roger Dearlove) came to the rescue.

The lights in the north and south aisle are on each day for visitors so needless to say they do need replacing more regularly than others. St Ives Electrical are very good at coming at short notice. I let a few lights fail before calling

them and then they can replace them in one go. There is a light high up in the nave that had gone out but that will need a scaffolding tower putting up to replace it, so again I will wait for some more to fail before calling the electricians in.

We have had all the gutters cleaned twice in the year and a number of gutter repairs. Basically the gutters are not the correct size for the building. We have been told this in a number of past Quinquennial Reports. This will be an expensive project but if enough money is raised at the Flower Festival this is what we hope to do next.

Most recently we have had a microphone fitted in the pulpit but it can also be used in other areas around the front of the nave. We have had the organ tuned twice and a broken foot pedal replaced.

The small altar in the middle of the nave has been fitted with locking wheels so that it can be moved about more easily. We are waiting for an altar frontal for this altar.

We are hoping to convert the front of the north aisle into a small chapel but we are waiting for permission to remove the side on

pew so that we can carpet the area. It is then the intention to move the altar from the south Aisle to the north aisle and the altar on wheels can be wheeled to the south aisle when not required.

A tree was planted for the Queen's Jubilee in October, we are now just waiting (hoping) that it will spring into life.

*David Wordsworth Fabric Committee*

## Safeguarding

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Since the last APCM there have been no safeguarding issues, disclosures or concerns to report. During the year 8 PCC members at St Margaret's have undergone DBS checks and St Margaret's people have taken a total of 11 various safeguarding training courses.

The Church of England continues to take safeguarding very seriously and in the last 12 months has issued a number of directives and guidance notes for implementation at parish level, including a major Guidance Note on Safer Recruitment and People Management. The PCC has reviewed and re-issued its safeguarding policies to ensure compliance with the latest requirements.

I have been Parish Safeguarding Officer for our two parishes for seven years now and have seen the role expand beyond all recognition as the Church of England has taken its safeguarding responsibilities to heart following some serious failings in the past. Much greater burdens have been placed on staff, PCCs and volunteers with more paperwork, more frequent checks and increased training requirements. I am hugely grateful for the support of the PCC as I have sought to keep the church compliant with all the new regulations and guidance, and to the individual PCC members who, with little or no grumbling, have accepted these increased burdens for the sake of being able to serve our Lord in all that they do for and in St Margaret's church.

I am most grateful, too, to Heather Chambers who has agreed to take over from me in the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer in the next few weeks. I wish her every success and ask that you pray for her!

*Ian Sinkinson Parish Safeguarding Officer.*