

Churchwardens' Report to APCM – 9th May 2021

Olu Ogunoye and I (Deborah Gibson) have had another tenure as Churchwardens since the previous APCM in October 2020 for the duration of approximately just under 7 months but are both stepping down from these roles at this APCM, having completed 3 years each in the post. For both of us the Churchwardenship has been a wonderful way to serve God and a great privilege. It has enabled us to learn a great deal more about the structure of church life and the enormous amount of work that goes on “behind the scenes” ensuring the smooth running of services, supporting the Vicar, Curate and Leadership Team, as well as care for our church, other buildings and grounds.

Our role since the last APCM (and since March 2020) has been primarily the task of keeping our congregation as safe as possible throughout the pandemic, enabling us to still meet when we were able to for Sunday worship and our prayer sessions in church on a Wednesday. Between lockdowns, we give thanks to God that we were able to offer Christmas Services in 2020 and Easter Services this year, which were well attended and a blessing to those that were able to come. We were even able to offer outdoor singing at Easter as restrictions eased – thank you to our wonderful Worship Leader, Catherine Mortimer for suggesting this and enabling it to happen.

Our church hall has been utilised by the Pre-School during the pandemic (restrictions permitting) and the uniformed groups have met outside in the grounds as and when they have been able to but will return to using the hall soon, along with the Youth Group.

The Buildings Team has very recently reconvened under the Chair Tony Addison who we would like to thank, as he has kindly agreed to lead this Team. There is a planned Quinquennial inspection of the church scheduled for 3rd June 2021. We are still having problems with water entering the church building in several places; side chapel and corridor leading to kitchen in parish rooms which has caused damage but the Buildings Team met on site on 4th May and we will be actively taking these issues forward now restrictions are easing. We have been unable to have any Work Parties since March 2020 but hope to be able to re-start these sometime soon.

In our last Churchwardens' report, we had 2 faculty proposals; the sanctuary area – this faculty submission had been approved by DAC and had gone forward for public consultation. This was for removal of the curtain from the sanctuary, moving the altar table forward and for use of free-standing LED uplighters – this process has now been approved and completed. The second was for the nave area, the removal of some pews – we had a temporary licence for this which expired in January 2021. Before lockdown we were at the experimental stage with this and because we had not been able to implement this during the pandemic, we had applied for a faculty to maintain the situation as it is for a further 3 years to give us time to explore further options. After public consultation, this faculty has also been approved and completed. The pews that were removed are currently being stored on the stage in the hall. We would like to thank Michael Smith for all his hard work with the application of these two faculties and preparing the public consultation documents.

Since October 2020 the Lockdown Leadership Team has continued to meet weekly on a Tuesday evening for discussion regarding planning services, supporting the congregation and wider community and any other urgent business. As well as in-person services, we have continued to offer an on-line service and a phone-in service on Sundays. Some of the members of the church House Groups have continued to meet via Zoom for bible study.

We would like to thank Andy Hulme who continues in his role as the Buildings Supervisor.

We would like to thank Yinka Okikiolu and Ifeoma Emezie in their roles assisting us.

We would like to thank Richard Mortimer, Laura Fatureti, Lynne Parkinson, Sharon Jarvis and Michael & Gill Smith our fellow members of the Leadership Team who have been an incredible support to us; our co-workers in a really difficult time in the Church's history - their tenacity, love and care have been amazing.

A special thank you goes to Michael Smith, who has guided myself and Olu through our Churchwardenship, always our "go to" person to tap into his wealth of knowledge about church life and its workings. His wisdom has been absolutely invaluable.

On a personal level, I want to thank my dear husband Colin Gibson, our Church Caretaker, without whom I would not have been able to do this role. He has been a tower of strength to me, supporting me, always happy to help, clearing the church grounds singlehandedly – filling a skip during lockdown of 2 tonnes of garden waste from the grounds, cutting bushes, weeding, programming the heating, the list is endless – a huge thank you to him from both myself and Olu.

As we stand down, we would like to entrust this role to our new Churchwardens and we hope that they will flourish and be richly rewarded by their time in this position. The role has been a huge blessing to myself and Olu, admittedly not without its challenges, especially in this most difficult of times over the last 12 months or so.

The Terrier and Inventory (record of church belongings) has been updated and along with the Log Book (record of works) are presented to the Meeting should anyone want to look at them.

To our church family, all of you, thank you so much for your support. We all have a part to play in being the body of Christ and please take time to consider what your role will be, both young and old – I never envisaged as a Brownie and Guide as I sat in the pew way back in the 1970s that I would one day be Churchwarden! What an honour and blessing.

Deborah Gibson

Churchwarden