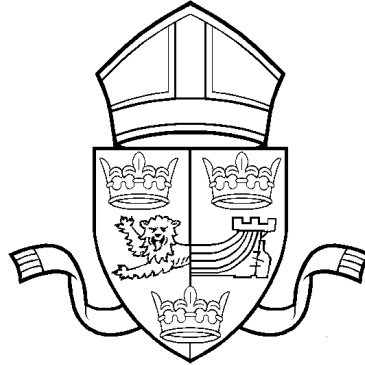


The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich



Annual Report and Financial Statements
of
the
Parochial Church Council
of St Mary's Church
Polstead
Suffolk
For the year ended 31 December 2009

General Information

Church:	St Mary's	
Correspondence Address Postcode	Pond Street Polstead CO6 5BS	
Incumbent:	Rev. Michael Tillett (to 31/12/2009)	Chairman of the PCC
Wardens	Mrs Anne Lewis Mr Bill Wigglesworth	Vice Chairman of PCC
Deanery Synod Representatives	Mr Barrie Hall (to 31/10/2009) Mr James Sephton, Mrs Maggie Bird	
PCC Elected Members:	Mr Richard Bartlett Mrs Maggie Bird Mr Barrie Hall (to 31/10.2009) Mrs Jill Lowe Mrs Joy Mattock Mrs Jackie Mitchell Mr Brian Orriss Mr James Sephton	Treasurer Secretary Liturgical Elder and Deputy Churchwarden
Co-opted Members	Mrs Elisabet Lynn Mrs Jackie Sephton	Reader Ordinand in Training

The Ministry Team of the Benefice.

Those involved in leading and preaching at worship on Sundays.

Clergy	Revd Michael Tillett [to 31/12/09] Revd John Fowler Revd Valri Armstrong
Readers	Mr David Rowe Mrs Elizabet Lynn Mrs Jackie Sephton (Ordinand in Training)
Pastoral and Liturgical Elders for the Benefice	Mr Raymond Bond Miss Francis Mount Mrs Cecilia Hines Mrs Jane Addis Mrs Jean Kingsbury Mr James Sephton Mrs Val Watling

Church Electoral Roll and Statistics (as at 31st December 2009)

At the end of 2009 the electoral roll stood at 81. The average attendance is 30.

There were 8 weddings, 5 funerals in church, 3 at the crematorium, and 8 baptisms during the year.

A review of the year

The full PCC met five times during the year in addition to the Annual Meeting.

The Standing Committee acts for the PCC when situations necessitate it doing so.

The Fabric Committee, comprising Mr Bill Wigglesworth (Chairman), James Sephton and Barrie Hall, met throughout the year and discussed matters relating to access to the tower, extending the churchyard, churchyard fencing, repair of churchyard wall, timber condition, wall paintings, wildflower area, the driveway leading to the church and a washing up facility adjacent to the Rector's vestry.

Main business discussed included:

- Experiments to improve accessibility of worship
- Priorities in conservation and maintenance of the church fabric.
- Improvements in the church including:
 - purchase of a new bookcase for hymnbooks and prayer books,
 - creation of new kneelers for marriage services and
 - provision of a washing up facility.
- Works for the churchyard extension and its fencing, repair of the North wall and refurbishment of the rest of the estate fencing.
- Policy towards the experiment of a wildflower area in the churchyard
- Improvements in communications through use of email by PCC members and extended information on the parish website
- Procedures for implementing the safeguarding policy for vulnerable adults and children
- Deanery pastoral reorganisation.
- Preparations for the interregnum following the departure of Michael Tillett.

In addition the PCC discussed ongoing matters of administration and finance.

The PCC greatly welcomed the award to Elsie Braybrooke, at the end of the year, of a certificate, signed by Bishop Nigel, in recognition of her lifetime of service to the church.

Worship

St Mary's choir continue to provide faithful leading to our worship. The Benefice singing group has sung at each Benefice service.

All the baptismal families were invited to attend the Gospel Oak service which was well attended despite the weather being rather cold. Our thanks go to Emma and Toby Owles for their hospitality and for encouraging an excellent turnout of young families.

The 'First Sunday' services at Leavenheath, to which all churches contribute, continue to be a great success.

The monthly 8.00am Communion service in the south aisle chapel has continued to be well supported.

The Carol Service, and nativity play, had to be held in the Village Hall due to icy winter weather, as did the Christingle and Christmas morning family service, although all were better supported than ever. The Midnight Communion service was again held at Stoke this year. The Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance Services continue to be exceptionally well attended.

Michael Tillett's departure was recognised at a special Benefice service and presentation to him and Sue Tillett at Stoke at the end of November, when we were able to express our thanks for all that they had done for us over the last eight years.

Nurture

An Alpha Course was run during the year with six members and two leaders from across the benefice taking part. It concluded with one of the members having safe delivery of her new son who was baptised in December.

The Home group was deferred till 2010 when it is hoped that after the Lent Course a new group will be formed.

A Mother and Toddler group has been started by Jackie Sephton, meeting once a month in the village hall for any new mums in the village. It is at the beginning stage but there is some interest being shown and five mums have attended.

The Women's Fellowship group continues to meet and thanks are given to Doris Westbrook-Smith for her continuing organisation of an interesting programme and for the annual Christmas lunch.

Outreach

The bereavement support group has continued to meet, under the leadership

of Brian Orris and Jane Wilson, on an occasional basis for fellowship and mutual support and enjoyment.

The building and the churchyard

The church fabric is mostly in very good condition and the state of decoration is excellent. The condition of the North and South aisle roof timbers continues to be kept under close review. Conservation work on the wall paintings remains deferred until funds are available. The creation of safe access to the bell tower and the steeple is being pursued with the help of Ecclesiastical Insurance. Plans are being formulated for the provision of a washing up facility adjacent to the rector's vestry.

Priority during the year was given to completion of the extension of the churchyard, for which planning permission was obtained early in the year. A full archaeological was carried out, as required in the planning permission, by the Suffolk Archaeological Team in June. New estate fencing was constructed around the extension and the opportunity taken to refurbish the rest of the estate fencing for the churchyard. The North wall of the churchyard was repaired in the autumn.

Fund Raising

We are immensely grateful to the Friends of Polstead Church for grants totalling £19,610.50 during 2009 and £4,270.00 during 2010 in order to complete the work in the churchyard, assisted by a generous donation by Toby Owles.

The church has benefited from a number of generous donations from collections at funerals during the year

Diocesan quota

The Diocesan quota for Polstead during 2009 was £18,398. The PCC has agreed to the same quota allocation during the current year.

Conclusion

Our parish, indeed our benefice, would not function without everybody playing their part, in addition to the Ministry Team. We should say thank you to church wardens, treasurers, secretaries, readers, Elders, choir singers, bell ringers, organists, servers, lesson readers, intercessors, prayers, flower arrangers, cleaners, linen ironers, lockers and the many others, including Ray Lowe (putting out of wheelie bins) and James Freeman (winding the clock), who give their time so generously; but most of all for the blessing and strength that God has continued to bestow upon us.

(Chairman) 14th April 2010