

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting - 2012

It is sometimes said amongst clergy that when we move to a new parish, for the first year we can do nothing wrong, for the second year we can do nothing right, and after that things settle down a bit. Well I have now been here just over two years, and I believe that things are settling down after the turmoil of the vacancy, and the departure noted last year of other paid help in the parish. In various ways together we have done many things to strengthen our Church to the glory of God.

Our finances – as has just been reported – are in a healthier condition. There has been an improvement of £29,000 in the balance of our income and expenditure in comparison with the previous year. This is a wonderful achievement in which we should rejoice. However, we are not quite able to balance our books yet, and some work still needs to be done. We have managed to cut our expenditure considerable, and this year the PCC plans to establish a small group to look carefully at each area of costs to find further savings. On the other hand there are two ways in which we can increase our income; one is to invite each member of our church to increase their contribution to our work here, the other is to add new members to our church and encourage them to contribute also. Hopefully we can use both these ways to grow our church and finance our work here.

Progress has also been made in the running of the Parish Rooms, which for many years has been heavily subsidised by the church. Brook Wimbury continues to look after the Parish Rooms with great care and attention, and there has been an increase in the use of our facilities. In addition the Parish Rooms working party has looked carefully at the rates we charge for hiring out the rooms, and from September last year new, increased fees have been in operation. Whilst much progress has been made in making the Parish Rooms financially self sufficient there is still a little way to go. Further improvements to our facilities are planned, the most expensive of which is the installation of a platform lift. I would like to thank Caroline Bird and the members of the Fund Raising Committee for their wonderful efforts; as I speak we have so far raised approximately £19,000 of the estimated £25,000 we need: well done.

With regard to the everyday running of services we have all been sad to see that both Fr. Derek and Fr. Robert are no longer able to help. We are of course deeply saddened by the death of Fr. Derek in Easter Week, and understand that Fr. Robert is not able to be with us so often since his move to Fosbrooke House. We are all grateful (well, I am at any rate!) for the help now offered by Fr. Lawrie Peat, and are please to welcome among us his wife Sheila. Fr. Lawrie is very willing to help with weekday Masses, and will become more involved on Sunday mornings as well. We thank God for his ministry among us.

In 2011 I did:

Baptisms	49
Weddings	11
Funerals	29 – (there were some taken by other priests whilst I was away on vacation.)

Again this year we have been the victim of crimes; on a number of occasions lead and copper have been stolen from our church roof. The PCC took the decision to remove that metal which remained on the roof, sell it, and put proceeds – together with funds from insurance claims – towards the cost of re-roofing in different, less valuable materials. Accordingly we are in the process of gaining permission for the Diocesan Advisor Committee to use a high

quality rubber sheeting to re-roof the choir vestry, and red roofing tile (to match those on the rest of the roof) for the mini spire over the memorial chapel.

I realise that finances play a significant role in the life of a parish, but I wouldn't want people to misunderstand my role as parish priest. So far as I am concerned this is not a business to be managed, nor is it a community group to be run; S. Anne's Church – like any Church – is a family to be loved. The use of the term, 'Father', reminds me of my responsibilities to you all.

Following on from last years report and am pleased to recount that I have been able to run two nurture courses for adults during the year. This represents limited success from my point of view. One problem I face is that the pattern of life here at S. Anne's means that the time I have available to run such courses is Tuesday evenings. This is OK for some people, but many of the potential candidates have young children who they are putting to bed in the evening. I believe that the best time for candidates would be Saturday mornings, but I know I simply couldn't commit to being available frequently enough to make it work. So if there is anybody amongst us who would like to be engaged in the important and rewarding work please will you have a word with me.

Looking ahead to the forthcoming year. Some of you will recall that I have mentioned on a few occasions that my belief that every worshipping community should have a social action project as part of it's missionary work. It is my intention – with the backing of the PCC – to embark on a process of discussion and consultation amongst ourselves and people in the wider community who are sympathetic to our cause, to identify areas where we can engage with those in need, particularly those with whom we seldom come into contact. Looking at our life as a Church it becomes apparent that most of the things we do, we do for ourselves and invite others to join us. Two exceptions are the provision of the Parish Rooms, and the babies and toddler group. Linked to this; it would be helpful if we all had a common aim in developing our life as a church, which direction do we want to go in, where do we want to be in five years time? Some congregations would look to their parish priest to tell them the answers to these questions, but whilst I may have some ideas of my own, experience tells me that for a church to truly own a development plan they have to be engaged in the process of drawing it up. More on this as the year progresses.

In addition to those already mentioned there are many, many others who have worked hard to support our life as a church – thanks to all of you. In particular I would like to thank our two Churchwardens Joan and Eric for their selfless devotion to the running of our church; for the order they have brought to the work of sidesmen and women; for the extra jobs undertaken when I have been away; for all the administration that they do behind the scenes and no one sees or is aware of; for their wise counsel (which I appreciate more perhaps than they will ever realise); and for their love of Jesus Christ and His Church here.

I look forward to the next twelve months with enthusiasm, and pray that, by God's grace, we may continue to honour Him, and continue to grow in faith and in numbers.

Fr. David Lyon
Vicar
April 2012