

Chester Diocesan News

October 2019

Growing
stronger
parishes

This summer, the town of Whaley Bridge sat on the brink of disaster when torrential rain tore away at the structural integrity of the local reservoir. Priest-in-Charge of Whaley Bridge parish, Revd Dr Margaret Jones reflects on the saving of the town.

"After standing in torrential rain, taking photos of the water cascading over the Toddbrook Reservoir Dam on 31 July, I commented on Facebook that we may need to start building an ark in Whaley Bridge! Little did I expect that within twenty-four hours some 1500 of us would have to evacuate our homes

and the heart of our community was facing potential destruction, including a Primary School, shops and businesses, the Bowling Club and Holy Trinity Church.

It is very salutary to recognise what could have been lost within minutes had the dam completely failed and we thank God that the worst didn't happen. It was a huge relief when those of us who had had to leave our properties were able to return home and when businesses were able to open up again. However, this is not something that any of us is going to forget for a long time.

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Toddbrook Reservoir Dam overflowing during the heavy rain

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Toddbrook Reservoir starts to break apart under the strain

Huge numbers of people were involved in working together to avert this crisis, and the whole community says an enormous thank you to each one of them. We know the names of those who led the different teams that worked unstintingly to achieve this, but, there are also countless unsung heroes, who responded to the potential disaster in any way they could. This may have been by bringing food and drink to particular centres, or making sure that the elderly and vulnerable were looked after. Ensuring that they had food and their necessary medication was especially important when carers couldn't reach them. The response was not simply local. Many of us received numerous emails and phone calls from far and wide, offering prayers and often practical support too. It is very

humbling to realise just how much so many people cared.

The siting of the dam meant that its risk of breaching divided our community in two and it needed a considerable detour to get from one side to the other. This was a challenge for the whole community and particularly so as, during recent years, a growing sense of community has been developing. Churches Together, who have a close working relationship themselves, play an active part in promoting this and now meet twice a year with members of the Town Council to talk about ways in which we can work together to create a better community. They also actively participate in various community groups.

We thank God that our town and our whole community was saved from devastation and for all those who worked together to achieve this. But, we also pray that we can learn from this experience – recognising the immense importance and value in working together to build a strong community where all are welcomed, cared for and supported. For some people the anxiety of the danger we faced will take time to work through and as a caring community we must work together to help each other towards a healing of anxious thoughts and bad memories.”

Revd Dr Margaret Jones



The reservoir at 10% of its usual capacity to allow for repairs

Live the reality of God's Kingdom

Dear Friends,

To say we are living in a time of transition would be an understatement. As I write (in August) we don't know whether we will be leaving Brexit with an agreement or without at the end of this month; what the consequences of either option will be; whether we will still have the same Prime Minister or another; will there be a General Election; will there be another referendum on membership of the European Union and /or will Scotland have another referendum on independence?

All of which puts the time of transition in the diocese as we pray for and prepare for a new Bishop of Chester into perspective!

It is a time to take with full seriousness the call to pray for "all who are in high positions" (1 Timothy 2:2) and perhaps when we see the people of God doing that in the Old and New Testaments it is encouraging that they were often praying in times of immense transition and uncertainty. Imagine being in exile, your land taken away, your institutions giving shape to a common life destroyed, your present and future identity under threat and then hearing the voice of the prophet saying

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion "Your God reigns" (Isaiah 52:7).

Somehow in the times of greatest challenge, however much there had been huge drift away from the Lord, they still were able to hear his voice and believe it. Whatever is going to happen does not alter one fundamental reality

which is God's reign, and we have even more reason to proclaim its reality because Jesus announced its coming and arrival with him. He looked Pilate in the eye and did not flinch. His death and resurrection have brought in God's reign in a way which can never be destroyed. It is a kingdom into which all may come who are willing to put their faith in him and be shaped by his death and resurrection.

If our country is showing signs of falling apart, it is for us to echo the words of Isaiah fulfilled in Jesus and call leaders, churches, communities to Jesus' just and gentle rule, to trust him and look to his leading.

So as we pray for the diocese, pray that we may be equal to these times, that God would enable us to proclaim and live the reality of God's kingdom, whatever may be going on in the world.

With love in Christ

+Keith



CCTV to protect against vandalism

A local resident and business owner in Lymm has donated CCTV cameras to St Mary's Church after learning of reported vandalism and damage to the building.

Benches and decorative white urns situated in the porch of the church building have been damaged and people are suspected of using drugs on the site too.

Rector at St Mary's, Lymm, the Revd Beverley Jameson, has reported the suspected criminal activity to the police. She says it is regrettable that the church has had to take the step of installing CCTV cameras and prays that they will deter any further damage.

She says: "To see our church damaged and disrespected was very distressing to our congregation and many members of the wider Lymm community. We have the appropriate permissions and policies in place and the cameras are operational to record activity around the church. We will have evidence to pass onto the police should any future vandalism occur. It is regrettable that we've had to take this step and I pray that the presence of the CCTV cameras around the church will deter any further damage."

Paul Widdrington, Managing Director DSIS Solutions contacted the church and offered to provide CCTV cameras at no cost to the church.

He says: "It is sad that a mindless minority can cause these issues

anywhere, let alone a church. Let's hope the cameras deter any further vandalism."

St Mary's Lymm has severe financial challenges to maintain the church building and the church hall in the coming years, including the installation of gates to the porch. St Mary's church has always been at the heart of the community and the church building is import to people of faith and of no faith in Lymm.

Beverley says: "I cannot express highly enough, to Paul and everyone at DSIS Solution, my thanks and the thanks of everyone at St Mary's for this generous donation which will protect the church in the future. It goes to show that the wonderful community of Lymm cares and supports one another."



Grappenhall's bells ring out again

The wait is finally over for a band of bell ringers in Grappenhall who have returned to ringing after a hiatus of seven months in order to remove old bells and cast and install new ones.

The Ringing Master, Nick Thomson, says everyone is relieved that the wait is finally over. "We've been waiting seven long months for this evening. They sound brilliant and although we've been practising up at Stockton Heath in the intervening months, it's good to be back at Grappenhall again.

"I've been ringing since I was 11 and it's both mentally and physically challenging."

The challenge for the ringers has only increased as the number of bells has risen from eight to ten.

Nick says: "For a village church you'd expect six or eight but because we have an active band we thought we would like the extra two."

According to Nick, the old bells were, "getting beyond being tuned, a bit thin and tonally not too good."

The ringers have been raising money for 20 years to replace the old bells but began fundraising in earnest just two years ago. They raised a total of £25k with the money coming from various grant-giving bodies, parishioners, and individuals.

Four of the old bells, cast by a founder called Henry Baguley in 1700, will be kept and used as service bells and clock bells.

The team at Grappenhall is made up of men and women ranging in age from as young as 9 right up to 92.

Nick has rung in more than 4600 churches, of which the furthest away was Honolulu Cathedral. He says: "It's the camaraderie of it all. When we were younger we'd go away on weekends and kip down at the church hall with our sleeping bags and have cooked breakfasts and whatever. We have ringing practices in the week and you're almost always going to find a pub next door to the church. For me, ringing is a large part of my life."



Bell ringers of Grappenhall with the new tenor bell (Photo by Nick Thomson)

Water great time at C



During the hottest August Bank Holiday on record over 60 volunteers from across Chester and Liverpool Dioceses came together to serve the revellers at the Creamfields Festival. Held each year at Daresbury in the Deanery of Great Budworth the electronic music festival attracts over 70,000 people. This is the third year that there has been an official Christian presence on site. Over the course of the weekend volunteers gave out in excess of 4000 litres of water and 2,800 Jammy Dodgers! "Record temperatures meant that we saw a lot of heat exhaustion, sunburn and dehydration this year." said Jonny Masters, Diocesan Youth, Children and Families' Missioner and member of the

planning team, "We worked very hard to get water to those who needed it and were moved by how grateful people were for our help."

This year the organisers of Creamfields approached the planning team to ask them to double their presence on site and will be in discussion in the coming year to see how their presence might be further expanded in the future. Planning Team Leader Revd Jane Proudfoot reflected that, "our ecumenical team of volunteers have been brilliant! They've had incredible conversations, funny moments, moving experiences, eye-opening, heart rending, godly encounters and I know that the blessing has been mutual -

Creamfields Festival



they have been a blessing and they have received blessing from those they have helped", she continued, "There have been some really difficult things that some of our team have dealt with, they have gone the extra mile to help and care. Their faith and trust in what God has been doing through them at Creamfields is amazing!"

New volunteer Melanie said, "I was nervous and excited going but surprised myself for feeling part of the team and comfortable talking to people. It was just such a joy and privilege to work with beautifully blessed and like-minded people and with the festival goers who were just so appreciative and surprised to get free biscuits, water and kindness."

More volunteers will be needed next year and full training is given. The only requirement is that you enjoy meeting people and are a good listener. The team are grateful for the donations from churches across the diocese that enable this mission.

If you would like to donate, get involved in volunteering or to find out more, please contact the planning team at **wearethechurchatcreamfields@hotmail.com**

Follow them on Instagram
[@wearethechurch3](https://www.instagram.com/wearethechurch3)

Events

To book and view other events, visit:
www.chester.anglican.org/events



Church accessibility audit training

09 October 2019 - Warrington

This training will help you to assess how accessible your church buildings are for people with different abilities. Facilitated by Vanessa Layfield, Engagement and Inclusion Officer with support from Caroline Hilton, DAC Secretary, and Ruth Reed from the Diocese of Liverpool.



How to write a successful grant application

12 October 2019 - Warrington

You will learn and develop skills in writing strong fundraising applications, understanding what the funders are looking for, identifying grant making trusts and establishing a clear fundraising strategy.



An Introduction to the Enneagram

23 October 2019 - Frodsham

The Enneagram allows us to explore our own personality and motivations and open ourselves more fully to spiritual transformation. This practical day will introduce you to this tool and may start a personal journey of self-knowledge. No previous experience is required.



Connecting with Poetry: With John Lindley

14 November 2019 - Frodsham

A day of poetry workshops that will be stimulating, non-intimidating and fun. John Lindley is a freelance poet, songwriter and creative writing tutor. An experienced performer, he has read at Ledbury Poetry Festival and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.