

Annual report 2019 for St Lawrence Over Peover presented at the Annual Meeting on Thursday 11th April 2019

This is my first annual report as PCC secretary and as I look back over previous reports I note the repeated concern about the dwindling numbers and increasing age of our congregation. On average there are usually less than 20 worshippers on a normal Sunday. We have nevertheless maintained our pattern of worship and welcomed to Morning Prayer a new and regular attendee who is already on the reading rota.

Despite the negativity of this above observation there have been many positive events during the year which, for one of the smallest parishes in the Diocese, demonstrates remarkable resilience and innovation not least because our church building is geographically remote from the heart of the village so our challenge is to bring the church in the wider sense to the village if the villagers do not come to their Parish Church on a regular basis.

In pursuit of that aim we have successfully promoted the following

Garden Church – providing a time of quiet reflection in a beautiful garden on two occasions during the summer of 2018. Our thanks to David and Val Hytch and Vicki and Stuart Irlam for providing those opportunities.

Remembrance Sunday- to mark the centenary of the Armistice, we opted for an afternoon opportunity again of quiet reflection and prayer with silent film footage of the conflict. This attracted over 60 local people and was much appreciated for its simplicity and meaning.

Advent Windows – now in its fourth year, we meet on each Advent Sunday at 4 village locations to sing carols and look forward to the coming Christmas season.

Nine Lessons and Carols – the unavailability of the Thomas Cranmer Choir gave our home grown singers, Rosemary and Bill Moss and Sophie Hurst the opportunity to lead the singing. This was welcomed as giving our community ownership of this beautiful service and attracted more local people as a result.

Posada Trail – This is the one of the few events which unite the two parishes as the Holy Family is hosted by local families on its way to Bethlehem. It has also spawned a What's App group as a means of keeping in touch with those families.

Christmas Eve Nativity – Now in at least its 30th year we continue to attract over 300 people to church on Christmas Eve. All participants, including the donkey, had a close association with our church.

Marked the Archbishop's Week of Prayer from Ascension to Pentecost with daily prayer@Plumleys.

Attendance by some of our congregation at Bible Study with Ann Barlow.

Quinquennial report – we have made great strides to ensure that our programme of repairs is carried out and in so doing we thank Rosemary in her capacity as Churchwarden (among her many much appreciated roles) for ensuring our church is kept in good order. Under her stewardship the churchyard is greatly improved by the removal of overgrown trees. We also record our thanks to James Hardy for his generous support in facilitating urgent repairs to the roof and to Stuart and Vicki Irlam for their unstinting work in the churchyard.

In accordance with the regulations I record that the PCC has complied with the duty under s5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 and has had regard to the guidance on

safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Louise Corlett remains our designated Safeguarding Officer and there have been no issues reported to her or the PCC in this regard during the past year .We thank Louise for continuing in this role.

This last year we have also faced the new GDPR rules and regulations concerning the data we hold. We identified that data was kept for the 100 Club, Posada Trail, envelope scheme and the What's App group. Steps have been taken to ensure that people affected were contacted and given the option to remain on our lists and where they have remained they consent to receiving notifications from us.

Inevitably there have been losses and difficulties to face.

For the first time in living memory we did not hold a Summer Garden Party due to lack of stallholders and manpower. However such was the outcry that many promises of help for 2019 means that we should be back in business with a renewed team of helpers.

Further we did not lose the revenue upon which we rely but more than made up for the profit by donations(with Gift Aid) collected at the Garden Church. Profits from the Christmas Fair were improved on previous year again demonstrating the support we enjoy from the village. The 100 Club, thanks to Vicki Irlam is operating at almost full capacity and bringing in much needed funds.

A first for St.Lawrence was Helen Oldham becoming a Reader and we were all justly proud of her achievement, but the valued assistance she gave to the Vicar was however short lived when she and her husband moved away from the Parish to be nearer their family. However she continues her ministry in a new parish and we thank Jane for all she did to train Helen. We also said farewell to our Reader Emeritus, Brian Haslam, now unable to make the journey from his home. Their contribution to our worship is missed by us all, for which we thank them.

We battle on with the challenging issue over the future of the Village Hall and what that means to the village life.

With regret , the lack of proper facilities, resources and support has meant we can no longer host Messy Church in Over Peover .We therefore have no regular provision for families at present.

So as we face 2019 with our Vicar's three month sabbatical, we must do so with the resolve to continue to bring our church into the heart of the community.

After a break of three years we are again hosting a Cherish Day in June 2019 and our guest speaker is the inspirational Diocesan Missioner, Lyn Weston. May she indeed inspire us to meet the challenges we face.

Finally sincere thanks to Jane our Vicar, supported by her family, in leading us in all our endeavours. It is now our turn to support and pray for her in her sabbatical.

Heather Jobling

PCC Secretary

April 2019