

Warden's Report 1st October 2020

I wonder how many times in the history of St Mary's Church, the Annual General Meeting has been postponed, and for as long as 6 months?

The Corona Virus epidemic has prevented us from doing so many things that we just took for granted. Who would have believed it last year if we had been told the church would be closed for all services, even quiet prayer, and closed to any visitors at all. Yet here we are tonight, in the church for our meeting. And we have had three services, the first on the 9th August, and the church has been open twice a week.

The word zoom has taken on a whole new meaning. We have had meetings by 'Zoom' and choir rehearsals and Evensong. Thank you Jerry and others for making this possible.

Thanks to John for his weekly reflections, and those who have read the stories, and especially to Phillipa for filming each week and then uploading to YouTube for those of us in lockdown to enjoy.

A huge thank you to Val and Gill who have stepped down from the fund raising committee. They have done so much to help raise much needed funds; from Christmas fayres and cream teas, a fashion show and an art exhibition as well as the very enjoyable ladies lunches. All who were there will always remember the dynamic duo's finale for the 'Sweet Music' concert. Unforgettable!

Sadly since Co-vid the usual fund raising activities, in particular the Plant Fayre had to be cancelled. John and Celia Hall were still able to sell their reknowned tomato plants at their gate, and raised a marvellous £500. But other planned events could not take place.

It will not have escaped your notice that the building of the new facilities has commenced this week. Hooray I hear you say! A lot of water has passed under the bridge since the first plans for new facilities.

Having gained all the planning permissions and approvals needed, we applied for grants. We were lucky to be awarded some but it soon became apparent there was going to be a shortfall in the amount needed. With Gill's help, letters were sent round asking for donations. I will always be extremely thankful for the generous and kind response we received. At last we could go ahead.

I would like to say we have great confidence in the architect, Adrian Ringrose. Gill is project manager, and is doing a great job chasing those who need to be chased, and generally dealing with any points that arise. We have encountered so many hurdles along the way to get to where we are today, and I am sure there may be yet more to come but for the time being it's full steam ahead!

Julia Turner