

View from the pew

Colin Bird

As always at All Saints, we had a very busy Christmas period with many school and local organisations' carol, Christingle and thanksgiving services. We had over 7,000 people attending church, which gives an indication as to just how much work is required.

Thanks are due to Jo and the Ministry Team, Martin, the Choir and Organists, Vergers, Sidespeople and helpers who prepared and set up the church for the flowers and candles that were used for a number of the services. I hope most of you, if not all, have got some respite during the quieter period in January.

The agenda for the PCC meeting on 22nd January has been circulated, and the meeting was held as this magazine went to press. The major items for discussion include the Social programme for 2018 (see list of dates on page 2) and the fabric of the church. In addition, the PCC reviews its own effectiveness at this time of year.

By the time you read this, our annual January Jolly will have lifted the spirits and made us forget the current rather dank and dismal weather! We have booked a Quiz Night on 17th March and expect the Easter Journey to take place between 19th and 22nd March, Good Friday this year being on 30th March.

On Fabric matters, we are concerned at the deterioration in the fabric of the alabaster Reredos, which is 100 years old this year, and are seeking expert advice on what we should do to arrest this.

In addition the trustees of the Memorial Fund have agreed to meet the cost of roof alarms which would enable us to obtain full insurance for the metal roofs. Hopefully this work can be completed before Easter.

Finally we have had a request from the Bell Ringing Master to approach suitable workshops to have a look at the bell

bearings and pulleys. The bell bearings are over 100 years old and may have to be replaced and all the pulleys need attention. Funding repairs will be a challenge!

On the financial front, I am pleased that our preliminary financial results for 2017 are that we broke even overall.

The Birthday Appeal, launched at our Patronal festival brought in over £6,500 plus Gift Aid, the result of the Bazaar was excellent and the St John's Hall results were good enough for them to donate an extra £1,000 at the end of the year.

In addition collections for the Christmas services were very good, especially from the Crib service and the Simon Balle School's services, which together brought in over £1,100 for the church. Together these covered the budgeted deficit for 2017 which is very good news.

Our problem is to make this happen every year without having to launch desperate appeals to get us financially through the year!

Of course our Fabric Fund, at £13,000 and Organ Fund, at £8,000 remain woefully short of the ideal given the challenges of keeping our fabric and organ in good condition.

The main strategic priority for All Saints is to create long-term sustainability enabling us to concentrate on the mission of the Church.

In previous articles, I have outlined what we are doing to seek out alternative options for us going forward and we hope to progress consultations with a group from HeartEdge in the spring.

We need to be able to start wide discussions this year on the way forward for All Saints.

Yours in Christ
Colin Bird