

Covid-19

Nothing to report – hallelujah!

Friends of St Johns Church

- 20 August, we held our annual BBQ – this year’s theme was “Medieval”! Our campaign poster was again drawn by local artist, Joan Darlington, for whom we are extremely grateful. This was another well attended event (the weather was glorious). Our grateful thanks to all who helped out, particularly those who entertained us, ie the Old Recs, (our resident band, almost!), Lynne Pearce. We are holding another Medieval event this August (12th).
- 24 September, we had our annual Ride and Stride Event. Ray cycled between the six parishes and raised £238, which 50% goes to Shropshire Historic Churches Trust and 50% to St John the Baptist church.
- 29 October, we held our first Murder Mystery evening. With fantastic character acting from our local community, the evening was a great success raising £380. As it was such a great night, we hope to run another in October 2023.

Toilet and Kitchen

- With rising prices as a result of the “cost of living crisis”, it was apparent that the funding that we secured thus far was not going to be sufficient to install the toilet and kitchen. Therefore, on 22 July, we sent another grant application to Shropshire Historic Churches Trust (SHCT). On 27 January 2023, we received a grant of £7000.
- 22 August, we met with Simon Smith (Conservation Architect) & Stewart Chapman (representative for the contractor, Cornerstone) for the kick off meeting for the toilet and drainage installation only to find out that a percolation test (for drainage purposes) was required to satisfy Environment Agency regulations. We were told that this would lead to a delay of approximately 3 x weeks from our proposed installation date of 12 September. Unfortunately, this delay lasted 8 months!
- 6 September, a test hole was dug in the churchyard by Cornerstone to test drainage for the Environment Agency. A scull was found while digging. After discussion with Reverend Helen Morby, she wrote to Archdeacon Paul Thomas, who agreed we could reinter, with a blessing by Helen.
- 2 December, we were asked to dig a 2nd percolation test hole for the Environment Agency.
- 15 March, the PCC convened an emergency meeting to discuss the latest costings for the installation of the toilet/kitchen. The result of the findings from the Environment Agency meant that drainage solution had to be extended to 19meters (from 10m) which meant that the costs of the contractor (Cornerstone) had increased considerably. Even with the grant of £7000 provided by SHCT on 27 January, there was insufficient funds from the Friends fundraising to enable the installation to go ahead without using some of the reserves from the Parochial Church Council. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that we would proceed with the installation of the toilet (and the plumbing work required in the vestry which will become the kitchen). The remainder of the kitchen installation would proceed when funds allowed.

Report for Annual Waters Upton Parish Council Meeting – year ending 25 April 2023

from St John the Baptist Church, Great Bolas (Bolas Magna), Telford TF6 6PQ

Other

- 4 October, our Safeguarding Co-ordinator stepped down from the Church Council. The vacancy is currently unfilled
- 2 November, we were awarded a Gold Certificate and a Nature Friendly award in the Churchyard Awards scheme
- 27 November, we found out that Pat Jones, our benefice Administrator and long-time supporter of our churches (particularly St Lawrence in Preston Upon the Weald Moors) died in a road incident. Her funeral service took place at St Peters Church, Edgmond on 22 December.
- 18 December, we held our Carol Service with celebration for winning Gold Certificate and Nature Friendly at the Churchyard awards ceremony
- 31 March, a presentation was given by the Edmond Wildlife Group on how we may be able to set one up in Great Bolas
- 7 April, our Walk of Witness from St Michaels in Waters Upton to St John the Baptist in Great Bolas, joining up with our coffee morning.

Maintenance

A number of maintenance jobs occurred throughout the year, namely:

- 1 May, internal chancel east wall plastering completed by Paul Beardmore
- 8 July, the border that meets Jan and Iain woods garden was weeded and planted 10 crocosmia plants and 5 red robin bushes.
- 12 July, Paul Beardmore on site replacing 4 of the stones in the boundary wall opposite Heritage House
- On 16 November, we applied to Lichfield Diocese for a heating grant. We asked for £1500, but were given £2000 on 8 December
- 21 November, we replaced the 2 x rotting posts on the notice board by the metal gate and repositioned/lowered the Notice Board to make it easier to read.
- 7 December, we cleaned the chancel in preparation for the heating and lighting installation on 12 Dec. Painted the replastered part of the wall above the altar on the top left-hand side.
- On 16 December, the chancel heating and lighting installation was completed this week by GEC Electricals (Matt Cooper).

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- 23 January, 3 x wooden window ledges were repaired
- 25 January, we replaced the cables and 3-pin plugs on all pipe heaters (as they would have failed a PAT test due to the lack of plastic sheaths on the live and neutral pins).
- 13 and 14 February, scaffolding was installed to help with access to the Nave roof to repair the kneeler & coping stones on the south east corner of the nave. The work was completed on 2 March.
- 1 and 2 March, GEC Electricals (Matt Cooper) completed our annual PAT testing and 5 yearly condition report. Some minor suggestions, but nothing major that requires fixing.
- 6 March, the right-hand door into the Nave was repaired so that it no longer sticks
- 16 March, we removed the holly bush near the main iron lych gate
- 15 March, a formal application for fitting a handrail up the staircase in the tower was submitted to the Lichfield Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

Finally....

It may sound repetitive, but we are eternally grateful for the hard work of our clergy and lay-readers, in particular, Revd Helen Morby, and especially Revd Dave Allport and Simon Harris who have managed to keep our church open for Sunday services. It is a testimony to the dedication of the individuals mentioned above that we have been able to do so. Also, I should mention my fellow Churchwarden, Jill Maddocks, who does so much behind the scenes, without whom our church wouldn't be as welcoming as it is.

I would also like to thank everyone who helps us make our church a wonderful place to visit – there are a number of people who always help out, with coffee mornings (still great cakes!), keeping our church open, doing odd jobs that no-one notices!, our little History Group who have masses of information on our descendants (most of which is now available electronically from our Parish Registers), those who keep the church clean and those who look after the churchyard.

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to you all.

Ray Hughes 24 April 2023