

## **Report for Debenham Parish Council**

Our church relies on a large number of people to keep it witnessing and to provide a place of peace and calm within the village, as well as a venue for weddings, baptisms and funerals. To name all these willing helpers would prolong this report but, though we are fortunate in having so many, they are thinly spread. It follows therefore that we could always do with more.

You may be aware that we have been trying to improve the storage facilities in the Church so that there are places to put all of the flower arranging paraphernalia, leaflets, service sheets, cleaning materials etc. and to improve the area around the font and the children's area. We have had a few delays that have meant this has not even started, let alone been completed. We are currently awaiting clarification from the Diocesan Advisory Committee on the type of scheme for which they would grant a faculty. We also plan to improve the area for distribution of books and leaflets at the beginning of services. We hope that in 2013 we can report on the completion of this project that will be funded largely through a legacy from Mim Sparrow.

The church floodlighting caused problems in 2012 through ingress of water into the junction boxes and conduits. This has been repaired and we have recently heard that the Parish Council have agreed to pay half of the cost; our thanks to them. Guttering has also been replaced on parts of the church. We have a new path to the rear door of Dove Cottage that will provide disabled access to the new toilet facilities.

There were a few new ventures this year. We held a quiz evening for church funds that was well attended. This was arranged by John and Mary Avery. Fifty-six people took part in Lesley Grant-Adamson's Christmas Literary Quiz. These supplemented our income from our regular bazaar and soup lunches. Our quota continues to increase and we could not pay this by relying on regular giving in church collections and via the envelope and standing order schemes.

Small beginnings but it is encouraging to note that a few young people are attending the Upper Room Club on the third Sunday of every month and the NYT Group (Not Yet Teenagers) meets every Tuesday evening. Who knows what may grow out of these activities.

A highlight after Christmas was the Epiphany Carol Service that brought together many sections of the community in an uplifting act of worship. We also had a Lenten choir contributing to our worship. All signs that our church is moving forward. We are always on the lookout for new ideas.

Once again we express our thanks to The Friends of St Mary's for their continuing and generous support. In 2012 they funded the cleaning of the chancel windows.

Sadly 2012 saw the Choir reduced to just Audrey and Joan. We thank Joan Read, who has joined last year's retiree, Vera, in the congregation and Eva for their long service and Joan and Audrey for still being there each week. Thank you also to Jean, our dedicated organist, who continues to support our worship.

We could not finish without thanking Patrick who works tirelessly among us, visiting, encouraging, organising and trying to make sure that nobody is forgotten as well as leading most of our services. We are very lucky to have such a thoughtful priest. We thank also the Ministry Team, Penny, Robin, Veda and Mark that voluntarily gives so much time to support him in this work.

### **Church Attendance**

We have recorded the celebration of 1 Wedding, 8 Baptisms and 10 Funerals during this current

year. Attendance at our Sunday services remains at around 45 on most Sundays. Festival Services were all well attended, particularly at Christmas & Easter. Benefice Services have averaged 45+ in the congregation and Wednesday Morning Communion have been attended by, on average, 6 worshippers.

The number on the electoral roll was 51.

#### Social Affairs Group

The Group meets most months to enjoy fellowship through music, prayer, bible study and discussion. We continue to support Christian Aid, The Children's Society, Church Action on Poverty, Samaritan's Purse, The Mothers Union and the Debenham Food Bank.

#### Friends In Deed

There are 11 regular members of Friends in Deed who, with the assistance of a few adults and their friends, organise fund-raising events in aid of their chosen charities throughout the year. The events organised in 2012 included Arts and Craft Activity Afternoons, Coffee Mornings, a Sponsored Virtual Cycle Ride to the Olympic Stadium and back, a Harvest Supper and activities at the village Christmas Shopping Event. The events were well supported by the community and members of the church. At the Epiphany Carol Service we were able to present a cheque for £2143.30 to Patrick for the charity Ubaka U Rwanda that supports street children.