

Hatley St George Church

2019 / 2020 annual report

This is my second report to Hatley parish Council Annual Meeting, what a lot has happened since last year!

One thing that hasn't is that, as I explained then, I am currently designated 'Priest in Charge' pending possible future arrangements linking with the Gransdens group. Things seem to have moved on however, in that links with the Gransdens are now not seen as important in any sense that affects reorganisation, and I am expecting to be made Rector of the parishes once the present crisis gives people time to think about such minor matters – it makes no real difference.

This year has been positive in many ways for me with the Hatley connection. My explanation of funding and responsibilities seems to have been helpful, I won't repeat it, but can send again to anyone who might be thinking that either:

- Gamlingay is somehow 'bleeding' resources from the Hatleys churches (the reality is the other way round if we were to be counting).

or

- The Church of England has plenty of money which the local churches can access for work to buildings and paying for clergy. Again the opposite is true, local churches pay towards their clergy via a share system which means some pay over the odds and some under – we as a Benefice with Everton pay just slightly under.

Last year I explained how I was looking for people to work with, and how enormously grateful I was to those who had already begun to get to know me and were being so supportive. This year I thank those same people and some others for their continuing help and support. Christians, people of different faith and those with none, all those who care about the heritage of our communities have been most welcome as fellow-workers – THANK YOU.

This year in the Hatleys we have again:

- Celebrated memorial times and the great Christian festival of Christmas in Hatley St George church with well-attended services (considering the size of the communities).
- Worked together as a Benefice in the completely changed face of things with coronavirus lockdown through Lent and Easter. Celebrations have taken place in homes via Zoom and shared written material is available – if you would like and have not received it, please ask: gamlingaystmprayer@gmail.com.
- The regular communion services (usually twice a month) both Book of Common Prayer pattern and the newer Common Worship continued until our churches were closed.
- Enjoyed community time at Coffee Morning – I couldn't get to all of them while they were still functioning, and look forward to when they may be resumed.
- Set up a Task Group to work on a project to do urgent work on the (still open) church at Hatley St George. The architect visited back in November. Great thanks to Micky and the others who have joined this group and helped get things done. The asbestos in the organ blower chamber has been made safe at reasonable cost, we are approaching the electricity suppliers to see if we can upgrade the supply to the church, a full overhaul of the drainage system for the church, which is not working well at the moment is in planning, and enquiries are being made towards heritage work on the shields in the church.
- Visited St Denis' churchyard again on more than one occasion and planned further conservation work there.
- Established a Benefice newsletter since Easter which we hope to maintain beyond the current pandemic crisis.

To do:

- Take stock of plans for Hatley St George church in the light of the coronavirus pandemic and the change to funding schemes brought about by the crisis.
- Review our worship patterns across the Benefice in the light of what we have learned as 'virtual church' during the crisis.
- Improve further our environmental responsibilities (this is work across the Benefice churches) in conserving wildlife – churchyards are special habitats.

Last year I wrote that the great resource is people, their time and interests. Thank you those who have joined with me in furthering the interests of these communities from a church perspective.

If you want to be involved and are not yet, especially if you can see a way to help with the 'to do' list, please get in touch! Anything you are good at and can offer could be more useful than you think.

Hilary Young
Priest in Charge
May 2020