

Christ Church, Bradford on Avon

Annual Report 2022-2023

It has been a positive year for Christ Church and encouraging that attendance continues to increase year on year and we would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome those new to the church, who bring their talents and interests and are now an integral part of the Christ Church family.

In May 2022 we celebrated the late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee with a mini fête which included the now famous 'Teddy Zip Wire' (hopefully the teddies all recovered quickly) and the planting of a native Rowan tree as part of the queen's 'Green Canopy' by Michelle Donelan our MP.

Sadly, in September, the Queen died and the church was open with candles and a book of condolence which was used by many who wanted to record their prayers, their memories and their thanks to the late Queen.

Christmas services were well attended, the Nativity service was resumed and attended by nearly 200 adults and children.

'Forest Church' continues to be popular and well attended by families from across the benefice, whether meeting in one of our churchyards for activities and worship on the open grass or an informative walk with stops for reflection and prayer. Christ Church has been actively involved with the holiday activities for families across the benefice that have been organised by Zoe, our 'Children and Families Worker', which have all been very popular, including those held in The Mount Pleasant Centre.

'The Ark' continues to be very popular and now regularly exceeds 20 young children and their parents or carers. It is also good to be able to report that 'Open the Book' has now resumed for both Key Stages 1 and 2 in Christ Church Primary School.

Apart from a few weeks just prior to Christmas when we had to close for safeguarding reasons, Christ Church has continued to be open for visitors and private prayer daily from 10:00am to 4:00pm each day thanks a team of willing volunteers to open and lock the church each day, turning on welcoming lights and music.

We are also pleased to report that the Wednesday morning Coffee Pop-In continues to meet offering a warm space to meet friends, chat, and perhaps to knit for charity if so inclined. Numbers remain steady and regularly include a visitor from Bristol who comes to Bradford-on-Avon once a month by train.

Our team of Friday gardeners has a new member and continue to tend the churchyard each week, weather permitting, which often presents an opportunity to engage with those using the busy footpath.

The south porch continues to be decorated with a theme appropriate to the season and world affairs and according to feedback received is much appreciated.

Fabric

Repairs identified in the 2020 Quinquennial Inspection have continued: the damaged pinnacle to the south-west corner of the tower has been made safe pending a full repair under the auspices of the 'Discover Christ Church!' project.

The blocked downpipe to the north west of the nave has been cleared and all hoppers and downpipes have been redecorated, damaged leadwork has been replaced and damaged stonework over the vestry cut out pending replacement when the new stone becomes available.

British Gas cancelled all commercial maintenance contracts early in 2022 with one more service due on our boiler which meant that we had to find another contractor before the winter set in, however I am pleased to report that the heating has largely been very successful following the installation of a new pump, the new boiler maintaining an acceptable temperature - providing a certain somebody remembers to set the timer! Indeed, appreciative comments about how warm it is have been received from members of the other parishes when benefice services are held at Christ Church.

A small leak which developed in one of the pew radiators has been fixed.

The latest news regarding the plans for community oriented facilities including kitchen and toilets is covered separately in a report from the Future for Christ Church Working Group.

In addition to the items identified in the Quinquennial Report, and as reported last year, maintenance and health and safety work is required on the bells and bell chamber door. John Sealy (Christ Church Tower Captain) is working with the Future for Christ Church Working Group to ensure that he is aware of any impact our projects may have on the tower. John is working to obtain approvals for the maintenance work he has identified which include: replacement of the bell bearings and re-bushing the clappers; adding new flooring to the bell frame and electrical safety work.

Repair to the bell chamber door and floor and the clock room floor is included in the 'Discover Christ Church!' project.

Spreading the Load

All of the teams involved in the care and functioning of Christ Church would be grateful for volunteers to help on a regular basis, so whatever your interests there is a slot for you! A list of opportunities and contact numbers is available at the back of the church. Please do give some thought to where you may be able to help.

Thank You!

Our thanks must go to all those unnamed (and often unseen) people who continue to work so hard to reach out to support and enrich our community and keep Christ Church clean and welcoming. We are truly grateful to you all! It is your work behind the scenes that allows our church community to be welcoming and function effectively in so many areas. Thank you for the enthusiasm, hard work and dedication that you bring to the life of our church. Thanks to the grace of God, and with your commitment and hard work Christ Church continues to be 'a beacon at the top of the hill'.

Finally, our thanks and very best wishes must go to Revd. Ann Keating for her ten years of devoted service to Christ Church and the benefice. We wish her a happy retirement!

March 2023