

ST PETER'S CHURCH COCKFIELD - REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2017

St Peter's Cockfield continues to be a great example of stability in an uncertain political, economic and environmental world. It has been again a good steady year in terms of church attendance of 32 adults (on a "usual" Sunday as defined by the Church of England Statistics for Mission). The numbers attending Easter, Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Advent and Christmas were considerably more, with a very heartening number attending worship Christmas Eve/Christmas day. This is continuing good news in the face of the overall decline in church attendance.

A special thank you is due to the Ministry team. We are grateful that James Ashdown has joined the team during the year as a Reader. St Peter's is very fortunate that a willing group of ladies and gentlemen organise the rota for decoration, brasses, grounds & buildings maintenance etc and who work away quietly in the background. The result is wonderful and always appreciated.

The painting of the nave, south aisle and porch was completed this year, which was a major undertaking involving scaffolding and the sourcing of special paint. Once again, a willing band of amateur painters (both churchgoers and non-churchgoers) worked hard to complete the job in face of several difficulties.

A group of ladies in the Benefice under the direction of Sue Jell, designed and created banners depicting Creation which were unveiled in St Peter's just after the painting was completed. The effect was stunning and a large crowd of visitors attended to be suitably impressed

The diocese 'Growing in God' initiative has been embedded into our thinking and action throughout the year. We are mindful of the four areas that this covers: growing in numbers, growing in depth, growing in influence and growing younger.

The Church increasingly reaches out to our extended community to explain our Christian commitment not just on Sunday but every day of the week. A free entry Big Day Out was held on the 18th June on Great Green. The Rock Choir were the main draw and the assembled crowd enjoyed all the free activities laid on by volunteers in the Benefice and invited friends. The day was perhaps the hottest day of 2017 which limited attendance but those who were present enjoyed themselves hugely

Fundraising plays an important part in the year, and we are always looking for new ways in which to supplement the income that is received through regular donations. There have been some very enjoyable fund raising events this year: the Coffee morning (courtesy of David and Gillian Hodge), the Summer Lunch and the Autumn Lunch were all well supported.

The work with families and children continues: through Cockfield Primary School in the form of weekly assemblies, Open the Book, Collective Worship, the annual Holiday Club and the nativity play in the Church. Messy Church is also now firmly established with numbers steadily increasing. Members of all our Benefice Churches, plus friends from Cockfield Congregational Church, are co-ordinating or involved in different aspects of these.

We are always willing to work with village organisations, and we have once again provided worship at the Cockfield Show and worked with the Congregational Church and Cockfield Community Council in providing 'Carols on the Green'.

St Peter's is an outward looking Parish and we give money to local and national charities, both at times of extreme need and as part of our annual giving. The food bank collection container at the back of the Church, for those less fortunate in our local community, has been very well supported throughout the year.

This year we have contributed to local farming charities, Christian Aid, Global Hope, Crisis at Christmas and The Children's Society among others as well as the Cycling Normans fundraising for Suffolk Historic Churches Trust.

Our outreach programme in the Cockfield Benefice includes home groups which continue to meet for fellowship and bible study either weekly or monthly. Home groups give us all an opportunity to meet together outside Sunday worship and to get to know each other's problems and opportunities better.

Tribute should be paid also to our Churchwardens at St Peter's, Norman Kelly and Dave Smith, who work tirelessly to ensure services run smoothly and co-ordinate (and undertake) maintenance, and to Tony Box for his watching brief on the building.