

CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH 2021-2022

2021-2022 has still seen us in strange and unsettled times in regards to the impact of Covid 19

The Church has continued to adopt safe measures with the wearing of masks, hand sanitising and signage. With the easing of rules at the end of February 2021, gave us the opportunity to ease the rules of mask wearing and sing without the use of masks. The congregation has steadily been returning over the coming months and it's a pleasure to see everyone

It was lovely to have Rob Smith sworn in as a Church Warden in 2021, he has been a fabulous addition to the team, working with Stuart and Amanda

We were visited by the Assistant Rural Dean for the annual Archdeacon's inspection in September and were pleased that his report found everything to be in order

Bishop Michael joined us at our June 21 PCC meeting held over zoom and said this was a fabulous opportunity to have a conversation, to listen to each other and listen to God together. He led this session with some bible study, John Chapter 6 Verses 1-14. Bishop Michael used the session to mull over some questions as the pandemic had been a strange time with lockdown restrictions starting to ease it may not be so simple coming out of these as it was going into them. It was lovely to be able to welcome Bishop Michael to our meeting.

In the gardens we have managed to keep on top of the growth with larger shrubs and trees being tackled by professional people. The pergola in the prayer garden has been weakened by rotting posts, these will be fixed and replaced where appropriate in the coming weeks.

Mandy Kirk has done an amazing job in keeping the flower beds and low levels shrubs looking wonderful for us all to see, our thanks go to Mandy for such an amazing job and her time given. A number of volunteers have been working hard too and our thanks go to them

It has been good to see Frankie's Garden in use again, and its Annual freshen up with the laying of bark was completed just before Easter.

The hall has had a wonderful makeover with fresh paint in the hall and cloakroom, colours were chosen to be in line with the lovely stained glass window in the West of the Church. Thanks to all our "designers" who pulled these colours together, we hope the congregation is happy with the new look.

Whilst we were not able to hold choir week away in its usual fashion, we were extremely blessed to be able to host the choir in the hall for the week as they set off daily to sing at St Albans Abbey. A lot of hard work from all our volunteers, but the week was enjoyed by so many whilst still managing with the Covid 19 rules at that time. Our thanks to Aldenham school too for their accommodation of the choir for part of the time too.

In August, the new audio visual system was installed. This provides facilities for recording and live streaming services, and also for replay of visual and audio material from multiple sources. Thanks to Stuart Richardson for all his research, no mean feat, and his continued support in training others to use the sound desk

Whilst December 2021 was still an uncertain time, the Christmas Tree Festival was able to go ahead. It maybe not have been have busy as usual, but we managed to still get 60 trees and

the response from the community was very heart warming. A huge thanks to all volunteers and participants, your commitment was greatly appreciated.

The Warden team would like to thank everyone who has supported St Francis church throughout the year in whatever way, knowing this has been yet another challenging time for us all and we look forward to a more positive year ahead.

We are blessed to have people who put so much love and effort into our church and who make it the wonderful community it is. Thank You!

Safeguarding report for 2022 APCM

St Francis Church endeavours to keep everyone, children and adults, safe and to comply with all relevant laws. The safeguarding group supports the PCC and all the people of St Francis in trying to do this.

The parish is, in turn, supported by the diocesan safeguarding team and the national teams. They provide the opportunity for training and advice on policies. Some policies, processes and training courses are mandatory.

It is important that everyone in our community at St Francis understands their own responsibility and is appropriately trained. Training varies according to role, not only must people be trained but we must keep a record of this training. The Church of England have updated their training requirements and your group leader will be in touch if you are required to complete the new e-learning modules. These are available on the Church of England website for free.

In addition new volunteers for certain roles within the church must complete a 'safer recruitment' process. In some limited cases, if necessary, people need to be checked with the government's Disclosure and Barring Service.

Alison Paterson is the current Parish Safeguarding Officer, she is supported by John Butler, Tony Boon, Craig Lowes, Denise Crabb and Nikki Clare.

All our safeguarding information including important contacts are available on the Church website. Through the work of the ministry team, PCC and the safeguarding working group the PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.

Alison Paterson
Parish Safeguarding Officer

2021 Deanery Synod Report

The parish of St Francis is a member of the Welwyn Hatfield deanery, one of 20 deaneries in the diocese of St Albans. The deanery holds a synod, usually three times each year. Each church in the deanery elects representatives to attend the synod.

Because of pandemic restrictions the first meeting of 2021 was held by video conference in March. The main topic was mental health.

The May meeting, also in lockdown, considered how best to continue to seek to grow faith and the church during and following the pandemic.

The October meeting was held in person at St Francis. Unfortunately, the guest speaker had tested positive and was unable to attend. As well as the regular business, there was discussion on the forthcoming Living in Love and Faith reflections.

Deanery synod members elect the diocesan representatives to the national General Synod and elections were held in 2021. The results are on the diocesan web site. Representatives were also appointed to the Diocesan Boards of Finance and Education.

The synod is updated on the proceedings of the Diocesan Synod, the Board of Finance, the Board for Education, the General Synod, safeguarding and other matters. In particular, climate change continues to be a concern and, whilst some action has already been taken, more needs to be done to achieve the ambition of net zero.

John Butler

March 2022