

ANNUAL PCC REPORT FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL 2024

2023 started on an optimistic note. A new Group, The Friends of Stradishall Church and Community, was established following a meeting in January with the idea of increasing the support base as some people were reluctant to support the Church but were interested in restoring the heritage building and the idea of a community facility. Several fundraising events were put on by them during the year. Firstly, an Easter event in the Church and then a very successful tractor run organised by Adrian Lee which raised nearly £900. Charlie Haylock returned for one of his popular talks, this time about his coaching of Ralf Fiennes for his part in the film, The Dig. This was followed by a Barbeque and Flower Show with the theme of hobbies. Finally, the Christmas tree event was again very popular, particularly with the arrival of Father Christmas. The monies raised from these events is held by the new Group. Sadly, the Harvest lunch, which was to raise money for the Church had to be cancelled. An exhibition of art by some of the inmates at Highpoint was organised by Carol Thompson, which, although not a fundraiser was certainly something different.

The Church Architects drew up plans for the restoration of the Church including a feasibility study for adapting it to become a community hub. These were exhibited in the Church but when people realised that the total cost of the work would be in excess of £1 million enthusiasm and support dwindled quickly. It now looks likely that the Church will proceed with restoration and the community hub idea will be put on hold for the time being. Meanwhile the Church sadly continues to deteriorate, rainwater is leaking through into the Church, in particular through the south aisle roof, but also the north aisle and Chancel rooves. Steps have been taken in early 2024 to stem the south aisle problem for the moment thanks to Peter Thompson but now the Chancel roof has to have top priority.

Church services continued as before, once every 7 weeks, plus a short Remembrance service and a Carol service. As before the Church is not well attended by the inhabitants of Stradishall, most of the congregation coming from the rest of the Benefice. We were really struggling to pay our Parish Share this year and were very fortunate to receive an anonymous donation in December which enabled us to pay the full £3780. Who knows what will happen in the future.

We experienced considerable problems with our bankers, Barclays. They requested certain information, with threats to close our account if we did not supply it. Many of their questions did not apply to us and we had a number of very lengthy telephone conversations with people whose accent made it impossible to understand and who appeared to be working from home. They kept requesting information we had already supplied and it was not until February this year that I finally spoke to someone who admitted all the information had been supplied last October! Literally days of my time were wasted on this!

Jane and I are resigning from the PCC this year after more than 12 years and would like to take the opportunity to thank PCC members past and present, the Rectors over that period including of course Eve, our current Rector, and the Parish Council for their support over this period and would like to wish our successors all the best in the future.

Jane & Robert Helliwell

PCC Secretary and Treasurer