

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting from St Margarets

We've tried several new services this year at St Margarets, including breakfast services with coffee and croissants and also a lunchtime service with homemade soup and cheese etc. we are intending to keep running these services and we will be putting on another lunchtime service later in the year. It would be lovely to see more people at the breakfast service as it's a very relaxed type of service and people can either talk or not just as they please.

We have also run some very good fundraising events, a very successful auction for example and we will be running a major flower festival to celebrate St Margaret, our patronal saint, in July. We will also do some stalls in South Molton market and an afternoon tea hosted by Mary, which everyone enjoyed last year.

It's been quite a difficult year for St Margarets as we now only have one Churchwarden and so much of the paperwork and legal bits and pieces we have to do always have to be signed by a Churchwarden. I've been "out of action" for some time, first with my Mum's last illness and death, but also with my own ill health. We're extremely lucky, because we have such a strong PCC here in Stoodleigh, unlike most of the other churches in the Exe Valley Mission, and they stepped up to the challenge and sorted out quite a lot of the outstanding work. However, as I said previously, there is only so much that anyone else can do.

One thing that has had to wait is the work to the tower and the subsequent replacing of the flagpole. I've been doing all the necessary paperwork and we are awaiting a decision from the Archdeacon as to whether we can do the work under a code B permit, which will save us a lot of money. One of the things that is holding us up is the "approved builders" who are a) very slow

to reply to invitations to quote or b) don't bother to reply or quote at all! So I'm going to spread the net wider and try to get a local firm to sort out the problems, if the PCC give me permission to do that. West Access have already said that the job is beyond their capabilities, but they have said they will contact a firm in East Devon to see if they can help. We also have an ongoing problem in the general state of the church, in that quite a few repairs have been done on a relatively "quick fix for now" option, which I can totally understand, but there comes a time when you have to renew and replace instead and we are coming to that time. We need to "future proof" the church so that it can stand for quite a few years yet!

Our future plans include putting in fully accessible toilet facilities, several people have asked me if such a thing is necessary, but the fact is that facilities are expected these days and there are several vicars who would come if they were sure of having facilities. We are also looking at some different possibilities for heating that are more cost effective and more environmentally friendly. The favourite solution seems to be a plan that would involve heated cushions so you just heat the people in church and not the massive roof space. The heating system is another example of things that need updating and/or replacing in the church. I also suspect that when the electric wiring is checked we will be advised to rewire the church.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the PCC for all their hard work and support, and although it probably isn't fair to single out people, both Yvonne and Phyllis have been a great help and support to me during my recent absence from church work. Yvonne will now go through the financial situation of St Margarets.