

St Mary's Church, Brent Eleigh - Report for the Annual Parish Meeting, 2022

1. We have pleasure in presenting our Report which covers the calendar year of 2021, plus current position.
2. After a second round of Covid restrictions, we were finally able to resume services at Easter 2021, and St Marys being opened gradually every day finally to seven days a week, between 10am and 4pm, as it is now.
3. The Crib Service on Christmas Eve was a real highlight, with 45 adults and 30 children, who enjoyed being active in the Christmas story, taking up the figures for placing in the Crib. A traditional stable scene was left for visitors across the Christmas – New Year period. On 1st May 2022, an 'All Age' Family Service (without Communion) was held for the first time in some years, and was much appreciated, as were refreshments afterwards. This format will be part of the quarterly pattern of services.
4. Fabric; in time for the Crib Service as above, various cold spots around the Church were eliminated by installing electric under pew heaters as recycled from St Peters in Monks Eleigh. Following advice and visit from Natural England regarding bats. St Mary's was then closed for the whole of March, with interior scaffolding almost throughout, for the installation of a complete relighting scheme, funded mainly by donations from Trusts and residents located in Suffolk, without use of 'St Mary's funds'. Opportunity was taken to upgrade the sound system, and repair the hearing loop. Our next task is the repair of the main West Window, as the leadwork has thinned, allowing rain to penetrate around the glass.
5. Fund Raising; we held a very successful 'Books & Pictures Sale' on 26th June in the Village Hall, well supported all round; a 'Crafts & Quilts' weekend on 11th/12th September, in the Church, raising much interest and visitors from across East Anglia ; and a Folksy Concert on 25th September, again fun and beneficial. On April 3rd this year, we held a 'Celebration Concert' to mark conclusion of the relighting scheme, with Yalda Davis, which brought a good audience and response. Mrs Roz Stephens at The Hall kindly came up with the idea of Christmas cards based on photos taken on a snowy day, and these proved very popular; we hope to repeat this promotion later in the year.

In 2022, we have two events planned; a talk on Saturday 21st May in the Village Hall by the recently retired 'official clockmaker to Windsor Castle' who spent 22 years touring the Royal properties tending to the hundred of clocks, as part of his career; and on 22nd October, at St Marys, a concert called 'Andrea & Friends', music, songs, and humour. We hope that residents of Brent Eleigh will come and enjoy these.

6. Churchyard; two very successful working parties were held, with an increase in numbers helping.
7. Safeguarding; Olga Lancaster is our Parish Safeguarding Officer; no issues reported. Requisite Foundation Certificates have now been gained.
8. Flowers, cleaning, and grass; in another 'sporadic' year, we thank all involved for their assistance in every way; we welcome new volunteers, especially for a new grass rota.

Michael Warner, Church Warden, and Deputy Chairman, St Mary's P C C.; 5th May 2022