

INCUMBENTS REPORT – PARISHES OF NORTH BOSMERE

The structure of our group of 8 parishes remains unchanged. However, in late December we were advised that the Proposed Reorganization was now being staffed by the Church Commissioners and the draft scheme is out to consultation. Assuming that the scheme goes ahead, at a date in 2019 yet to be confirmed, the 8 parishes should be formally constituted as a single, 8-parish legal Benefice.

Ministry Team. In September 2018 Rev Barbara Gallagher left to take up an appointment in Peterborough Diocese.

Worship. The pattern of worship remained broadly unaltered across the 8 parishes for 2018. Special services continue to attract additional interest, especially when supported by personal invitations and/ or additional publicity. The departure of Rev Barbara necessitated a review of weekly patterns of worship. Apart from Christmas, the resulting changes were introduced for 2019.

Schools. Parish clergy continue to visit both schools (Creeping St Mary and Stonham Aspal) to conduct assemblies and provide other support. Both schools hold acts of worship in their respective parish churches at least once per term whilst I, as incumbent, sit on the governing bodies of both schools

Buildings Our buildings remain an important community resource. The focus of that resource varies from village to village. For one the church is a social hub, for another a palace of quiet contemplation, for another it is the church hall which provide the hub. For all our communities the building provides, albeit at different ways, a spiritual focal point both for family stepping points for family and community activates (such as for baptisms, weddings and funerals) and for community celebrations (such as Christmas, Harvest and Remembrance). The challenge that faces us all is linking this focus for the special event with the ongoing round of worship and fellowship in a way that builds and sustains community.

On a practical basis, maintaining 8 listed medieval places of worship remains a daunting and never-ending task. Detail reports on individual buildings, as required, will be given by the church warden or other designated person on an individual parish basis. Broadly speaking our buildings are sound at present, though all require work of some sort. I would like to pay tribute to all who contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings, recognizing that many contributions of time, expertise and money come from members of the wider community who would not count themselves as regular worshippers. This is just one example of the connection between the Sunday worshipping community and the wider community of which we are a part.

Statistics Inevitable in any report I just note that in 2018, across our 8 parishes we hosted 8 baptisms, 7 weddings, and 30 funerals.

P Payne
Priest-in-Charge