

St Mary's Report for the Thornborough Annual Assembly

This has been a very busy year in the life of St Mary's. Our established pattern of services has continued, with two services a month, one shared with the Chapel, joint Benefice services and Festivals/Celebrations. These have been very well-attended and included a summer Songs of Praise, Advent Service, Nine Lessons and Carols and Christingle among others. The church also hosted the Village Harvest Supper this year.

Financially there have been some significant challenges this year. The Lych Gate was found to be in imminent danger of collapse and required urgent repair and the ladder to the tower needed to be replaced. The total cost of the projects to the church was approximately £15000 (after applying for VAT relief etc). These are huge amounts on top of general maintenance of the church and churchyard and diocesan costs (associated with employing a vicar etc) so the PCC hope villagers will consider helping on our fundraising arm. At the moment we are small but mighty but would love more members.

Our current fundraising comprises monthly porch sales plus special events. The porch sales include local seasonal produce plus baking, combined with coffee and a social gathering. Other events include our annual quiz plus two new events – the Christmas Tree Festival and Pancake Day Races. Both the new events were well supported by the community, and we plan to repeat them.

We have also been delighted that a Bellringing team has been re-established at St Marys after several years thanks to villagers and a number of experienced local bellringers who are supporting the project.

In March we said farewell to Rev Jacqueline Dove, who has moved to a new parish in Kent. Jacqueline, and her husband Richard, have been a huge asset to the church and village and will be greatly missed. This means some new challenges for the parish as we will be without a vicar for some time; we will continue to hold services and, where possible, stick to our monthly programme. The timetable and contact details will be displayed on the church noticeboard.

Above all the churchwardens and PCC are committed to making sure that St Mary's continues to be a key part of church and village life in Thornborough.