

Church of St Lawrence, Lackford.

Annual Report

(including Churchwarden's & Churchyard Reports)

2022 was a year of growing optimism in the Lackford church community. Rev. Andy and Rev. Ali observed and settled into the routines embedded in the Lark Valley churches, identifying their strengths and weaknesses before making any changes. It didn't take long to realise that there was a lot going on, in a lot of different places and therefore people were struggling to support everything. Thus, the Christingle Service traditionally associated with the build up to Christmas was held at Candlemas, during the afternoon of 30th January, and was well supported by Lackford residents – 19 adults and 11 children.

As part of the campaign to replace the 8am. Holy Communion Service, the regular 8am. Easter Day Service at Lackford was replaced with a Maundy Thursday Eucharist Service which was well supported by the other churches in the benefice. The Pets' Service was held outdoors at the end of July, by which time we were well into a heatwave which deterred many people from venturing out of doors during the day with their animals.

The Harvest Thanksgiving Service was postponed from September to October due to the death of HM The Queen and the ensuing period of national mourning, the donations of dried and tinned goods being donated to Gatehouse Foodbank in Bury St Edmunds.

In early October the Wonder Club was 'born'; an informal act of worship including a story, questioning, craft and interactive prayers followed by tea and cake during the afternoon of the 1st Sunday of the month proved to be popular with children and adults alike and continues to attract newcomers to Lackford Church from other places in the benefice. The children who attend (with their parents) range from 18months to 14+ years; the adults range from 18 to 80+ years; there is literally something for everyone. Meanwhile the 10am Eucharist Service on the 3rd Sunday continued throughout the year with the same few in the congregation. Eventually it is hoped that parents and children who support the Wonder Club will also support the 10am. Eucharist Service.

There have been no weddings at Lackford Church this year; a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Tim Gough, a local radio personality and son of the deceased patron of Lackford Church, was held at the Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds in November following his burial in Lackford Churchyard.

The Suffolk Historic Churches Ride and Stride event took place in September and thankfully we were visited by several cyclists, making it worthwhile.

The Church building itself is looked after by a small team from the village; there are no major maintenance issues, though the mice manage to cause havoc with the organ by leaving droppings inside which cause the keys to 'stick' occasionally.

Following the imposition of the Tree Preservation Order on all the trees in the churchyard, and in consultation with various professionals with knowledge and expertise in tree maintenance, and the necessary permissions from West Suffolk Council's Tree Officer, Archdeacon David and the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Environmental Officer, the essential work necessary to ensure the safety of those who use the church and visit the churchyard, and the church building itself, was carried out in January.

The churchyard has once again been adopted by the Community Payback Team, which is a great relief for the churchwardens. The new bench is now in place, thanks to the Parish Council, and visitors to the area frequently enjoy, and comment on, the peace and tranquillity of this well-ordered space, though the rabbits continue to excavate in and around the graves despite the CPT efforts to fill in the holes.

The Church building was well used for community events during 2022; the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June, a Folk Evening in July, a community social event and Christmas mini market in December, as well as the quarterly Parish Council meetings and the weekly 'Coffee, Cake and Conversation' mornings for Lackford residents which re-started in April.

Harry Lidster (Churchwarden)

April 2023