

Thank you to all who have stayed for this meeting and thank you to all who have kindly agreed to stand for churchwardens and the PCC again along with the other PCC members who continue and those who have assured me that, at the PCC meeting following this they will continue, if requested, in their official roles.

This part of my address is the “thank you” part.

Once again Jeremy and Janet have put a lot of time and effort getting the Annual report prepared takes so thank you to them and thank you to all those who produced reports for it. Thank you also to Linda for preparing all the notices which have to precede this meeting.

With Becky having left for pastures new last March the parish has found itself with only one ordained clergyperson – a situation which has not occurred since before David Parker came as assistant priest – possibly before that. There is an inevitable increase in workload but I have been wonderfully supported by Pat and Michael who have been amazing – always willing to help bear the load and giving me and the church so much wisdom and insight. I am so grateful to them for all the work they do. Admin is probably not the most favourite of my varied jobs as vicar and it gives me such a sense of security to know that Janet and John are so “on the ball” when it comes to sorting out little and big problems that occur with the building, churchyard etc. We are blessed to have them. Being a churchwarden and working at the same time takes quite a bit of effort so thank you Julia for supporting them. And also David for the help he gives me with matters concerning archives and graves. Last year he kindly took on a big task of bringing our churchyard records up to date. When it comes to matters concerning the church – structure, decoration health and safety etc. please let them or Andrew Hughes our H&S officer know. We all should take responsibility especially when it comes to saving energy. Perhaps, if it is a small thing you can help with, you could volunteer your services!

Sadly, there are ever increasing amounts of paper work to complete and legal requirements to fulfil. Having dealt with health and safety we now have to look at data protection and the use of the information we have. Our finances have been, in one sense simplified by Jeremy but again, additional rules and regulations continue to add to his workload. But knowing Jeremy is in charge helps me to sleep at night. His meticulous attention to detail and careful review of how we are doing helps me and the PCC to make decisions and know that everything is in order. Thank you Jeremy for this and all the extra work you take on as well.

Thank you also to Linda who took over last year from Sheila as our PCC secretary. She continues to smile despite complicated PCC debates which must be a nightmare to minute. Nothing is too much trouble for her.

The PCC is supported by others who give their reports at each PCC meeting - Michael in his role as Electoral roll officer, Kate as Gift Aid secretary, Julia and Irene as deanery synod reps and Irene and Constance as CTCH reps. Thank you to them for their help.

Our work with young children continues to grow and Clare has worked tirelessly in her leadership of the mainly music team and her role as safeguarding officer. Thanks to her and the dedicated team who support mainly music. Thanks also to those who help with messy church. Both are labour intensive but I believe everyone who takes part finds it incredible rewarding.

Our worship on Sundays also requires a big team. There are those who make sure the church is clean, warm and beautifully decorated and those who wash and iron the linen and make sure the frontals etc. are changed when necessary. Thanks to Janet our sacristan, the flower group lead by Frances, the cleaning team, and Michael Constance and Lydia.

When Sunday arrives we have a team of sidespersons who welcome people, servers who prepare for the communion, someone on hand to man the sound system – all important and much valued help. Thank you to Trevlyn who doesn't just work on Sundays like the vicar(!) but is busy all week practising, preparing the hymns, training the choir as well as playing the organ. And thank you to the choir for the time you give to helping assist our worship and lead the congregational singing.

Then Pat and Michael are there preaching, leading the intercessions and ministering. Others too help with the prayers and readings and help administer the sacrament.

Afterwards, as with Thursday morning we have those who make the teas and coffees. All are a vital parts of the times we spend together worshipping God and enjoying fellowship.

I am grateful to David Pickett for all he has done to set up and maintain our website over the years and to Clare and Lydia who have organised the new website. Communication is important and thanks to those who help prepare and distribute the parish magazine, the pew notice sheet and make sure the noticeboards outside are current.

Our various groups – Bible study, Home group, Friday club, Men's society, Flower group, Craft group, Choir and Mother's Union provide interest, support and fellowship for those who attend. Thank you to all who lead them and agree to take a part in their running. And thank you to those who organise our fundraising events – the Charities Committee and those who organise the Shoebox appeal, the Christingle, the ongoing support for Wellspring and the Chelwood food bank.

I'm sure I have forgotten someone. There are so many people who willingly help out. In addition to all this huge body of work I know that this is a fellowship of people who love their neighbour, who make sure people who cannot get to church are supported, who have a social conscience and who, in the quiet of their homes pray for the work of the church.

I know I do this thank you every year but it is helpful to us all to reflect on what it takes to be the body of Christ in this place and all those who support the church in this way should feel valued and hopefully energised for the work of the coming year. There is a danger that it just becomes a back slapping exercise but I don't see drama queens who have to be gushingly thanked in order to do anything – I see humble loving service. So, let's gird our loins for another year and pray that we may not be too busy to hear the still small voice of God guiding and encouraging us. Once again, it has been a pleasure to lead you. Thank you for your kindness and support.