

# **St John the Baptist Church Aldbury**

## **Message from Ron Kennett Churchwarden**

As I am standing down as Churchwarden this time, I thought that I would like to express my appreciation for the privilege of serving in this office in recent years. There is much for us to celebrate in the life of our Church in the community and we made a short report covering the past year and presented at our Annual General Meeting. I thought it would be rather nice for it to be included here on our website for more general perception.

### **Churchwardens Report to the 2010 Annual Meeting**

As was the case last year, our Report will not be limited to fabric issues, but will embrace our Church life in general.

The year opened with focus on the Installation of the new Vicar - The Reverend Jo Wetherall, and her first service here in February. Although we appreciate the breadth of her responsibilities as Team Vicar, we were especially anxious that she could build on the ministry of Huw and Jane during their six years here. They had worked hard to win the hearts and minds of 'today's villagers' and we looked forward to this younger generation increasingly consolidating themselves in the Church. The year has seen tremendous progress in this respect and there is a sense that our new Vicar and her family are an established part of our community, both in the Church and around the village.

Another concern has been to keep on top of churchyard maintenance and, again Jo has shown strength in organising and leading working parties. We had an annual review of the churchyard trees, conducted by Colin Chambers with assistance from Jo's husband - Simon. Recommendations required by this report underpin our insurance coverage for any liabilities arising from accidental damage caused by our trees, for example as a consequence of a storm.

We have also made considerable progress in the upkeep of the church, as ever supported by the Friends of Aldbury Church. We have reviewed our experience with the sound amplification system, in conjunction with the supplier and implemented their recommendations, yielding considerable enhancement of sound quality and coverage. We also explored alternative options for our heating system maintenance and placed the new

contract with Milgas of Kings Langley. They quickly established flaws in the wiring of the control system and we now have much more effective programming options. Simon is taking a close interest in both the amplification and heating systems and also makes practical contributions wherever he can, not the least in the churchyard.

In respect of the churchyard, we are addressing the question of appropriate gravestone design and grave adornments, as required by Diocesan practices. This requires considerable sensitivity, especially in particularly tragic circumstances where idiosyncratic expressions of grief emerge. Jo's leadership in this will be most beneficial.

The anticipated incidence of burials in the graveyard requires us to look to future needs, but we are able to avoid medium-term problems by clearance of the south-west corner, which has been used for an ever-expanding spoil heap. The Parish Council is helping with financing this significant task by increasing our grant for the past year.

Early in the year, we identified the need for the Church to acquire a set of chasubles, as the existing vestments are the personal possessions of Janet Ridgway and we should not depend on clergy having their own. Gill has taken the lead of a working party which has arrived at a design and selected fabrics, in conjunction with Jo. These are kindly being produced voluntarily by one of our parishioners having appropriate experience and skills.

Some time ago, at Huw's initiative, a proposal was developed to relocate the font, the project financing being by means of a legacy. The proposal had considerable publicity through the Aldbury Outlook and by means of an exhibition in the Leeds Chapel to explain the rationale. Time has passed while the formal Faculty processes have been conducted, but the project has yet to be initiated.

The Churchwardens are, as ever, grateful for the support received by the Church from so many volunteers, for example - church councillors, sidesmen, servers, choristers, readers, intercessors, cleaners, coffee brewers, etc, etc. We know of a number of people who will be taking a break, and most of these lists will need new faces in the coming year and we look forward to hearing from all who can offer their help.

We must conclude by expressing our gratitude to both Jo and Simon and congratulate them on a successful first year's ministry.

Ron Kennett

Gill Lerigo

