

St Mary's, Wavendon Churchwardens Report 2023-4

Our churchyard clear-ups were rather intermittent last year with work being done on an ad hoc and as necessary basis. Our sincere thanks to Brian and Roger who were the stalwarts of this work. The ride on lawn mower continued to be problematic despite many attempts to fix the problems. Over the winter the decision was taken to cut our losses and purchase a new machine. We are very grateful to Townlands for a grant to cover the cost of the new lawn mower. It's been used a couple of times this spring to take the top off the grass and we're pleased to report that, so far, it is working well. A vast improvement from the frustrations of last year!

We intend to reinstate the churchyard clear-up rota this coming season. These will be held on a Saturday morning on a regular basis. Not only will they be a time to keep our churchyard under control and looking good but they will also be a time of fellowship for our congregation and community. No previous experience needed and we have plenty of tools!

The trees on the western edge of the churchyard – between the church and the rectory – are getting to quite a size. During one of the recent high winds a couple of large branches were blown down. We engaged tree experts to look at the trees and we subsequently commissioned the lopping of the top branches of the tree in the south west corner. Again our grateful thanks to Townlands in covering the cost of this essential work. We continue to monitor the state of these large trees.

The Garden of Rest to the east of the churchyard progressed disappointingly slowly during the year. This is a collaboration with MK City Council who are funding the project. All the necessary approvals are in place, the ground was levelled and prepared and a lawn is now evident. We agreed the design with the Council last year and we hope that the hard architecture will be completed this spring/summer.

We couldn't run the services or keep our lovely church building and churchyard in such good order without the help of so many friends. We are truly thankful to those who help on a regular basis at our services: welcomers, on the sound desk, readers, intercessors, musicians, refreshment providers after the service, the unseen cleaners during the week, the flower arrangers for such lovely displays and the pray-ers after the service. And those who help us with necessary odd jobs around the building and in the churchyard. And also those who give their time regularly in organising coffee mornings, language classes, concerts and quiz nights. Serving the church and others is an act of worship and we thank you one and all. If you feel called to help in practical ways around the church or at the services then please do not hesitate to speak to one of us if you are able to offer a little help.

We offer thanks to God that our congregation has grown over the year (see the Rector's report). Our welcoming and friendly atmosphere has been noted by many of our newer congregation. This has led to one or two challenges! We have printed additional service sheets, we have acquired additional hymn books (at no cost) and we are considering whether to invest in some folding chairs that can be brought out when needed. We continue to take communion as we did during Covid and in order to keep the service moving we would now ask that groups of four or five come to the table rather than family groups. We must apologise that, sometimes, we have underestimated the number of communicants which has led to a slight pause as additional wafers and wine/juice are brought forward.

Finally, but not least, our grateful thanks to Matt and Alise for everything that they do. For their leadership of services and daily inspiration; and for their leadership and pastoral care of our growing community. And, from our point of view, for all their practical guidance and their unstinting support for us both.

2023/4 has again been a year of growth in congregation numbers and we pray that, with God's guidance, we will continue to be a warm, welcoming and friendly community of worshippers. We thank the congregation for your support and fellowship over the past year; it's been a pleasure to serve you and to get to know you better as we enjoy each Sunday in fellowship together. We would both be delighted to serve you for another year as Churchwardens with the agreement and support of church members.