

## **Parish Priest's Report APCM 2022**

The last year has been very much a time of taking stock, consolidating and preparing for the future.

I announced at the last APCM that I would be retiring in June 2022 upon medical advice and so the intervening time was always going to be slightly awkward, in that I would not be likely to make any new initiatives, and instead make sure that I didn't leave total chaos behind me!

Whatever I may have been expecting was certainly not what God had planned for this parish as I have seen new areas of growth in the church in the manner of Spring bursting out in the hedgerows and gardens around us. We co-opted Rupert van de Bogarde onto the PCC and hope to confirm his appointment later in this meeting. Rupert is the Estate Manager at Pylewell House and his presence on the PCC reinforces our close relationship with the Estate.

I am delighted that Rachel Prophet responded to an advertisement in the Bridge and has since been appointed as PCC Secretary, and she is already proving to be a massive help with the administration. It is even more significant that Rachel lives in Norleywood and is very much part of this parish.

Shortly after our last APCM, Pat Mennie volunteered to return as a churchwarden and a special Parochial Meeting was held to ensure that she could be properly appointed. This was done and I am grateful to her for her support this last year.

Slightly further afield, there has been positive work being carried out to combine talents and resources across the benefices of Brockenhurst, Boldre and South Baddesley to benefit everyone and nowhere is this better exemplified by the on-going drive to appoint a children's worker to improve contacts with the junior schools in the area.

The main driver for this initiative has been our Vicar, Simon Newham, to whom I owe a tremendous amount. Simon has been constantly supportive of my ministry even after I said that I was leaving, and I am very grateful to both him and Andrew Neaum for their support since November 2020, when it was clear that I would have to step down.

I have continued to be deeply indebted to all the volunteers who help our church in their own, different, ways. First and foremost, the support given by Andy and Maureen Ward, Leo Gibb, Pat Mennie, Lynda Leen and the members of the PCC has been essential as we moved back into the church following the Covid Lockdowns. I could not have functioned without them, nor could I have managed without Gordon Wynne giving so much valuable assistance when needed.

I have very mixed feelings about stepping down but I think that the church is in good shape, with a good PCC with members covering a wide spread of the congregation and parish, headed by Simon Newham whose experience and wisdom has been such a benefit to us since his arrival. This team will surely lead the church into a period of growth and, I hope and pray, renewed vigour.

May God's blessing be upon you now and in the future.

Richard