

AGM Wardens' Report April 2021

And what a year it has been! Starting almost exactly a year ago with the announcement of the first lockdown on March 23 the AGM of last year was summarily postponed and only took place on October 4 in the form to which we have become well accustomed, blending the real in church with the virtual on zoom. It is worth recalling all the many technical changes we have had to learn and implement over this time.

Firstly with churches completely shut we recorded services and posted them on line. Then a little later we were allowed to open the church for private but socially distanced prayer so Maurice's two metre stick was a valuable tool in designating the seating arrangements. And in early Summer churches could open for organised worship and we were in the world of reserving your place for a service but the recording continued and developed into live streaming as the expertise of working with these techniques was refined.

However Summer was a bit of a false dawn as in the Autumn the pandemic took hold again and November brought a second lockdown although services could continue. An attempt was made to relax this but in vain and from January 5 we have been in a third lockdown with services continuing in the same vein. With the vaccination programme and Summer approaching there is hope but it may be quite a while before the social distance rules are removed.

But it is also worth considering what was able to continue despite all this – services have been posted right throughout the year on line, DCC meetings have been held via zoom as have regular meetings of the book club and a number of bible study classes, a virtual Fayre was a marvel of technological creativity by our vicar and made about £700, we have introduced digital methods of payment and are encouraging new ways of giving via the Parish Giving Scheme, the magazine has been produced bi-monthly as before and circulated both digitally and in hard copy, there have been Christmas and Easter events for the children, there have been community projects born of successful grant applications leading to the creation of Wellbeing in Wideopen, and other initiatives besides.

Of course some aspects of church life have been seriously affected – no activities have taken place at all in the church hall. This inevitably has had an adverse effect on all those groups which meet regularly there and the people who would find a great social opportunity in those gatherings. Also we found it difficult to say good bye properly to Father Peter Sinclair who in two years made a terrific impact on the parish and who left in November.

So a year like few others – but let us hope that the future is brighter and then perhaps sit down and consider if there is anything from this year which can guide us helpfully in the future. That might be quite interesting!