

2025 Warborough Parish Council Annual Meeting St. Laurence Church Report

Warborough Church is open every day, free to enter, and maybe you'll leave with something special! The Church is the largest Community space in Warborough and, together with St. Laurence Hall, are Community Hubs for the benefit of all in the Parish.

Rarely has the Church in Warborough been more active than now!

Throughout the last year, many *special services* have been held, including:

- School-in-Church for St. Laurence CE Primary School, for the celebration of Father's Day, Harvest, Christmas, Mothering Sunday & (this coming Friday) Easter, usually with over 100 children and 80 adults attending on each occasion (10 children per Sunday!!);
- St. Laurence Feast on Green, Associate Archdeacon Rev'd Prebendary Jane Haslam;
- Harvest Festival, followed by lunch in the Hall;
- All Saints-tide Service, to remember and give thanks for the departed;
- Remembrance Sunday Service, held at The War Memorial;
- Special services taken in our Church by the Rt. Rev'd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester, and The Venerable David Tyler, Archdeacon of Dorchester;
- Carols at Christmas, by Candlelight in Church & at the Six Bells; Walking Nativity from Pub to Church & the Crib Service brought delight to so many children - and parents;
- Choral Evensong resumed in February, rotating monthly in Eastern Cluster Churches.

The Church and Hall are *Community Hubs for Life Events* and other social activities:

- Baptisms (7) and Weddings (5) are a joy for all;
- (16 total) Funerals (7), Memorial Services (2) and Interment of Ashes (7), are a time to share the grief of the bereaved and to give thanks for the lives of the departed;
- Bell-ringing teams visited our Church 13 times, thanks to the Tower Captain, Sue Dyke;
- The Organ Club visited Church, playing both Father Willis and Abbot & Smith organs;
- The Hall continues to host Lunch Club, Village Coffee, Games afternoons, After-Church Coffee & Conversation, W&S WI, Mowers & Growers, W&S Society, Quiz nights, Meetings and Private functions.

All this would not have been possible without the commitment of so many who give freely of their time, talents and money. Too many to name, but special thanks to:

- *The Friends Committee* for making The Church Conservation Project their own, raising significant funding and being interested in every detail of the work carried out. The beautiful conservation work carried out meticulously over the last year on the large, listed Thomas Blackall Tomb by SSHC; fundraising now focuses on the Roof & Tower;
- The *Hall Group*, for managing Hall usage, fundraising and major refurbishments which now turn towards the outdoor area within the railings of the Hall;
- *Warborough Parish Council*, especially for tree & clock maintenance and Capital Project grants for the Church Building and the Hall;
- *Those individuals* who care for the Churchyard, including the War Graves.

Finally, please remember the following in your thoughts and prayers:

- Rev'd Myles for the additional energy, commitment and love he's given our Church & all in Warborough & Shillingford, especially over these last 2 1/2 years, since October 2022;
- Rev'd Caroline, for her return to full health, after taking early retirement & moving home;
- Rev'd Mel, for inspiring happiness, optimism, and hope in our Church.

Please do visit the Church and join us this Lent on Palm Sunday, Holy Week - including Services commemorating the Crucifixion on Good Friday and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Day - when the first service taken by Rev'd Mel is at 5:30am!!

Michael Watkins
Churchwarden, St. Laurence Church
3 April 2025