

## **St Sampson's church report to Golant Parish Council Meeting May 2023**

When Simon Funnell gave last year's report on St Sampson's to this meeting he ended by saying that it might well be the case that the church would still be on the way to appointing a Priest by the time of this meeting. Happily for me, that is not the case! I started at the end of January and have been appointed as Interim Priest in Charge for a period of three years (and possibly a further three after that) on a part-time basis working in this parish and St Andrew's, Tywardreath. The interim nature of the appointment means that the parishes can establish a relationship and working pattern over a period of time but which acknowledges that these things take time to settle and may need further adjustment. You will know about the hope to work with Fowey parish in due course and that is something that remains a possibility over time.

The last year has been a busy time for the churchwardens and wider team who have managed the church and all its activities with enthusiasm and dedication. I am very thankful for this as it has meant that my arrival has been made so much easier as I have simply had to transition into what is already happening and which is well established. The church building, which has been so well maintained, is open every day of the year as a place of welcome and quiet place for rest and prayer. It continues to draw people from near and far – those who are undertaking a pilgrimage along the Saints Way and also those who are looking for their ancestors among the graves in the church grounds. We are very grateful to those who are willing to take turn as keyholder so that this is possible and it is always a delight to read the comments left in the visitors' book.

We are particularly blessed to have a wide range of musical activity which enhances and supports our worship: six regular big bell ringers who ring on a Sunday morning, 19 handbell ringers (with three regular groups who practise on a Monday afternoon) and the Choir which continues to flourish, with some 20 members who rehearse on a Friday afternoon. The handbell ringers and the choir provide a wonderful embellishment to services especially at key festivals such as Christmas and Easter but also at the War Memorial for Remembrance Sunday and at services to mark various Royal events, the most recent of which was the King's Coronation. It has been good to finally return to pre-covid ways of operating, and the large attendance at the variety of Christmas and Easter services has been a wonderful reminder of the joy of gathering together to mark the different seasons.

As with everything in life we are very dependent on the commitment of volunteers who give their time and resources in so many different ways. It ensures the church remains accessible and welcoming to all those who seek us in time of need whether that is in the church building for baptisms, weddings and funerals or as a visitor to people in their homes if they are unable to get out. In particular I am always keen to meet with people who have any pastoral or spiritual matters that they would like to share and no matter if that person has never attended church as the church is here to support the whole community. One thing I have discovered about Golant since my arrival is that this is a welcoming place with a wonderful sense of community and St Sampson's church is glad to be a part of that. I look forward to meeting with more people in the coming months.

Revd Shona Hoad (Priest in Charge, St Sampson's)