

Report to Walberswick Parish Meeting 19 April 2018

Saint Andrew's Church

It has been an exciting and eventful year at St. Andrew's.

At long last the work to the Ruins was completed in the early summer and we were able to say goodbye to the Contractors and to the unsightly fencing and danger signs.

We are thrilled with the result and delighted that the project was completed at no cost to the village, or the Church. It was funded entirely by grants from Historic England and WREN, a not for profit business that uses the Landfill Community Fund.

This restoration project has now been nominated for an architect award.

On Sunday 15 July there is to be a Celebration and Blessing Service with the Bishop of Dunwich, Bishop Mike, in attendance and the whole village will be invited to come along. There will be a band, popular hymns and concluding with family picnics within the walls.

The now attractive space have been well used by the brides, 7 of them last year, for their wedding photographs and some enjoyed post ceremony drinks and canapés there.

The space has attracted those who wish to hold events within the walls. The first was a Music Concert at the end of the summer, arranged by Denis and Astrid King, which attracted nearly a hundred people. A most successful and happy occasion which raised money for the Church restoration fund for which we were most grateful.

We are now 'geared up' for future bookings.

The upkeep of a medieval Grade 1 listed building is an ongoing project and this year we can no longer put off the necessary work on the south porch. Re-roofing and alteration to water drainage and the lowering of ground adjacent to the walls is needed to prevent further internal damage and to the 16c churching benches.

Grant applications are already being pursued.

Also, a 'Friends of St Andrew's' scheme is underway to also help us raise ongoing necessary funds to undertake larger projects and maintain and improve the fabric of the Church.

We are fortunate to be able to hold services every Sunday, and the PCC have been searching for ways to attract our families and young people into the life of the Church.

This coming Sunday, the 22nd April, we are holding a short Family Service to celebrate St. George's Day (on the 23rd) and are inviting those attending to dress up as St George, his princesses and the dragon. We hope that this will be popular and that we can hold regular similar services in the future.

We owe enormous thanks to all those in the village that support us. Special thanks and huge appreciation for the Village Fete Committee who gave us half of the profits from the village fete which significantly helps us to pay our annual expenses and also to the Walberswick Common Lands Trust who donated money to assist us in the upkeep of the churchyard.

We cannot thank you enough.

Thanks also to our enthusiastic group of 'Angels' who have toiled to remove ivy from the roadside wall and the Church walls, ensuring our ancient gravestones are visible and for general tidying and maintenance tasks. There is much more work to be done.

More frequent Tower openings have been well attended and our huge thanks to Wayne Haselgrave for his duties at the top of the tower. He continues to thrill his audience, at the top and outside, with sitting legs astride the parapet!

The enhancements have certainly attracted more visitors as evidenced by the many appreciative comments in the Visitors Book. Visitors tell us they are able to stand in the Ruins and appreciate the grandness of the huge Church when it was completed in 1492.

We are so proud of our Church. The now splendid ruins and the well maintained grounds provides a fine spectacle to all those many visitors as they enter our lovely village.