

CHURCHYARD REPORT 2021

A new Mowing rota had been drawn up and circulated to the regular mowing team. Dates for Work Parties had been sorted and were ready to roll, our first work party date was to be 24th March 2020. Then COVID hit and on 23rd March 2020 we were locked down to halt the spread of the virus and everything stopped for months. Whilst we could not mow or garden in the churchyard the wild flowers did their bit and the churchyard blossomed as never before albeit a little unkempt for some. It inspired us to try to establish a wild flower meadow in an area at the back of the churchyard so we could have our wild and flowery area and keep other, more used areas, trim.

Luckily, once we could get back mowing and gardening it seemed as if in no time the churchyard was looking its well kept self again. Our thanks go to the regular team of mowers and strimmers who work tirelessly to keep the grass short in some areas so they are accessible and you can see where you are walking safely.

Our mowing team remains at the same strength of 8 individuals though one came off the rota and we gained a new volunteer. More mowers are always welcome, so if you would like to join the rota please get in touch. We also have volunteers who strim those areas we cannot mow.

Our regular maintenance work party groups were eventually able to meet up in the summer and autumn of 2020 and we switched meeting days between Tuesdays and Fridays so more individuals could join us. We tackled a number of jobs in this short space of time but unfortunately tea and cake breaks were not possible and the Church remained shut whilst we worked as we kept within the COVID government guidelines.

In the Summer of 2020 we focused on a few main tasks:

For safety, Derek cut back branches from the 2 dead cherries at the front of the church at the beginning of the Summer and our neighbours, the Bickertons, not only helped us to remove a lot of the wood to their wood pile but also offered to remove the trees which they very kindly did during the year. One of the yew trees also dropped a branch to the ground just by the tool shed making it tricky and dangerous to gain access. Jason kindly cut this branch down for us.

Sheila and Lawrie also moved the large ton bag of sand by the small gate opening to the back end of the churchyard, a feat in itself, but this was also done on one of the hottest days of last Summer. Thank you both for helping with this task.

Jason has also helped us with some of the more physical jobs that have been required to keep the churchyard tidy and safe, building us a compost container and removing small saplings from the base of the wall. Thank you Jason for all you have managed to do in 2020.

Norman has also been hard at work since late Summer revealing and cleaning up the memorials in the Ashes area that have gradually been buried over the years. This is an ongoing job into 2021 but has really smartened up the area and bought back many a memory of those whose ashes are interred here. Many compliments have been received about this area. Thank you Norman for all the hard work you put in during the Winter of 2020 into 2021.

We have also had anonymous individuals who have done much work down in the churchyard over the Winter. Our thanks go to these individuals too with the hope that they will join our work parties in 2021 so we can thank them in person.

Our thanks also go to everyone who has joined the work parties when we could go ahead in 2020 helping with general maintenance and in particular the clearing of the ground where we intend our

flower meadow to be shown. We look forward to meeting up again to continue this work. Rachel and I made a start in the Autumn to sow some seed into patches in the hope we could have some flowers in 2021 and we will be sowing more seed for this year shortly.

New dates for the work parties in the churchyard have been published for 2021 and will be advertised in our weekly newsletter. The work parties will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and the 4th Friday from 1.30pm to 4.00pm. Our first work party is set for Tuesday 13th April 2021.

We look forward to maintaining the churchyard through 2021 making it a peaceful and well cared for space for those seeking a retreat from the difficulties we have all faced in 2020/2021.

Linda & Rachel
March 2021

BELL RINGERS REPORT

The last time the bells were rung was Sunday 8th March 2020 for the morning Service. All six were rung, unbeknown to us all then it would be the last time dad (Ivan) would ring.

On Wednesday 18th March 2020 with the help of Linda I rang all six bells down as the church and tower were due to have extensive repair work carried out.

Then we went into lockdown, where we have stayed mainly since. There was a brief time when the lockdown was lifted and ringing could commence, but we were still unable to ring due to the repairs.

Also because of the work I have been unable to even toll the tenor bell for funerals. I have regular emails from the head of the bell-ringing association with updates about when church bells can be rung again. This is more than likely to be June when hopefully the country opens up again fully?

Some of the big churches with very big belfries and bell ropes that are not close together will be able to open up maybe before some of the small churches. I will wait for guidance on this.

Rachel