

## **2025 Parish Council AGM – Seend Church summary report for year 2024**

The highpoint of the Wellsprings Benefice (WSB) events of January 2024 was the Licensing of Revd Gerry Lynch as our new Wellsprings Benefice Rector. This took place on the evening of Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> at St Mary's, Potterne and was led by Bishop Andrew of Ramsbury. It was well attended by a cross section of parishioners and clergy from the Benefice and other Deanery parishes.

During the year congregation numbers at Holy Cross averaged 18 – 25 at 11am services and 6 – 14 at early and evening services. Revd Gerry ensured he led at least one service a month in Seend, whilst spreading his ministry around all of the five Wellsprings Benefice parishes. Revd Caroline continued to successfully lead services around the WSB in her role as Associate Priest. We were still fortunate to have the services of retired priests, Revd Maureen Allchin and Revd Jane Knowles. Both retired priests celebrated 30 years of being Priesthood this year – something of a landmark for female clergy nationally in 2024. Contact details for the clergy and the administrator are available in the Spotlight.

Holy Cross held five Baptismal services, only one was within the service time which was an adult baptism prior to their wedding later the same month. There were four weddings this year. The church family were much saddened by the sudden death of Dr Simon Phillips on 14<sup>th</sup> February, his service of thanksgiving was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March and was very well attended. Pam Muller, one time Lay Reader within this parish, passed away in her Melksham home and was interred with her husband on 25<sup>th</sup> February within our churchyard. There were three other ashes burials including Anne Salter's in July. There was a £100 donation from her family to go to a local childrens' group, it was decided that it should go to Bowerhill Scout group, Cubs and Beavers, as Anne had a strong connection with the Girl Guides. A presentation service was organised with their representatives and Revd Caroline and this took place on Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup> during the service of Holy Communion.

The church connection with Seend School remains strong with fortnightly attendance by the Bible Storytellers, alternating with clergy led assemblies. The children have attended Easter, Harvest, Christingle and Leavers services throughout the year as well as other church led events.

Fundraising remains a vital constituent of our financial survival as can be seen in the figures that follow.

We have another challenging year for Holy Cross. The main points to note are shown below. We were able to pay our Parish Share (annual payments made to Salisbury Diocese to pay for clergy and training etc.) in full and just about maintain our balance from last year. We have been able to make all necessary repairs when required but have not been able to reduce the balance on the loan this year. However, the Spotlight and Church funds are in a healthy position and remain robust.

### **Receipts for the year 2024 totalled £45,290 (£54,865). (numbers in brackets = 2023 figs)**

Main points to note are:

1. Regular giving through Gift Aid amounted to: £15,615 (£14,623).
2. Grants and Donations received amounted to: £8,705 (£6,200), including: Friends of Seend Church, and legacies of £7,000.
3. Receipts from Activities generating funds – a total of £6,099 (£9,438) gross including: Summer Concert, Seend Cleve Open Gardens, Fete Teas.
4. Spotlight – Total receipts amounted to £3,493 (£4,716) including Donations: £517 (£1,535) and Advertising revenue: £2,976 (£3106).
5. Income from investments: £1145 (£896).

### **Payments for the year 2024 totaled £44,922 (£61,354).**

The following significant items are included:

1. The 2022 Diocesan Share: £23,302 (£22,845) was paid in full.
2. Maintenance & minor Repairs: £1,320.
3. Insurance costs: £4,976 (£4,595).
4. Upkeep of churchyard: £4,718 (£3,876).
5. Spotlight – Expenditure on Production: £3,504 (£2,671).
6. Costs of Fund raising: £1007 (£377).
7. Salisbury Diocese Board of Finance Loan. **Balance outstanding: £25,269.67**, including interest.

#### **In Summary:**

**In 2024 the total Payments including Parish Share for the Holy Cross Church, Seend, amounted to £44,922 (£61,354). This equates to:**

**£864 (£1180) per week or £124 (£168) per day.**

The Queens Green Canopy trees, donated to villagers by the Parish Council last year, were transplanted in May, they had been grown on in pots in the Churchwarden's garden. A flowering cherry to the west of the main path, a rowan to the south of the tower and a silver birch to be planted in the unadopted ground to the south as and when a suitable place is found.

The year drew to a close with the familiar and popular Christmas services, the Carol Service when 140 attended (down 60 on last year) – led by Revd Gerry, there were 43 at the Midnight Christmas Eve Communion service – led by Revd Caroline and 47 for the Festal Eucharist on Christmas morning – led by Revd Maureen.

The last words go to our Rector:-

*After two generations when religion was easy to dismiss as something disappearing into the past, we have now entered a great bend in the road culturally, across the Western world. Young men, in particular, are clearly casting around for answers to questions that the secular establishment would rather weren't even asked. Some of the consequences of all that are worrying, but crises are times of opportunity as well as threat. In the springtime we realise that growth comes in its God-given season, when the hard-work we have put in in colder and less abundant times finally begins to bear fruit. May God grant us a springtime of the church here in Seend.*

**The Rev'd Gerry Lynch**

Here endeth the Church report.



Len Murray (Church Warden, Church of the Holy Cross, Seend)