

## Kings Norton Team Ministry

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# Annual Report for 2010

2010 was another year of changes, some long prayed, hoped and planned – and some unexpected.

### **Growth in Ministry**

Church is all of us together in Christ, not the clergy. But unless your clergy get our act together as a Team, all suffer. We welcomed John and prepared to say farewell to Rebecca, thankful for their rich friendship, faith and wisdom. We now work collegially across the parish, rather than dividing the parish's work into separate self-contained bits. We each take responsibility for areas of parish work, but always within the Team as we all continue to learn and grow together in **Enriching Ministry and Mission** within the diocesan Transforming Church programme and our Mission Statement. God calls us all to be "members of one another". As clergy, we must exemplify what that means so that all learn and grow. Please pray that we do!

### **We have been working through good change – to prepare us for more**

Deb Buckley has moved to ordained service in Balsall Heath, Jess Boulton, our Lay Pastor, has moved on and Stephen Plant has become Chaplain to the Longbridge development – while remaining here. Others have moved – but yet others have discovered new calling and new strength. That continues – not least in growing requests for adult baptism as people find their way into Christ's life.

We have been able to renew seating and layout in St Nicolas, greatly welcomed by (nearly) all, regulars and visitors. We are ready for more.

Hawkesley School and Saint Nicolas Place have come through a difficult year, ready for new futures.

Congregations have held steady, ready for possible further change from decisions by others – and of course from God's prompting of new mission.

We now have a very clear grasp of practical needs and tasks, and the human and financial resources we require to make them happen – and enable growth.

### **Where to in 2011?**

We are called to be a worshipping transforming partnership in Christ, offering God's radical hospitality for all and being steadily equipped for work in God's world.

We must ensure that, in every change in society, we continue as the very rooted inclusive parish church of Kings Norton, growing in faith, life and mission as congregations across the parish, in St Nicolas, the parish's church building, and at Hawkesley School.

We cannot therefore stand still. We must treasure and renew the rich heritage of faith, story and buildings we have received – but ensure that it grows in our own time, ready for whatever tomorrow may bring.

### **What must now be our priorities?**

#### **1. Growing in Faith and understanding**

With John's arrival, we are able to grow in offering sensitive and rewarding ways in to growth in prayer, faith and understanding. Take-up has been slow so far, although all who have shared in groups and short courses have discovered far more in God and themselves than they expected. We need more.

#### **2. Being ready for hard decisions**

During 2011, we are likely to face challenge and change across the parish. Funding cuts and big

policy decisions by others are likely to affect each congregation, especially Hawkesley and Immanuel. We need by God's grace to embrace change and find God's way through it, so that the parish and its communities grow in God's promised life for all.

### 3. **Growing in worship and welcome**

These do not just happen. Real worship and welcome grow through recognising our own need of God and our need to grow. We do not yet have all the answers! God does.

And they for all: younger people, those who first come at baptism, wedding, funeral or chance visit – and us too. Jayne, John, Donald and I, with so many lay ministers, are really called to grow! Please do.

### 4. **Stewardship of plant and money**

With Restoration complete, we can now see all this very clearly. We know that we need to find a further £12000 to fund mission and work in 2011. We shall find it. We are preparing boldly for full lively use of St Nicolas Church, Saint Nicolas Place and the new Community Hub at the old Hawkesley Team Vicarage - and our churchyard. (*see p.9*)

### 5. **Grow in God's world-wide church!**

## 2011 Annual Parochial Church Meeting: Reports

### Churchwardens

We give our very warm thanks to Stephen Plant and Paul Shelton for their devoted commitment as the parish's lay leaders with special responsibility for St Nicolas, supported by John Clark, John Jelfs, Nathan Crooks, Jan Anson, Sian Smith, Simon Brown, Michael Kennedy, Graham Boulton and so many devoted sidespeople. With Gerry Moorcroft at Immanuel and Jim Clarke, Ray Davis and beloved Peter Smith at Hawkesley, they have been tireless in ensuring that all are welcome, all is done well – and that we all have wisdom and dedication close by.

The Parish Electoral Roll currently stands at **278**. (2010: 284). 184 (2010: 176) live within the parish. 94 (107 in 2010) live outside the parish but only 35 live over a mile from one of the parish's churches. St Nicolas ER: **197** (202 in 2010) Hawkesley ER: **21** (2010: 21); Immanuel ER: **60** (2010: 58). 13 people have joined St Nicolas Electoral Roll, 17 have moved on. We have also mourned and celebrated Pat Kemp and Peter Smith.

### Financial Report for 2010

Once again in producing the figures for this year's accounts I am very grateful to Dennis Hodges, Chris Gadd and Revd Jayne Crooks for all their hard work, help and advice.

Last year it was reported that the Saracens' Head and Church Fabric CBF funds had been restored to their pre 'Restoration' totals and that the sale of 28 Westhill Rd, when completed, would enable the same for the Graveyard Maintenance CBF fund. The sale was duly completed in April 2010 and the monies transferred.

The accounts show that Planned Giving across the parish remained at about the same level as last year, but that income from tax effective giving and other collections or donations fell by 22%. Fees from occasional offices were up by almost 9%, investment income rose again and we had the benefit of three legacies amounting to £9,952. This year as a parish we gave £11,883 to various charitable organisations and contributed £25,000 towards St Nicolas Place within the terms of the HLF grant contract.

On the expenditure side, the total Parish Common Fund increased in 2010 by £2049 to £89561, reflecting the increase in the Fixed Element related to each parish's clergy numbers. 2011 sees a Common Fund rise for the whole parish of £2,330. This brings the overall increase from 2009 to £4379. Within this, Hawkesley's share has fallen by £400 and Immanuel's by £300. The St Nicolas share has however risen by over £5000 in line with the Fixed Element increase. Savings have been made on Church running costs, parish

administration and salaries. Disbursement fees for occasional offices were up, mainly due to the increase in the number of weddings and funerals, but also to verger fees being paid directly from received fees for each occasion rather than as formerly by an annual stipend. 2010 saw the 3 yearly clergy conference at Swanwick and the fees are reflected in the increased level of clergy expenses.

Despite these savings, the overall parish deficit for the year was £39,917, with St Nicolas bearing the major share of £33,638. This deficit is almost entirely made up of additional spend on churchyard maintenance, including work to pathways and trees; late invoicing from Birmingham City Council for 2009 mowing contract; accounting loss against earlier valuation on sale of 28 Westhill Rd; pew and clock repairs and the contribution to KNRT already mentioned.

With regard to Restoration liabilities of £43000, these arise from KNPCC responsibility as freehold owner for the original construction contract and represent all completion liabilities as known at end of 2010. After drawdown of all retention monies held by Heritage Lottery Fund and BBC Restoration Fund, the final cash settlement sum is however reduced to £10,100 to be paid in 2011.

The accounts also show loans by KNPCC to Kings Norton Restoration Trust of £51,000. This sum is made up of two very different elements. £31000 arises from the separation of KNPCC and KNRT accounts and liabilities in 2009 under which KNRT as leaseholder took on all responsibility for running costs. The sum of £31000 represents payments made towards running costs by KNPCC before separation. KNPCC expects return of this sum in due course but recognises that this might not happen until the long term sustainability of KNRT is assured. Separately, KNPCC agreed a loan to KNRT of £20,000 in 2010, at a rate of 1% above base rate repayable over five years. This reflects the return which KNPCC receives from its CBF deposit funds. Any further loans will be on the same terms.

Once again we are indebted to Mike Edwards, our Accountant, for auditing our accounts this year and I move that this meeting agrees to appoint him for a further year.

Jon Crooks

## Kings Norton Parochial Church Council

The PCC held eight ordinary meetings and two special meetings in 2010. Major concerns have been Transforming Church, re-shaping finances, Restoration, Hawkesley Church School, the growth of ministry and mission within a Team renewed by the Revd Dr John White's arrival and the care and renewal of churchyard and of our buildings – St Nicolas Church and the Pastoral Centre and former clergy house at Hawkesley, now to be transformed into a Community Hub. We owe much to all who take on the faithful responsibility of PCC membership. Particular thanks are due to Stephen Plant our vice-chair, to Sylvia Fox our PCC Secretary, to Alan Haynes and Gerry Moorcroft for their assistance. and to all who care for our finances, especially Jon and Jayne Crooks, John Clark and Greta Lacey for the weekly count, Roger Monk who looks after part of our Christian Giving, Evelyn Finn (Immanuel), David Smith (Hawkesley) and Jean Brownsword for her faithful diligence in looking after our Christian Giving.

We continue to be very grateful to John Jelfs for his wisdom in all insurance matters – and to Dennis Hodges for patient wisdom in all matters financial.

## The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of St Nicolas Church – and its Life

As Church Warden I have pleasure in presenting to the APCM a report on the condition of the fabric, goods and ornaments of St Nicolas church. The Quinquennial Inspection was completed during 2009. The recommended contracts for clearing of rainwater goods and service of lighting systems are in place. We can report that the inventory is complete and that

no major additions or replacements have been required during this year. During the past year the fabric of the church has been maintained in good order with only minor repairs and replacements being required.

The heating system has continued to function well ensuring that a warm welcome is given to all who use the building. Inspection however indicates that we should replace the boiler. PCC are following this up with Diocesan Advisory Committee.

The churchyard continues to be cared for by Mark Rose and maintained by a dedicated small team led by Richard Harper and John Jelfs. Their report is included within this Report. We thank them warmly for their dedication and hard work in keeping our churchyard clean, tidy and safe but most importantly a place where friends and relatives can come and find solace and peace. The help of the community support team on a regular Sunday basis is acknowledged and appreciated by the Grave Yard team and Church Wardens. During 2010 a full survey and audit of our churchyard has been undertaken to enable its further development as a haven for all.

The internal lighting of the church continues to frustrate with lamps requiring frequent replacement. We thank Gerry Moorcroft and John Clark for their diligence in ensuring lamps are replaced as required. The electrical Inspection report has been completed. A number of issues were identified and the PCC has agreed to the implementation of the inspection report. The basic system is still sound although replacement of lighting and some wiring is now a priority. There are no safety issues relating from electrical installation although area outside of the vestry requires constant vigilance when in use.

St Nicolas is however always welcoming. We thank those who clean our church, polish brasses and ensure that it is a hospitable safe environment for all who come in. We are blessed with a building that has for centuries proclaimed the promise and glory of God. This owes much to the prayers of our forebears soaked into the walls and also to the hard work

and dedication of those who care for this special space. Thanks go to Alison Blumer and her team for ensuring that our church always has beautiful displays of flowers and flower arrangements, week by week and at special times.

A faculty was applied for, and granted, for the removal of the front three rows of pews either side of the aisle in the nave. This has opened up the space at the front of the church and enabled the space to be used in a much more flexible manner. This change has been welcomed by many as it enables a variety of use and settings in relation to the particular type of service and function required. Positive comments have been made from those who use the church on a regular basis and those who use it for weddings, baptisms and funerals. This faculty has been extended and continues to be a blessing for all who use the church.

We thank all who share in preparation and organisation of services, welcome - and of course music. Our faithful choir, led by Sylvia, and the offering by David Ash and by Phil, Lorri and others, have enabled us to grow.

St Nicolas is well known, thanks to its story, to its position and its glorious spire. We thank our dedicated team of bell ringers led by Jim Dunn for ensuring that it is not just the physical sight of the building that proclaims our place in the community. Recently repairs have been carried out in restoring the roof in the bell tower.

At St Nicolas we are blessed with a clergy team that provides vision, leadership and teaching as well as pastoral care for all, whether a regular attendee or casual visitor. The church can be grateful for the inclusive nature of the ministry of the clergy, which is not just regularly stated but is lived out in the many acts of practical service provided by the team. We miss Rebecca, now rightly Vicar in her own parish but Rob, Jayne, John, Donald, Fay and Ruth continue to give loving faithful and imaginative service to the people of the parish, church goes and the wider community.

There are many more activities involved in the running and maintenance of the church that I have not mentioned specifically. These all

require willing volunteers to enable them to happen, to all these people I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to serve as church warden in this lively, diverse and inclusive church and parish. I wish to thank clergy and parishioners alike for their prayers and encouragement as I move into ministry of the chaplaincy to the Longbridge development.

Stephen Plant, Church Warden

## Hawkesley Anglican/Methodist Church

The Rev. Dr. John White has been warmly welcomed following the departure of Rev Rebecca Pullin after 3½ years of rich ministry both in the school and church community. John is now fully engaged with the school; taking assemblies on a regular basis and serving as a Governor.

The Rev. Donald Sampson holds the lead role in pastoral care, working with community groups, including The Sweet Project which focuses on needy families.

**Worship** is sustained on a regular basis for approximately 20 people with wide appreciation of all who lead it, both ordained and lay. Our Christmas services were unavoidably disrupted by the weather. Car lifts are given to some senior personnel week by week.

**Coffee and Chat** meets fortnightly and gives close and effective pastoral care to approximately twenty people, providing cultural and devotional input.

**Youth:** Our Guiding Groups function with great stability and effectiveness for approximately 50 girls.

**Partnership with the School:** The goodwill and help of the Deputy Head Teacher, Mr. Graham Gill is much appreciated. Children have played instruments in festival services. A daily Breakfast

Club for the pupils functions in the Pastoral Centre.

**Partnership with St. Nicolas:** Our partnership with St. Nicolas is vitally important to us, with some members of our church community regularly attending groups at the Parish Church. United services afford opportunity to gain enrichment from the bigger congregations. Many special occasions, like our Pancake Evening and Quiz Night are well supported by St. Nicolas and Immanuel members.

**Finance:** Owing to the generosity of the members financial stability has been maintained with some support also given to seven charities.

**Appreciation of Loyal Service:** Our Hawkesley presence thrives largely because of the loyalty and devoted service of a small, but competent team. This has included the late Peter Smith, for whom we have recently given our thanks to God.

Revd. Donald Sampson

## Immanuel Church

The past 12 months have proved to be a somewhat settled period in Immanuel's' history, with numbers attending worship on a Sunday remaining steady at around 40 plus.

Over the past year we have celebrated 4 baptisms amongst the Immanuel congregation, namely, Paige Moorcroft, Joseph Crooks, Akeem Osborne and Kai Osborne.

During the year there have been several social events organised – meals out, skittles and a day at Earlswood, which was blessed by fine weather. All have been hugely enjoyable and provided opportunities to spend time with one another and to have fun in each other's company. Thanks must go to all who made these events possible – we do appreciate the hard work that goes into planning and preparing.

The Mission and Outreach Group continues to meet and explore new ways of sharing faith and presence in this part of the parish. The monthly prayer group has been encouraged to learn of prayers answered in sometimes miraculous ways.

Holy Communion continued at Moundsley Hall, as did leaflet drops for Back to Church Sunday and Christmas. We again sang carols, but this year in the roads around the top end of Vardon Way. Unfortunately the snow in December put a damper on some of our plans as Carols by Candlelight had to be cancelled, as did singing at the Day Centre.

At the last AGM, Gerry Moorcroft agreed to continue in the role of Immanuel Warden, a role he had exercised from July 2009. I am extremely grateful to Gerry for all the care and attention to detail that he has given to this role and also for the numerous other tasks that he has embraced. Gerry has decided to retire this year from active duty at Immanuel and so on behalf of everyone I say a huge 'thank you' for all that you have done, but hope that you will still be available for advice on 'things' Immanuel!

We also need to say a big 'thank you' to Sarah Crooks, who is also standing down from the DCC and thus from being DCC secretary. Thanks must also go to Evelyn Finn, who although happy to continue being Immanuel book keeper, no longer wishes to be on the DCC.

The coming year may bring challenges and changes for Immanuel, not least in the very real expectation that under local government cuts this Centre may close and we may need to find a new venue for our Sunday gatherings. The DCC has already begun to think about the way ahead, but we shall need all of your prayers and your support in the coming months as we seek the way forward. The Day Centre has been 'home' for about 34 years and so a move away will be a large step in the history of Immanuel, but whatever next year may bring, we have a God who is in all and through all; who is over all and under all and who can be trusted to keep his promises. Amen.

## Hawkesley Church Primary School

In February 2010, OFSTED inspection placed us in special measures. Often this is seen by a school and those who love it as a disaster. At Hawkesley, we were sad but very relieved. It was a turning point

We have a core of committed and very able staff and a strong history of generous serving partnership of churches and the school community within the pressures and joys of life on the Three Estates. The inspectors recognised school strengths in the care and commitment of staff, parents and governors. The Church School inspection commended the quality of RE and Collective Worship, the strong relationship of school, clergy and church and that in Hawkesley, every member really does matter.

But, we were on our fourth head in three years and the local authority has left the future of all 3 Estates Schools in a planning vacuum for much longer. The inspection at last confirmed what we have known for so long – and action has followed.

We have grown. Subsequent inspection visits have encouraged us greatly. They judge improvement as good, and increasingly outstanding. Children, staff and governors have all pulled together and made full use of the extra support that comes with special measures to raise standards and ensure good quality teaching and progression for all pupils.

Although we have still not been able to appoint a permanent Headteacher, school is in good heart, led by Mr Gill as deputy and a number of advisers. We shall come out of measures but are committed to doing this in a way that ensures our school will be good or outstanding for many more years.

The spiritual life of the school is strong and deep, nurtured especially by Rebecca, John and Donald. I am very grateful to my church governor colleagues; Rebecca (now John!), Mrs Gail Rogers and Dr Marion Fleming Froy and of

course to parents, staff and above all Hawkesley's children. It has been very hard work, but the necessary change will happen. We are committed – and hope that you are too.

Canon Rob Morris - Vice-chair of Governors

## Druids Heath: Church and Community

During 2010, PRODH (Project for Druids Heath) continued to develop under Karen Urwin's committed leadership. It has now become independent of KNPCC as a solidly established partnership of community and churches, including Dickens Heath Village church and Pavilion Christian Community.

We of course continue our extensive ministry through church members on Druids Heath and through baptisms, weddings, funerals and in the pastoral care of elderly and housebound people.

We also hope that re-organisation of the local Methodist circuits (and a new Vicar at Highters Heath!) will enable us to renew ecumenical partnerships on Druids Heath. Please pray.

## Work with Young People

**Children** We are very blessed in this parish to have a loyal and dedicated team of people, willing to work with young children. The **Oasis** leaders at St Nicolas and Immanuel use the same material each Sunday and work together to run **Messy Church** once a month. They also enjoy the occasional social gathering together. Children at Immanuel have begun to experience leading worship this year and it has been very successful. Messy Church, begun a year ago, is now a regular feature in our calendar. Numbers vary, but all who come enjoy a good morning of activities. Thank you to Penny, Julie, Rose, Linda, Nicky, Pam, Nathan, Matt, Khembi & Sue.

**Tiny Tots** is a source of delight and attracts an ever increasing number of tots and their carers each Thursday morning in St Nicolas church. I am grateful to Pauline, John and Rob who have

all stepped in on occasion to encourage and support and of course to Marlene Collyer who makes the drinks, buys us biscuits, helps to set up and tidies everything away! The children adore Marlene and she them!

## Schools and Uniformed groups

We give grateful thanks as always to the leaders and volunteers involved in the many uniformed groups at St Nicolas, Hawkesley and Oddingley. It is good to see so many of them at the monthly Parade services and special services. Of the 9 non RC schools in our parish we have governor representation on 4 and regular contact in a variety of ways. There is scope for more, so if anyone can offer time as a school governor or to hear children read, then please do let the clergy know.

Rev Jayne Crooks

## St Nicolas Music 2010

Each year, I continue to be amazed at how much commitment each musician makes, regardless of age; giving time and talent each week to bring varied and quality music to each of our services. Some weeks sees choir low in numbers, as choristers juggle family life, school work, sporting activities and work life. Thankfully, we are blessed by having adult choristers who understand that life is "not like it was when we were on the front row", and they support their young friends wonderfully.

Sunday service music has been much enriched by the playing of Phil Watkins and Lorri Withers, on guitar and flute - particularly at Taizé Services and Evening communion Services, and at many of our larger Festival Services. David Ash is often to be found playing piano or organ too – a very welcome colleague for me – and the established leader and musician of the now regular Taizé services.

In the Summer of 2010 we were able to hire a baby grand piano for three weeks. The primary reason for the experiment was to provide a piano for a concert in July. We then tried the piano in every service setting possible within

those three weeks, and came to the very rapid conclusion that it would be lovely to "have one of our own". Although helpful to our growing programme of classical concerts, its main use will be in our regular worship with the organ. We have now very gratefully accepted the long-term loan of a small grand piano, which should arrive in church at the end of April.

The ghastly weather in late December scuppered the Victorian Christmas event in Saint Nicolas Place – but not before the gathered Christmas Choir had wonderful fun rehearsing a selection of period Carols together. We will most definitely try again in 2011 – "While Shepherds Watched" will never be quite the same again!

"Quavers" Singing Club for King's Norton Primary School Year's 4 & 5, has had three terms of good activity, and has introduced Ciara Hay to Choir – who also brought Dad along – so we have been very happy to welcome Peter Hay to the Basses as well.

King's Norton Handbell Ringers relaunched at Hawkesley Christmas Bazaar, with a medley of all the carols they had managed to teach me in one term. With the kind perseverance of the former team members, I have learned to read and write in a new language – music by numbers! Huge thanks to Margaret, Molly, June, Mal, Barbara and Diana. We have gathered two new members already, and others are waiting in the wings. The choir also enjoyed their "lets try" session. A Youth Team may well be part of next year's report.

Sylvia Fox

## Pastoral Life and Service

### **Baptisms**

Baptisms are a constant source of great rejoicing and we are taking more and more enquiries from adults seeking baptism. Last year we baptised 73 children and 4 adults, but already this year we have baptised 3 adults with more seriously thinking! Acting as a sides person at the services can prove challenging,

but they do a wonderful job of making everyone feel welcome and at home. Thank you to all of you – too many to name! There is also a band of very faithful people who follow up on all the children who live in this parish and are baptised in St Nicolas. Phone calls and visits are made and books and prayers given. The gifts are positively received and many good contacts made. Thanks to Marlene, Carol, Joan and Mary.

### **Home Communions**

One of Revd Rebecca Pullin's roles was to make sure those who were unwell or infirm received Holy Communion at home. This is a vital role and ministry in the life of the church. I met with all those who take part in the ministry – Ron Wills, Sylvia Fox, Mary Walker, Richard Carter, Carol Wozencroft, Fay Fearon – and we looked at good practice and encouraged one another. Between them and the clergy team, HC is given at Moundsley Hall, Druids Meadow, The Spinney, Grosvenor Court, Neville Williams House and at the homes of 6 individuals. We have recruited Greta Lacey, Ron Ayres, Linda Bridgewater-Budgen and Kathy Smith to the team and hope to be able to continue offering Christ's gifts of bread and wine on a regular basis during 2011.

Rev Jayne Crooks

### **Marriage**

If marriage is in decline, the news has not yet reached Kings Norton. We took 68 marriages last year in St Nicolas – an increase of 10 from 2009. The easing of marriage regulations allows more to be married here, but maybe it also has to do with what we offer in welcome, support and preparation.

From first enquiry to the day itself, thanks to our Marriage Clerks, Vergers, Office staff, to our hospitality team – and to what they receive when they come on Sundays, couples and their families are finding much more of God's welcome and promise than they expected from "church". The fruit is sometimes slow in coming, but it grows in new friendship, new faith and new relationship with God and church.

## Funerals

Although we do fewer funerals at crematoria (only 109 last year!) the number in church remains steady; 74 last year. All are a serious privilege for us; many bring really heavy demands in sensitivity, welcome and care.

Thanks to our Vergers, Office staff and organists, we are always able to offer a setting and ethos in which each funeral and every mourner is cherished and supported. They all matter – and within them, we who minister are able to speak with confidence of Christ's living hope and promise in Death and Resurrection.

Since Rebecca's departure in January, Jayne has met once a month with the bereavement team. We have reviewed what we can offer and now incorporate praying for each person by name at our meetings as well as sending each family a copy of the parish magazine, together with an invite to Hawkesley Coffee and chat and a small card containing prayers that can be used at home. We also follow up with a phone call if advised by the clergy. Thank you to Mena, Mary, Margaret and Ann, who sustain this vital and important ministry.

Bereavement visiting, Candlelit Church, Open Church, Seniors Club and other support strengthen our response in care and mission. It really matters.

## Communications.

The **magazine** continues to go from strength to strength. Alan and Susan Haynes bear the brunt of editing and production. Alison Blumer is tireless as manager of advertising, distribution, subscriptions and sales. Gail Rogers looks after the Children's Page, Jim Clarke and John Clark give whole-hearted support and all are ably led by Jayne. We owe them all a great deal – including lively contributions submitted by monthly deadlines. Thank you to all.

And 2010 of course saw the complete re-design and re-launch of the **parish website** by David "Three Camels" Ash, building on Graham Boulton's work. It is a delight to discover how much is now on-line and to find it refreshed and inspiring each week. Even the clergy use it to find out what's on. Thank you very much David for [www.kingsnorton.org.uk](http://www.kingsnorton.org.uk)

## Churchyard

Maintenance of grass in the Churchyard during the 2010 season was carried out on our behalf by the City's subcontractor, Birmingham Parks and Nurseries. The mowing generally was done to a high standard and on a reasonably regular basis to the agreed mowing schedules. There however has been a problem with the late receipt of invoices from the Council and this is currently being addressed.

No major tree works have been carried out in the Churchyard. A professional survey of the trees has recently been carried out by Marlow Consulting Ltd; no major works are required except for the removal of dead wood from some of the trees. During the summer of 2010 repairs were carried out by Parks and Son Builders Ltd to the paved areas around the Church and to the block paved areas in the lower Churchyard.

The Thursday Morning Team have continued throughout most of the year. In addition to the general maintenance work around the Churchyard further work has continued realigning displaced and unsafe masonry edging and the laying down of loose headstone and filling and seeding around sunken graves.

Further crown lifting of the hornbeams in the lower section of the Churchyard was carried out by the Team to about 2 metres to reduce the over crowding and shading of the branches. Repairs to and the reinforcing of the boundary fence/hedge between the lower Churchyard and the Park have been commenced by the Team.

The leaf clearing in the Churchyard during November was attended by more Church member and, again with the help of the Brownies, the leaves around the Church were successfully gathered up.

The "Unpaid Work Team", part of the Probation Service, have attended on most Sundays throughout the year. During the summer period they levelled off part of the accumulated surplus soil along the north boundary of the lower Churchyard, commencing from the Pershore Road end.

The completed section was reseeded in the early summer. During the summer further soil was removed to fill sunken graves and in the autumn/winter period their main task was the clearing of leaves along Mirey Lane and the lower Churchyard. Throughout the year the team continues to remove the accumulated dead flowers etc, on a regular basis and have also carried our general tidying up and litter picking.

The committee would like to express their special thanks to the teams and supervisors provided by the Probation Service without whose regular visits and help the Churchyard would definitely not be in such good order. We also thank Birmingham Parks and Nurseries and to all the members of the congregation and friends who have helped during 2010.

The Wednesday Evening Churchyard Caring Team, in spite of frequent requests for new volunteers, has had to be disbanded in 2010 due to lack of numbers. We are still requiring more volunteers for the Thursday morning team, which now has a maximum strength of four regular members.

Although it many appear we are coping with our limited number of volunteers, the shortage is acutely felt when one or two members are on holiday. Will you join us?

Richard Harper and John Jelfs

## Appreciations for St Nicolas

An Annual Report gives opportunity to record our heart-felt thanks to so many people who

contribute to the life of the church. Those who give so much to the life of Hawkesley and Immanuel will have been celebrated and thanked at their own AGMs. There are others at St Nicolas for whom the only opportunity is at the Parish Annual Meeting.

We could not have such a range and depth of worship and welcome week by week without the (currently) over 60 servers, Communion assistants, readers, sidespeople and prayer leaders who share in its offering, along with those who help to clean brasses, prepare linen, decorate the building, offer refreshments and conversation – and those who care for our churchyard. There are too many to name individually – but all are precious and deserve our thanks. We do however mark Molly Barron's special ministry that in bringing gifts to the altar, newcomers are always welcomed and included. We also thank our flower team, led by Alison Blumer, who consistently bring fresh imagination and creativity in the changing life of our church. We need also to thank all who enable Open Church, Saturday Coffee, Women's Fellowship and Candlelit Church.

They all make a difference to our welcome - and to our being truly the parish church of Kings Norton.

We also have a too often unseen band of handy-persons: Gerry Moorcroft, John Bowen, Richard Harper, John Jelfs, Stephen Plant, Deb Buckley, Sylvia and Tony Fox who have kept St Nicolas well-lit, well-managed and well-furnished with inspiration to worship and prayer. Thank you to you all. Please join them!

. . . and in prayer and gratitude.

we remember all who have died in the past year. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

May I also record, on behalf of all in the parish, our deep gratitude to key people:

All involved in Saint Nicolas Place, new friends and familiar ones, especially Barbara Hedgeland and her team and Gerry Moorcroft and John

Jelfs who have stepped down from Kings Norton Restoration Trust. We owe them much.

We have also been very pleased to welcome Abigail Roberts, our new Director, after Graeme Clarke's move last April.

Among Parish staff we thank as always John Clark, our friend and tireless support, and Chris Bowen, Chris Gadd and Sylvia Fox, our Parish Office team and Clifford Skirrow and Nathan Crooks as vergers.

Chris Bowen as many know is now retiring after 19 years devoted service, which has often been crucial for the sustaining of the whole parish's life. We cannot adequately thank her for all that she has so faithfully given – in good times and in hard ones.

In May, Jess Boulton, our Lay Pastor for 18 months and a lively encourager of new directions for much longer also moved with Graham to new ventures. We are grateful to them both for inspiring and supporting so much – and so many.

Deb Buckley was made deacon last July to serve in the parishes of Balsall Heath and St Mary and St Ambrose Edgbaston. We miss her and Sian after their many years of making a difference to so many here, but of course rejoice at her calling to ordained ministry, nurtured here and now fulfilled.

We rejoice too at Rebecca's appointment as Vicar of Immanuel Highters Heath – another calling nurtured here by the whole church. Alleluia!

But we're not left as orphans! We are of course deeply thankful for the continuing faithful service and friendship in ministry of Fay Fearon and Ruth Howman our Readers, Donald Sampson our Methodist colleague and my wonderful Team Vicar colleagues, Jayne Crooks and John White. They are such a strong, graceful and lively team.

### **. . . and some more detail on Priority 4 on p.1**

What full lively use?

**St Nicolas Church:** Stephen Price will soon complete his full study of St Nicolas furniture

and fittings. We shall use his findings in two ways:

To plan the best ordering of the front nave area to benefit all our many uses – with worship first – and ensure that our church building is fully accessible

To develop a detailed HLF application for a church interpretation scheme to complement KNRT

**Saint Nicolas Place:** We shall continue the work towards full sustainability and shared resources

**New Community Hub** at the former Hawkesley Team Vicarage. Fully funded work begins in May.

**Churchyard:** We are now doing a full churchyard mapping and audit of all areas. This will help us plan for the best use of every area. We will also develop a grant-aided scheme for full conservation and environmental development of the churchyard as a beautiful place of peace for our communities.