



June 2017

Dear Friend

Approaching the church the other day, I was struck by its sense of permanence. Surrounded by fields, with the escarpment as backdrop, there it is, sitting firm in this ever-changing, turbulent world. It was the most beautiful day, the birds were singing and all that glorious spring greenery just made one feel good to be alive!

Your Council met the other day – our new Rector’s first as Chairman – and we had good discussions. Nicholas, our Treasurer made his report, showing that we are currently in a reasonably good financial state, largely due to our investments benefiting from the way the stock markets have been behaving and to a couple of generous legacies. The churchwardens reported on events in the church, where something is always happening – there were two stunning Edington Arts concerts recently, young organists have given a short recital, music exams have taken place, the bell tower is busy, tours have been given – quite apart from the daily round of services, weddings, baptisms and funerals. They commented how the calendar is always beautifully managed by Joanna Robertson. We talked about future projects for fund raising and recruitment. One idea is to begin a series of annual lectures given by eminent speakers. And we talked about our main *raison d’être*, of course: helping the PCC keep the church in good repair so that it remains the vibrant place it is today.

In her Fabric Report, Sheila outlined some of the general maintenance that has occurred this year, highlighting the expense of maintaining the current high level lights in the Chancel and transepts. Uppermost on the PCC’s agenda, however, is the Architect’s Quinquennial Report. Running to some 58 pages, it shows that he did a thorough inspection: hardly surprising, as it was his first. There is some lead work needing attention on the roof and several minor, but necessary repairs and maintenance, but the PCC doesn’t feel it needs to ask us for support to do these. That said, there may well be an approach next year for the second tranche of works. This is currently under discussion with the architect and I’m sure the churchwardens will be able to up-date us at the AGM in August. They will also have more information on the need to refurbish the chamber organ in the Chancel and will be asking the AGM to vote on a small grant to contribute towards this.

We have an apology to make to you too. Our website is running, but creaking somewhat! Our website manager is finally having to retire the computer from which he runs the site. Both the machine and the software have become outclassed and are much in need of an up-date. We are researching this, but it is proving less simple than one might at first expect. So please bear with us. We hope to have a refreshed, rejuvenated website up and running in time for the Festival.

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Speaking of which ... You may have heard that there is a new Festival Director, Richard Pinel. He has recently become Director of Music at Jesus College, Cambridge, having been at St George's Chapel, Windsor. Many report that he is a real feather in the Festival's cap. The theme this year will be The Beatitudes and the leaflet has a very eye-catching picture painted by a Lebanese artist. As you might imagine, planning for the week advances apace and we look forward – as always – to seeing as many as can come.

You may remember we discussed the possibility of new chairs at the AGM last year. The old wooden ones are getting somewhat rickety and, due to a legacy to both the Friends and the Edington Music Festival Association, it was agreed to go forward with research and purchase of new – possibly more comfortable – chairs; funding to be split equally between both beneficiaries up to the sum of £5,000 each. After much research, the churchwardens and the PCC selected a chair and manufacturer and then learned a Faculty would need to be obtained. This has finally been achieved and the order was placed a couple of weeks ago. We very much hope they will be here in time for the Festival, so those of you who end up having to sit on extra seating during services will be rather more comfortable and secure than perhaps you were in previous years!

The leaflet for the Festival tempts us with treats. The Beatitudes is a theme with much to interest no doubt, interwoven with wonderful music. I'm sure we will be hear thought-provoking sermons too. The BBC will be broadcasting Evensong on Wednesday live, as usual. The Requiem on Friday will be the Faure and our President, Bishop Ed Condry, has been invited to preach on Festival Saturday this year. We are very much looking forward to that, as we hope he will be able to stay and join us for lunch and the AGM.

The lunch this year will be catered for by one of our local farm shops, Planks. Very sadly Angela, who has given us such wonderful meals over the past few years and made many friends amongst us, has had to retire due to severe arthritis, but we hope she might come to the Festival Supper on Wednesday 26 August. If you would like to reserve a place for the lunch – or indeed the Festival Supper – details are enclosed.

After the AGM, Kate Charles will be giving the talk. As a veteran crime writer who has published twelve novels to date, mainly set against the colourful background of the Church of England, she is a former Chair of the Crime Writers' Association and the Barbara Pym Society. Kate has been attending the Edington Festival for over 25 years. Her talk will be entitled "Corpses in the Cloisters". Do bring your friends and family to join us, we have heard Kate is a great raconteur. And there will be a chance to meet her and buy her books over a cup of tea afterwards.

The next exciting event in church, however, is Andrew Carwood's Choral Workshop for Edington Arts on 10 June. He has chosen to lead us through Handel's Dixit Dominus, which is going to be exhilarating and strenuous in equal measure I think, and quite an experience. It will certainly concentrate our minds and distract us from all the extraordinary news and events in the wider world.

We look forward to seeing you in Edington before too long. We are ever mindful of your continuing support and send our very best wishes to you and your families.

Susie