

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC) REPORT TO TILSHEAD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 9.3.10

Tilshead is one of a group of four parishes looked after by The Reverend Sue Armitage as Team Vicar, who lives in Shrewton. We are also part of the Wylde and Till Valley Team of 12 parishes led by our Team Rector John Hamilton, who lives in Steeple Langford. The formal responsibility of Tilshead Parochial Church Council (the PCC) is "to co-operate with the incumbent in promoting within the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical". The PCC currently comprises nine members.

Our normal pattern is three services a month in Tilshead, with a rotating group service on the second Sunday in the month and a rotating team service on the fifth Sunday, although the arrangements for the team services are currently under review. The average Sunday church attendance last year was 18. However this average conceals wide swings, and numbers are far higher at festivals and for special services. There were 60 people at the service of Remembrance in November, and our Christmas Eve midnight mass and the carol service on Christmas morning were attended by a total of 71 people.

Close links are maintained with the School and Nursery School. As the School has Church of England Voluntary Aided status, it is the responsibility of the PCC to nominate up to seven Foundation Governors in addition to the Vicar, who serves *ex officio*. There are currently vacancies, and if anyone would like to know more about this interesting and rewarding role please contact the Vicar, whose telephone number is in the Tilshead Newsletter.

Until last year the Nursery School had relied upon its affiliation to the PCC for its charitable status. However with the opening in September of the new Nursery School building, funded by a grant from Wiltshire County Council, it became necessary for the Nursery Committee to seek its own charitable registration, and this has now been done. We wish the Nursery well with its new independent status.

Some doubt had arisen in recent years as to whether or not the Ministry of Defence was Lay Rector of Tilshead, carrying with it responsibility for repairs to the chancel of the church. Research undertaken at the County Records Office during 2009 established that the War Office had purchased the Tilshead Rectory Estate and glebe land from the Earl of Pembroke in 1911, proving that the Ministry of Defence, as successors to the War Office, is indeed our Lay Rector. This interest has now been accepted and officially recognised.

There were two successful fundraising events during 2009: a Garden Fete in May run jointly with the Friends of Tilshead Church, and the St Nicholas Fair, attended by no less a person than Father Christmas, in December.

The price we must pay for the privilege of having a Grade I listed church in the village is the continuing cost of maintenance. The two Edwards memorials in the chancel were repaired and restored in 2009, and a specification has been drawn up for plasterwork repairs and much-needed redecoration of the interior of the church, together with the improvement of disability access. It is hoped that this work, together with the cleaning and restoration of the royal coat of arms, will be carried out later this year.

We are grateful to Tilshead Parish Council and the Baptist Chapel for their annual contributions to the cost of maintaining the churchyard. We should also like to thank the team of Holy Dusters who keep the church clean and shining week by week; those who help to decorate the church, both as members of the regular flower rota and at festivals; The Friends of Tilshead Church, who give us their practical and financial support; Mrs. Jean George, whose glorious music and warm personality so enhance our services; and last but by no means least all members of the village, whether churchgoers or not, who support our fundraising events, thus helping to preserve our beautiful and ancient church for the benefit of future generations.

Libby Anson
Secretary, Tilshead PCC
March 2009