

Christ Church in the Manche
Le Homm el – Virey
France

The Churchwardens' report 2017

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At last year's AGM we, the wardens, asked you to support the decision to formally launch the vacancy. You voted in support of 'going forward' and this we immediately did. In May, a Special Chaplaincy Council meeting was chaired at Gratot by the, then, Archdeacon for France, Ian Naylor. The main upshot of this meeting was that we decided as a council, in formally launching the vacancy, to choose Bishop's option; this means we are asking the Bishop to find a candidate for us, rather than advertising the post.

This option soon brought results and a candidate was interviewed in July. Unfortunately, however, the candidate was not judged to be suitable by the panel and we had to return to business as usual and steer our way through the third year of vacancy with our own resources. These resources, at that time, included Mike and Linda Brooke, but by December, as we all know, they had successfully sold their house here and moved to the Isle of Wight.

The gap left by Mike and Linda has been filled by our other valiant priests and ministers (despite personal and family health challenges) but also by a new small band of Worship Leaders who have had to lead worship and even read the sermons of preachers not able to be present in person.

By these means, we have managed to keep an unbroken pattern of worship in both churches; but we cannot be, at all, complacent and are very much looking forward with hope to announcements at this year's AGM, by our new Archdeacon, Meurig Williams, of the Bishop's advertisement for a priest and an interview slot for our chaplaincy this June.

One other cause for hope in these testing times is that we have now managed to cross all the hurdles with regard to the sale of the land. Professionals have been engaged to assess the number of plots that could be sold and to assess the merits of bringing services to those plots and selling them as viable building plots.

Brexit is behind us and yet in front of us, because, with formal negotiations only just started, we still do not know how this vote will affect our life here in France. What we do know, as we did last year, is that Brexit brings uncertainty, and we have to meet that, as with all the other uncertainties of life, with faith.

So let us begin this year by placing all our hope in God. The prayers of the whole chaplaincy will help by aligning our will with God's will. Let us pray as we did at the last AGM, but with renewed fervency:

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Dear Lord, we don't know the road ahead, but we trust that you have plans for us in Christ Church in the Manche, and we trust that you are, at this time, preparing a priest to lead us in your ways and help fulfil your plans in this place. Help us to do all we can to cooperate with your plans, knowing that you will accomplish that which you purpose.

Your Churchwardens,

Humphrey **FARNSWORTH**

and

Paul **EVANS SCOTT**

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