

## Chaplain's report 2019 – St Hugh's Vence



When I arrived, we had to use hymn books, a service book and a pewsheet at each Sunday service. I promptly revised their content and format but it was still confusing for many, especially visitors.

Easter and Christmas were different, as we had a single booklet containing everything. A year last summer, we switched to providing a single booklet for every Sunday and this has been a success. It is easier for regular parishioners but also for the many visitors that we have in Vence and Nice.

Claire Ery in her report stresses how important it is that we be an open and outward looking community. Having coherent liturgy and booklets that allow you to follow every word that is said or sung are a great help in fulfilling this aim. Fussing with multiple sheets of paper and booklets is confusing and off-putting (for this reason I often get completely lost in churches when I'm on holiday).

When I arrived in 2014, the first phase of decorating and lighting work in the church was near completion. There was anxiety about how we might afford to do other things that were necessary.

We were subsequently blessed with gifts and legacies that have helped us to achieve more. Last year the ramp cum terrace was completed. In recent months, the exterior of the church has been painted and restored, with the addition of an impressive cross on the roof top. Passers-by should no longer wonder 'where's the Anglican Church?'

But we shouldn't be complacent. We suffered the sad loss of Father Chad last summer and his widow, Jean, has returned to the UK. Others have also chosen to leave France, often through anxiety about Brexit.

I remarked last year about the effect that Brexit was having on our community. A year on its effect is even more malign. For those with UK pensions, the weakness of the pound affects their quality of life. Fear of a -no-deal- Brexit makes those who have relied upon their EU citizenship, worry about their future status as residents in France.

However, St Hugh's is a friendly and positive community. In the past year, we have welcomed the wider public to cream teas, Christmas fairs, etc. People in



Vence and its environs have become more aware of our presence and the quality of our community life.

We have also deepened our relationship with Eglise Protestante, who now wish to obtain funding from their central body to help with past and future works on the fabric of the church. We also intend to

build on the shared worship that we have at Christmas by having other occasions when we worship together (our next is on Maundy Thursday).

We must not ignore our problems but there is much to be proud of and hopeful for as we look forward to 2019/2020.

*Fr Peter Jackson*