

The Churchwardens Write



What's in a name . . .

Do you like quizzes? Here's a question that is unlikely to be asked in any TV quiz show – "What have the group Black Sabbath, the Russian city of St Petersburg, Snickers chocolate bar and the actor Michael Caine all got in common with our Parish Vacancy?"

Too difficult? Well, these are all replacements for previous names.

Parish Vacancy is the new name for an interregnum, that period when we are without a vicar. Interregnum literally means "the time between kings" and is not a particularly helpful word! It suggests somehow that the Christian community completely grinds to a halt when there is no priest. Of course we know that isn't true; we are all in this together and a vacancy can be an opportunity for growth (but having said that perhaps the word "vacancy" isn't a very good word either). So what happens during a Parish Vacancy and who is in charge?

To answer the second question first; the churchwardens, as the Bishop's officers, are formally in charge of the parish, working with the PCC and the ministry team, to ensure that services are organised and that the church continues to function normally. This doesn't mean that wardens have to do everything – rather that they have the responsibility for making sure that everything is done.

Now back to the first question "What happens?"

James announced his leaving at the services on Sunday 5th May. Throughout the following weeks questionnaires were available at all our services to collect the views of members of the congregation.

There was a special PCC meeting on Monday 17th June, chaired by Helen Scarisbrick, our Rural Dean. At that meeting two "representatives" were elected - David Russell and Christine Kershaw. They will oversee the "vacancy process" from beginning to the end; when a new vicar will be appointed.

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Also at that meeting a group of 6 people was formed (a mix of PCC and non-PCC members) who will write the "Parish Profile". This is a lengthy document that describes the life of the church and the wider community. It contains some "technical" information about our church's statistics. It describes the church's mission priorities and contains a clear role description for a new priest - the role they will fulfil and the skills and gifts needed for this post.

This is a really important part of the document as it will be used for short listing and interviewing candidates in due course. Once completed, the Parish Profile will be seen by the PCC and copies will be sent to the Bishop of Chester, all Suffragan Bishops, the Archdeacon, our Rural Dean, Church House, and will also be available to prospective candidates.

The interview itself will be carried out in confidence by the two representatives only. And that's just about it, two wardens, two representatives and a parish profile; what could be simpler?

But hang on, we've forgotten someone; where is God in all this? We will all need God's guidance (wardens, representatives, PCC, church congregation, ALL OF US) to see us through this vacancy. Let us listen to what God is telling us, for as John writes "without God we can do nothing". We should look at this as a time of opportunity - a chance to work with God to try new things, to help and support each other as we look to the future. Please continue to pray for our church, our congregation, PCC and all those involved during the months ahead.

And if you want to know about those other "name changes" you'll have to ask a churchwarden!!

David and Dejan
Churchwardens



June Molyneux

It is with deep sadness that we must report the passing of our friend June Molyneux, verger at St Michael's.

June died suddenly on Saturday the 10th of August.

The funeral will take place on Friday the 30th of August.