

ST. PETER & ST. PAUL

PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE

NORTH CURRY WITH WRANTAGE

Crisis at the Tower

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CHURCH BELLS FELL SILENT?

THEIR DESTINY IS IN
OUR HANDS...

FULL STORY ON THE
CENTRE PAGES

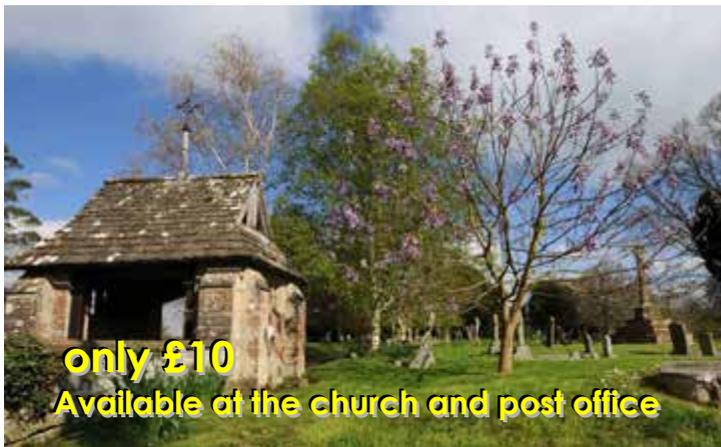


Our warmest
congratulations to the
Coffee Shop for
picking up a National
Award... see page 15



JANUARY
2020

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North Curry Village Calendar 2020

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Church Diary Events for January

School Holiday Terms

Winter 23rd December – 3rd January 2020
Half Term 15th February – 23rd February 2020
Easter 4th April – 19th April 2020
Half Term 23rd May – 31st May 2020

Produce Market, first Saturday
of every month 9.30am-
11.30am- next date: 4th
January

Non Parish Church Diary Events

Wednesday, no meeting this month

Thursday, no meeting this month

Wednesday, 15th January, South West Airfields

Friday, 17th January, Wassail

(Details on all these events can be found in the magazine)

North Curry WI

NC & District Gardeners

North Curry Society

NC Wildlife Group

For other local events, check out the Parish Council website and calendar
at www.northcurry.com

Church officers phone numbers, and other local useful phone numbers, can now be found at the inside back page.

www.northcurrychurch.co.uk/ email ncurrymag@gmail.com

Cover photo: Tower – Courtesy of Julian Comrie (image crop)

An internal view of the bell chamber

If you would like a guaranteed copy of the magazine
delivered monthly to your door, only £6 per year.
Please contact Jenny Satchwell on 490463

Little Angels
Toddlers Club and Pram
Service

Every 2nd Thursday in the
month at the church.

Next meeting 10am –
9th January

The North Curry PCC
Welcomes applicants for the
roles of:

Honorary Treasurer

Magazine Editor

Please contact a warden to
find out more information

Editor's Comments

January 2020 is not only the start of a new year, its a new decade too. As we bid farwell to quite an eventful last decade, we make preparations at the church for a new (exciting and ambitious some might add) project. I am confident that the entire village will get behind the fund raising proposals to keep the bellfry of our church going strong.

These developments will reported more in issues to come, but under the leadership of a new editor. As like like all good things, my tenure as editor of the magazine has come to end after taking over in November 2018. I hope you have enjoyed the varied articles and amusements presented for your delight and entertainment over the course of the past year, and I wish the new editor all the very best.

Calendar 2021 Photo Competition

The 2020 calendars have sold incredibly well, and only a few remain on sale at the Post Office/ in the church.

The 2021 competition continues though, as we hope you have been taking plenty of photos over the recent festive period for consideration into the village 2021 calendar.

So during the course of 2020 to September, please continue to take as many photos as you can of North Curry life for inclusion in the calendar (ideally, something from each month to reflect our village through a year).

The competition is open to all, and can be of any aspect over of village life you would like seen in our calendar.

In later issues, we shall give more details on where to email/post your photos, but ideally, digital images are easier to handle (and a better quality) than scanning in from paper photos. But for now, just get snapping away!



Announcements/ News in Brief

Congratulations to our December 200 Club Winners

1st Prize - £30: John Taylor

2nd Prize - £20: Lesley Durrant 3rd Prize - £10: Di Keyzar

Christmas Prize Draw - £60 Ted Collins

If you are not a member but would like to join, please contact Sue Bethune on 490179. The annual subscription is £18. Players must be 18+ yrs.

The mobile library calls once a month. It visits on a Wednesday every 4 weeks and stops in Queen Square for 45 minutes between 1.45pm–2.30pm. There is a good selection of books of all kinds and it is a really important resource. Wednesday 29th January - contact Libraries Direct 0300 1232 224 Please continue to support it.

The Grand 2020 Quiz will be on 7th March. Tickets now on sale from Jenny Satchwell (490463) for just £10pp, teams of 6, price includes a buffet.

Our Christmas Tree looked magnificent this year; lights all the way to the ceiling. Thank you to those involved.

A kindly reminder with these **dark** evenings that when out walking the dog or alike after dark, please ensure you have a torch and a hi-viz clothing. Be Seen, Be Safe!

The positions of Treasurer and Editor will be vacant from 1st February; please contact the warden or the current treasurer if you would like to take over one of these roles.

Produce Market

In the Village Hall

Saturday 4th January

9.30am-11.30am

New stalls recently added, with a fresh and varied stock.

The kitchen is open throughout serving supuuous bacon baps and hot drinks, with plenty of seating and tables.

PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL MARKET!

Benefice of Athelney – Service Rota January – 2020

5th January			THE EPIPHANY (anticipated)
08.00	North Curry	Holy Communion	Revd John Tyler
09.30	Lyng	Holy Communion	Revd John Tyler
10.00	North Curry	Eucharist	Revd Martin Mudie
<i>8th January</i>		<i>(Wednesday)</i>	
17.00	Stoke St Gregory	Evening Prayer	Revd Dr Jane Sutton
<i>9th January</i>		<i>(Thursday)</i>	
10.00	North Curry	Little Angels	

12th January			THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
10.00	Stoke St Gregory	United Benefice Eucharist	Revd Prebendary Jane Haslam
<i>15th January</i>		<i>(Wednesday)</i>	
17.00	Stoke St Gregory	Evening Prayer	Revd Dr Jane Sutton

19th January			THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY
08.00	North Curry	Holy Communion	Revd John Tyler
09.30	Burrowbridge	Holy Communion	Revd Martin Mudie
10.00	North Curry	Morning Prayer	Mr Ralph Roberts
11.00	Stoke St Gregory	Christian Unity service	Revds John Tyler & Sonya Setchell

26th January			THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY
09.30	Lyng	Service of the Word	Dr Robert Dunning
10.00	North Curry	Covenant Service	Revds John Tyler & Anthony Huxtable
11.00	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist	Revd Martin Mudie
<i>29th January</i>		<i>(Wednesday)</i>	
17.00	Stoke St Gregory	Evening Prayer	Revd Dr Jane Sutton

2nd February			THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (CANDLEMAS)
08.00	North Curry	Holy Communion	Revd John Tyler
09.30	Lyng	Holy Communion	Revd Martin
10.00	North Curry	Eucharist	Revd John Tyler
11.00	Stoke St Gregory	Morning Prayer	Mr Ralph Roberts

The Rev'd John Tyler writes

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

(though the Christian Year started on Dec. 1st)

One of my favourite Somerset stories :

Jim and Maggie were walking down a lane in the late evening ;
Maggie broke the long silence.

“I'm terribly afraid, Jim.”

“And what would you be afraid of, Maggie ?”

“I'm afraid you might be going to kiss me.”

“ And how would I be kissing you with me carrying a bucket
in each hand and having a live hen tucked under each arm ?”

“I'm afraid that you might put a hen under each bucket and
then kiss me . . . “

More often than we think we decide and engineer our own destinies.

I am writing this on December 9th, before Polling Day ; you will
be reading it in early January 2020. Whatever happens with the
General Election, it will be the result of actions taken, votes cast - or
abstaining from voting. As we enter the New Year and work our way
through it, whatever we face in our National life, in our relations with
Europe and with the rest of the world, we can still affect the course
of events by our interventions, or our abstentions. 2019 was an
extraordinary year ; who could have foreseen in January last year
the way it would develop ? What can we be sure about in the year
that lies ahead ?

But as with Maggie in my story, sometimes we actually bring
about what we 'fear' . . . and we can also bring about what we
hope for. So, as Christians, we hope and we pray that God will be
with us in this coming year, and that he will guide us and all
humanity to a just, fair, compassionate and positive way forward,
for that is his will for us.

With Every Blessing,

John Tyler.

Letter from the Right
Reverend Ruth Worsley,
Bishop of Taunton



A rich journey

'A cold coming we had of it
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey...'
T.S. Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi'

How many of us are making journeys over the turning of this new year? Perhaps it has been an opportunity to catch up with family or friends we haven't seen for a while. Perhaps for some of us, it's been about fun and relaxation, (although skiing doesn't appeal for either, for me!)

Perhaps some of those journeys have been disrupted by weather or illness. Or perhaps they've been punctuated by the plaintive cry, 'Are we there yet?' During winter months we are often seeing the journey as a 'means to an end' rather than something of value in itself. However travelling with others or meeting people on the way can make journeys so much richer.

On my windowsill at home sits a wooden cross with a shell attached. It's made from the stick my son used to walk the Camino de Santiago, one of the most popular of pilgrim paths in Europe. I'm not sure I have the legs to do it! Two of my sons have walked it from France to the coast of Spain, each on their own, but meeting strangers along the way who have become friends.

2020 is being marked by our Cathedrals as a year of pilgrimage. You will be hearing more from our Cathedral here in Wells as they invite us to share in pilgrimage with them. Journeying together gives opportunity for us to discover something new as we share in others' perspectives and experiences, not just our own. At this time of Epiphany we remember the journey of the wise men who travelled together to seek out something new. A star had appeared which indicated to them there was new learning to be had. And so they left the familiar and went to explore what was new.

So... what new thing might you wish to explore this year? Who might you travel with? And what might you do once you find it?

Wishing you a very special new year!

The Right Revd Ruth Worsley
Bishop of Taunton

News from North Curry /Curland Methodists, by Daphne Gilham

The Church council was held in Dick's farm house on 15th November having been moved forward from the planned date in October.

Richard Sillett was welcomed as the new Circuit Steward for the chapel. Richard then read a full report from the circuit which was received with interest by the meeting.

It was noted that a representative is needed for the circuit meeting. Rachel was approached with regard to filling this duty and will consider the proposition.

It was proposed that the council apply to the Methodist Conservation Listing Building office for permission to remove one or two pews from the back right hand corner. This space would accommodate any wheelchairs/walking aids etc.

The secretary has undertaken this task.

The Rev'd Deborah Kirk is taking a Sabbatical from January 1st to March 20th 2020. Pastoral cover for the church will be held by the Rev'd Tony Huxtable during this time.

The Taize Service held on Friday 6th December went well as usual. About 18 people from the circuit and village enjoyed the time of Taize chants, readings and quiet reflection. This oasis of calm is so important in the hectic run up to Christmas. Thanks go to Deborah for her tireless commitment to this lovely hour of worship in setting it all up and leading the service.

North Curry/ Curland Methodists wish everyone a Very Happy New Year together with hopes and prayers for a peaceful and blessed 2020.

2019 had been a successful year for our market, with lots of new faces and produce tables.

The market is only open on the first Saturday of every month.

If anyone in the village would like to help with the setting up and putting away the tables, please get in touch with me.

Table set up time: 8.00am-8.30am / 11.30am-12.00pm to put them away.

Open to the public: 9.30am - 11.30am

From all the team of volunteers at the Market, we hope you had a Happy Christmas, and wish you a very Prosperous New Year.

Anne Williams, 01823 490319

Grand North Curry Quiz

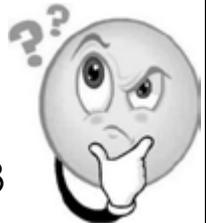
Saturday 7th March,

in the Village Hall 7pm for prompt 7.30pm start

Teams of 6, £10 per person.

Tickets available

from Jenny Satchwell – 490463



A delectable buffet will be available, and is included in the price.

Please bring your own drink (and glasses)

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New Year Wassail

Join us for a village Wassail on Friday 17th January in a celebration of apples, orchards and the New Year, the Community Woodland at White Street Recreation Ground. Last year's event was a great success and the evening is part of seasonal celebrations being coordinated by the village Wildlife Group. There will be a lantern procession from the Village school, music from the North Curry Village band, songs, food, drink, toasting and more. Starting at 6pm. If you would like to get involved, contact Tim Hill at milton3hill@yahoo.co.uk.

Did you know?..The word Wassail comes from the Old English greeting for 'be in good health', a toast offered at special times.

Plough Sunday

Students of ancient history will often claim that the invention of the plough was a greater benefit to civilisation than the invention of the wheel. How fitting therefore that the Church has a ceremony to bless this essential implement.

Plough Sunday is usually celebrated on the first Sunday after the twelve days of Christmas, this being on the 12th January in 2020.

In medieval times, spring cropping was the norm so ploughing started in the first months of the year. This was with the hope that frost and rain would help to work the freshly ploughed furrow to make a finer seed bed and a better establishment of the crop.



A token plough or sometimes several ploughs were taken to the church and blessed before work commences, along with a sample of soil and seed.

According to the Bath and Wells service for this day, a farmer says "We bring you this soil, rich soil and fertile, poor soil and stony, wet soil and waterlogged. And the seed we will sow in hopes of rich harvest. Soil and seed for your blessing we bring." The priest replies "... Bless all soil and all seed, the potential they hold, and all may have plenty and be filled. God bless the soil and the seed."

Very apt words when we consider the hunger in the world.

Tom Jeanes

Open Gardens returns for 2020!

Pencilled in for 6th/7th June,
Would you like to be involved,
either by showing off your
garden or by assisting in the
planning and organising.
Please call Lorraine on 491665



Advance Notice of very special service, 9th February 3pm

Next month, at the Parish Church, we shall be holding a service for all those children were Christened in our Church during 2019. They, their parents, godparents, families and friends, will all be specially invited, but this short Service is OPEN TO ALL, and we very much hope members of our usual Church Family will come to be part of this happy occasion.

Revd John Tyler was sincerely surprised to receive a most kind and generous Voucher for the Smokery at Christmas from the Benefice ; he sends warmest Thanks for this delightful gesture.



What does being in debt feel like?

Fearful, desperate, their world out of control and in a state of chaos, this is how people experiencing the blight of personal indebtedness are described by the local charity Taunton Area Debt Advice. TADA helps people from all walks of life by providing a free, unconditional, non-judgmental, fully confidential advice and practical support to help them become debt free.

Martin Ingrams, our local postman, is a Trustee and says "We put people back on their feet. We sort out the jumbled chaos of debt to understand where they are. We take the burden of the problems off their shoulders by being a shield from the threatening letters and telephone calls. We give them a plan, make arrangements and negotiate agreements. Then they have hope, they have structure. They can see life beyond the spiral of debt. They have a future".

TADA is supported by local churches, but offers its free debt advice to people of faith or no faith at all. The TADA Debt Advisers are regulated and authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. People can gain access to this free support by going to the web site www.tauntonareadebtadvice.uk or calling the helpline 07921 526087. TADA is a member of Community Money Advice which is a national charity with 1300 volunteers working in 160 debt advice centres across the United Kingdom.



Airfields in the South West by Brian Lane-Smith and Brian Fernley

What do you know about the airfields at Westonzoyland and Upottery and their role in WW II? Be ready in the Village Hall departure lounge from 7:30pm on Wednesday 15th January before our speakers take off at 8pm for an illustrated tour of these military airfields. Brian Fernley will talk about D Day preparations at Upottery and Brian Lane-Smith will talk about Westonzoyland, which opened in 1926 and remained in use by bombers, fighters and troop carriers until 1969.

Brian L-S is chairman of the South West Airfields Heritage Trust, which aims to preserve aviation history for future generations. Brian F's interests are aviation history, the First World War, film and photography. The Trust maintains heritage centres at Dunkeswell Airfield and Smeatharpe, nearby to Upottery airfield, displaying information, photographs and related artefacts to illustrate the history of the airfields.

As well as giving educational talks, on weekends throughout the year and evenings during the summer the Trust conducts pre-booked private views of Upottery, Culmhead and Dunkeswell airfields and information on what took place there during the second world war. Lunch, afternoon tea or dinner before or after the tour can be arranged at Dunkeswell or Upottery, making for an entertaining and interesting day out.

The North Curry Society meets on the third Wednesday of each month. Annual membership of £5 includes admission to talks, discussions and refreshments; visitors pay a small charge. Whether you are a visitor, new to the Society or an established member, we look forward to welcoming you this month at the start of our lively programme of meetings for 2020.

(Last one out of the village hall, please ensure all landing lights have been switched off...)

North Curry W.I, Jill Cox reports

Happy New Year everyone! As we leave 2019 behind we look back on what has been an eventful and successful year which concluded with our group carol service, raising over £200 for the 'Open Door' charity

We now look forward to our first get together in 2020 later this month with lunch at the Maypole Inn, but as our normal meeting for January happens to fall on New Year's Day this year there will be no meeting in the village hall until 5th February when we celebrate our 92nd birthday.

Looking ahead, there are a few tickets left for our visit to the Octagon Theatre, Yeovil, on the evening of Monday, 17th February to see Agatha Christie's 'The Mousetrap'. Seats cost £22.50 with an extra option of travelling by mini-bus available. If anyone is interested in joining us please telephone 01823 284825.

North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners, by Heather Williams



There will be no Meeting in January! Our next meeting will be on 6th February when we look forward to seeing you all again.

We hope you've all had a wonderful Christmas and wish you a very Happy New Year!

Our Christingle Service this year on 8th December was thoroughly enjoyed by the many who attended. It was heartening to see so many children there with their parents, all joining in with gusto. The beautiful orange Christingles were a delight and a huge thank you to Jenny Satchwell and her helpers for all the hard work involved in making them. The Rev John Tyler along with Reverend Deborah Kirk Officiated with their usual enthusiasm and warmth.





North Curry Coffee Shop

North Curry Coffee Shop has won a national award!

It has received the Investing in Local People Award; Janet Bennett and Sheila Brown travelled to London to collect the award from The Plunkett Foundation. The judging panel said "North Curry Coffee Shop with its dedication and unique way of saying thank you to its volunteers, through its well thought out points system, made it the stand out entry."

Each hour a volunteer works is rewarded with a point. Volunteers then nominate a charity to benefit from their volunteering. They went on to say, "The points scheme was both innovative and a great way to reward the volunteers and the community at the same time." So, if you would like to be a part of this success then please consider joining our volunteer team. Pick up a form from the Coffee Shop.

Opening hours: 10am – 4.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday
(January)

Burrowbridge Bingo

Come and join us at Coronation Hall

We try to meet every two weeks on a Saturday evening at 7.30pm, in the Millennium Room of the Coronation Hall. We play for small cash prizes and an accumulating cash Jackpot plus coffee break raffle with small raffle prizes donated by members.

A full 10 games as well as two jackpot rounds costs £5 tea/coffee and biscuits just 30p.

For more details, just phone Sue or Brian Walker on 01823 698500.



Pop along – you'll be very welcome Directions to the hall – on reaching Burrowbridge traffic lights, take the left turn at the crossroads, before the bridge, into West Yeo Road. The hall is about 500 yards on the right, with plenty of parking. Go on with you.... what are you waiting for?

Conservation Works at St Peter & St Paul North Curry with Wrantage

As anyone who has been to the church or walked through the churchyard since October will know we have had Crowstep builders on site doing a variety of conservation jobs.

WHY

You might ask why this work has been done now. The answer is that the churchyard wall in the north western corner had tumbled down and the lych gates were damaged and difficult to use. However much more work has been done. It was not essential to do it this year but if we said that every year, we would inevitably have a major problem in the future. As temporary custodians of a beautiful old building we wish and need to hand it on to future generations in good order.

WHAT

The work which has been undertaken was identified in the Quinquennial Inspection by the church architect which the PCC is obliged to have done as the name suggests every five years. Ours was last done in 2016 and initially we undertook the most urgent work to make the building watertight.

We have had work done on the North, East and South churchyard walls, the base of the preaching cross, the lych gates, the statues on the south Porch, and some parts of paths.

The contractors also erected a substantial scaffold to enable our own labour to replace weak links in the chandelier chain.

More obviously the chancel has been covered with scaffolding which has enabled the contractor to "defrass" the stone work (i.e. scrub off the loose stone to find a more weather proof surface) pin the parapets where the stone had big cracks and apply special resin to smaller cracks. Some attention has also been paid to the downpipes carrying water off the roof. Uniquely the chancel cross (the cross on the east gable end of the church) has been restored (it was missing some curlicues). This is unique because the rest of the work has been conservation rather than restoration.

Indeed Gary (head of Crowstep and who worked on our church back in Michael Lewis time) said he will have done his job if we cannot tell that much has been done. Together with our architect, considerable care had been given to matching mortars and replacement stone both as to colour and consistency. The contractors have conscientiously done slightly more than was originally specified within the contract price as they had men and materials on site.

HOW MUCH

Even though “there is not much to see” the whole project has cost in excess of £50,000.

However, we shall be able to reclaim the VAT, last year we obtained a heritage lottery grant of £10,000, and the Church Commissioners who are mostly responsible for the structure (but not the decoration) of the chancel will pay £20,400 towards the bill. Two kind sponsors have paid for the conservation of Christ and the two Saints on the south porch. This leaves the PCC with a net cost of around £10,000. The PCC felt able to commit some reserves to the project following the Planned Giving campaign in 2018 which means the “normal” outgoings can be met from a stable income stream. All the other fund-raising activities—produce market, 200 club, quizzes, exhibitions and concerts also make a very necessary contribution.

In addition, a benevolent member of the congregation has himself rebuilt the two wooden kissing gates at either end of the path between the Fosse and Moor Lane.

WHAT NEXT

Most of the work identified in the quinquennial has been done. But we know that work is needed on the cross of the preaching cross, the nave and isle parapets and on the downpipes and on some remaining sections of churchyard walls. However, we hope that minimum repairs will be needed in 2020. A new schedule of work will be identified in the quinquennial of 2021. In 2020 we may have to pay attention to some of the trees in the churchyard following an arboriculturist's survey. Additionally, we now know that the bell frame in the church tower needs very substantial repair or more likely replacement if we are to continue to be able to ring in the church.

David Akerman
Churchwarden

The 200 Club always has room for one more! Players must be 18yrs+ to join. Only **£18 per year (£1.50/month)**

Prizes each month £30/ £20/ £10

Proceeds for churchyard maintenance

To sign up, contact Sue Bethune on 01823 490179

Cheque payments to North Curry PCC

Standing Order/ BACS payments to

North Curry PCC – Account No: 00514650, Sort Code: 30-98-45



Do you have ME/CFS?

Are you aged 18-25?

Do you live in the UK?

For my PhD at the University of Exeter I am undertaking research aiming to better understand the experiences of young people with ME/CFS.

I'm looking for people who would be willing to share stories of what their life is like in interviews (in person or using Skype video calls) and photo diaries.

If you think you might be interested in taking part, please get in touch for more information (you're under no obligation to take part if you do).

Or if you know someone who might be, please pass this on to them!

Louise Toller
Department of Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology
University of Exeter

Email: lt328@exeter.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr. Hannah Farrimond
(H.R.Farrimond@exeter.ac.uk)



Church of St Peter & St Paul, North Curry

CAN WE SAVE OUR BELLS?

North Curry church bells are approaching crisis point ...

Virtually unchanged for over 200 years, they have performed miraculously over this time. But they're feeling their age.

An inspection by the country's leading bellfounders last year, and now a recent survey by church structural engineers, have confirmed that our ancient bellframe is reaching the end of its working life. A pre-Victorian oak structure, it has done well to support the 4 tons of bells all this time, but it is increasingly fragile and unable to withstand regular repair. It is showing movement when the bells are rung – this makes some bells hard to ring, and gives cause for concern on safety grounds.

The bells themselves need attention too, as do the various fittings which attach them to the frame – headstocks, bearings, wheels, and so on.

The solution: a programme to recast, retune and rehang the bells on a new metal frame. The cost: up to £200,000.

This is not a once-in-a-generation project but one which only comes once every few generations. The aim will be to future-proof our bell tower for the next 200 years. If we don't tackle this soon, the bells will fall silent ...

It's a big challenge but with an organised programme of fund-raising including approaches to national bodies – it can be done. If our forbears succeeded, surely we can too ...

In the meantime we're already having to cut back the amount of ringing we do – and sometimes resorting to the hand bells ...

You are likely to hear more about this so your support will be welcome !

North Curry bells – past, present and future

The past

Our Church has been a dominant structure from the top of the hill for hundreds of years: overlooking the levels and being a symbol to people in many different ways. Placed gracefully on top of the building is our beautiful octagonal tower, supporting eight mighty bells which when rung can be heard for many miles.

Records show that there have been bells at this church as far back as 1586, calling people to church on a Sunday. Likewise letting people rejoice in couples getting married and saying farewell to loved ones as they depart this earth. History shows that bells have also been used as warning systems for thousands of years: in World War II bells were used to warn people of bombing raids and also rung out when the war ended. In 1811 our 6 largest bells came to our tower, then in 1894 they were joined by the 2 lightest bells we have today. Originally rung from the ground floor – in the space occupied by the nave altar today – in 1833 the bells were moved higher up in the tower, allowing what was then the bellchamber to become today's ringing chamber. Hence instead of a team of eight ringers getting in the way of the congregation, they are now hidden away up the spiral staircase accessed from the door at the foot of the tower. So North Curry's bells are a very traditional part of the village. Whilst only certain of us are regular attenders at church services, the bells are heard by all, and are an essential part not only of the traditional Sunday, but in particular too of major celebrations such as Christmas and Easter when the church is at its fullest. Not just that, but the bells are also used for the church clock chimes, sounding every quarter day and night. We know indeed that they are part of people's lives – when following a problem some months ago the chimes were stopped for a while, there was general unrest around the village ! Whilst in this day and age we all have instant ways of knowing what the time is, the distant chimes of the church clock are a reassuring sound echoing in our subconscious and somehow giving a sense of permanence: something to be treasured in this fast moving world.

Regularly used over the years, they have stood the test of time well – a tribute to our forbears who installed, maintained and rang the bells: particularly considering the lack of modern equipment, power tools and so on, which we take for granted today. Like everything though, if used enough, things start to wear out ...

The present

We have been very fortunate over the years, and with good maintenance and a handy team of steeple keepers, our bells have sounded out over

the village and surrounding areas for all of those years. But we have now come to a time where local skills are not enough to keep the bells ringing. Over the past 6 months articles have been written for the church magazine to highlight to the local community some of the problems which have started to arise with the bell frame, likewise with the bells themselves, and the various fixtures which connect the bells with the frame: wheels, headstocks, bearings and so on. The bell ringers felt that it was only right to let the village know that these problems were increasingly.

The actual frame – the all-important structure which supports the bells – is in itself a piece of pre-Victorian engineering which has performed its task brilliantly over more than 200 years. A solid oak structure, it has nonetheless been weakened over time as new bells have been installed and other modifications made. Cracks in the wood are evident, and the metal struts which hold parts of it together are increasingly worn and bent. Furthermore, attached to it is a smaller metal frame which supports three bells: this was installed about a hundred years ago when new bells were introduced, and is in itself in need of renewal. Between them, there is growing anxiety about their ability to support the four tons of metal up there which the bells represent.

What is more, the frame is not embedded in the tower walls as would be the case with a modern frame: it simply rests on supporting beams above the ringing chamber. This is showing increasing movement, evidenced by the difficulty in ringing certain lighter bells when the heavy bells are ringing at the same time. All in all, whilst there have of course always been maintenance issues to resolve, the frequency of such issues has intensified in recent months to the extent that firstly the demands are getting beyond the ability of the local team to respond to them, and secondly increasing health and safety concerns.

To confirm our fears, we engaged a visit from Taylors of Loughborough, bellfounders and bellhangers. They supply and install bells throughout the world and recently completed the bell restoration at St Mary's in Taunton. They undertook a thorough inspection of our bells now and recommended that a new bell frame be fitted, submitting a quotation for various options, including casting new bells.

Following this, there has now been a detailed survey by structural engineers which has concluded that action must be taken. This has given us an independent opinion following the inspection by Taylors, confirming in particular the movement of the frame during ringing as well as pointing to further deterioration in the frame itself.

Both inspections have outlined the possibilities of repairing and strengthening the frame, but leave us in no doubt that this will be a challenging task, and an expensive item itself. Added to which there are significant numbers of other items which need attention: namely all the

fitments which connect the bells to the frame and enable the ringing to happen – headstocks, bearings, wheels and so on. Not forgetting the clappers which are an essential part of the noise we make – very heavy items which need careful handling, one of which indeed comes loose on a regular basis at the moment ...

The challenge is thus to decide whether to attempt a repair – or whether to replace ...

The future

The bellhangers have outlined three possible options:

(1) Rehang and retune the bells, provide new bell fittings and strengthen the bellframe.

This will involve creating an opening in the ringing chamber ceiling, dismantling and lowering the bells, and sending to the bellhanger's works for cleaning and tuning. New tie bars, brackets, strengthening steels to be fitted to the bell frame.

(2) As above, but additionally providing a new bellframe.

The new frame to be cast iron, with steel girders.

(3) As (2), but additionally recasting the bells.

The bells to be cast in the bellhanger's own foundry.

The costs involved are estimated to range from around £90,000 for the first option, £115,000 for the second, and £170,000 for the third. There will be VAT to be paid additionally, which should be reclaimed subsequently but will need to be funded.

It can be argued that the first option, whilst the lowest in cost, is the most expensive in terms of the end result. This is because of the very significant nature of the work involved to restore an ancient wooden frame. It is worth noting that a long guarantee on such work might be difficult to obtain.

The second option profits from the advantages of using new materials to install a modern metal frame, without incurring the labour and materials needed to repair the old frame. A new metal frame would be securely anchored in the walls of the tower, unlike the current setup which rests on the belfry floor.

The third option is the ideal package, profiting from the opportunity to update the bells and "future-proof" the tower for the next 200 years. It will allow the bells to be reconfigured as a lighter peal of 10 bells as opposed to the current eight. This will make them easier to ring, particularly for younger ringers at the learning stage, and benefit from modern fitments with latest technology.

What are we going to do?

Following the surveyor's report it has been agreed that the bells can keep being rung, but this will involve additional maintenance and increased close inspections in order to ensure that everything is safe. In effect this means a belfry inspection prior to each ringing session. The serious movement in the frame which has been confirmed, and the cracks in the wood which have been established, mean we can do nothing less.

So we have had to start cutting back on the ringing, and also how many bells we can ring at any one time. The tenor bell – that's the heaviest at just under a ton – is unfortunately out of action following an accident with its wheel: which on examination was found to be suffering from woodworm. Repairing that cannot be justified at the moment and will await the time we come to replace all the wheels. The emphasis in the short term will be just to ring the lighter bells, without incurring the stresses on the frame incurred by the heavier bells.

In essence, the bells and frame have deteriorated far more than was initially realised. As time goes on things will only get worse until we cannot ring any more.

The photos of some of the bells and the frame illustrate some of the issues which have arisen. It is all looking very tired, with past repairs on the frame now slowly failing.

A new sound for North Curry

In 2020 we will be starting a campaign to raise money to replace what we have in the tower. A major project for the village and the church, it's an ideal opportunity to take the bells out and replace with a new frame, mechanics and bells. Fund raising events will be announced over the coming year, and initiatives pursued at local, regional and national level. Charitable status will be sought for the project and approaches made to appropriate grant giving bodies. Many towers throughout the country have had success in renewing their bells – North Curry can do it too ...

What can you do ?

We will be keeping the village informed about the initiatives being pursued, and all those who can support them will help immensely. Large or small, every contribution will count, whether for example –

- You may be able to sponsor a bell. We will be giving the community an opportunity to purchase a part of the project.
- It won't matter if it is a nut and bolt or a new bell, your name will be placed in a special book detailing your donation, what part this went towards and any message you would like to record. This will then be kept in the church archives when the project is finished so that generations to come can see how you helped.

- We have had commissioned two drawings of the church by a young bell ringer who has allowed us to make 100 prints of each. Available for purchase framed or unframed.

SO – please join us in this campaign to restore the bells to their former glory. If we don't take action, try to imagine never hearing them again. Not having the opportunity to celebrate a family member on their wedding day; or saying goodbye to the person you love. Not hearing the clock strike its hourly tune. A silent village.

It's a huge undertaking, so support in whatever form will be gratefully received – we need your help to make it happen and so keep alive a village tradition that has run for hundreds of years. They are the people's bells. Let's leave a legacy that the village can be proud of so that future generations can hear what we hear today.

Further information: Darren Woodyer, Tower Captain 01823 690162
07718 059071 email gograndsiredoubles@gmail.com

For pictures and information please visit our website:
www.northcurrybells.com

See the display at the back of the church or in the Village Store window for more information and pictures.

Bell Tower Appeal

If you would like to make a donation towards this project, please back to

North Curry Bellringers:
Account: 38229860
Sort Code: 30-91-91

or give a cheque in person to Paul or Darren.

Photo Right:

One of the many perishing joist fitting to the main bell frame.



North Curry Church

Is part of the Benefice of Athelney, along with the parishes of Stoke St. Gregory, Lyng and Burrowbridge – the Parish Church is frequently referred to as 'The Cathedral of the Moors', and from the River Tone valley it is easy to understand why. It was built on a site of an earlier Norman church in about 1300 in the Decorated style, using Ham Hill stone, blue lias stone, and some grey sandstone from a quarry within the parish. About a hundred years later it was updated in the Perpendicular style when the roofs of the nave and aisles were raised to accommodate larger windows.

Evidences of the original pitches can be seen both outside on the south and east faces of the tower, and inside on its west arch. At this time the upper stage of the tower and the parapets were added, as was the interesting collection of gargoyles and hunkypunks.

The North Curry Parish Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials date from 1539 and are almost complete.

The churchyard, just over two acres, is in two parts, with the lower 'new' part has been in use since 1952. The upper 'old' part has gravestones that are centuries old, and includes war memorials. A plan of the graves, complete with the names of the occupants, can be found in the church porch. This is a place of solace and tranquillity, with seating on the north (far) side affording magnificent views across the River Tone to yonder hills in all directions. In springtime, the natural beauty is never more apparent, when the flora carpets amongst the headstones and trees.

Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals

If you are interested in getting married, having a church blessing for a civil marriage or organising a baptism or funeral please contact one of the churchwardens.

The statutory fees are set by the Church of England and a fee list is displayed in the church porch, or is available online from www.churchofengland.org.

Additional local fees may be due in accordance with the services required. At the time of your enquiry, all fee options will be explained.

There are also regulations governing the condition of the churchyard and graves, designed to ensure it remains a special peaceful place. Again, a copy is available in the church porch.

Hiring the Church

Our church is available for hire, for events such as concerts, talks and exhibitions for which we make a reasonable charge. Contact David Walker should you wish to know more on fees and availability.

Will Planning and Legacies

Having a Will in place, for when the time comes, is strongly recommended for all individuals, to ensure your final wishes are clearly laid out to friends and family.

Planned Giving and Donations

Planned Giving, by standing order, is a regular charitable payment (or pledge) to the church. This type of giving is an important and integral aspect of our finances, as the majority of our income comes through the planned giving scheme.

Donation pledges by standing order are easier to administer, both for you and us. Regular planned giving can also attract tax gift aid, enabling us to boost your donation by 25%. Donations can be given monthly, quarterly, or yearly, and the amount is very much up to you. You are not beholden once started, and can be cancelled at anytime. Please contact our Treasurer, Rob Ellis 01823 490599, for the appropriate forms to complete, or to discuss your giving pledge. Standing order mandates are not the same as direct debit mandates. The amounts and dates are fixed, and the instruction to your bank is completely controlled by you.

One off donations can be made anytime – cheques payable to North Curry PCC, and can be mailed to the Church address – see inside back page for details. BACS to North Curry PCC – Account No: 00514650, Sort Code: 30-98-45

Prayer for the Athelney Benefice

Almighty God,

Who made all things and sustains all things;

We come together remembering the past and full of hope for the future;

We thank you for the part you call us to play in our Benefice's continuing story.

Lord, bind us more closely together and unite us in the work of your kingdom in our communities;

Help us to draw on the gifts and talents in our midst and to use them in your service.

May we be a welcoming and loving community, united in worshipping you and open to your guiding Spirit.

Holy Spirit guide us at this time of uncertainty and change:

Fill us with vision and energy; make us faithful in prayer and worship, that we may discover your way for the future and see your kingdom grow.

We ask these things in the name of your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Church Opening and Closing Rota

Sunday, week commencing during:

January

*5th Tony Brooker

12th David Walker

*19th Ralph Roberts

26th Tom Jeanes

February

Rota to be confirmed!

* 8am service

Commonwealth War Graves

Private Harry Udell Gannett, Devonshire Regiment died 13th January 1919
Private Charles William Stodgell, Devonshire Regiment died 2nd February 1919
Second Lieutenant Peter John Carr , Royal Artillery died 11th October 1941
Sgt John Bernard Hebditch, Royal Airforce Volunteer Res. died 1st December 1943
Information taken from the War Graves Commission website

Register of:

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals (July 2019 - December 2019)

We ask for God's Blessing on all the following

Baptisms

James William Parrington, Luca Pine	August 2019
Oliver Nathaniel Smith, Noah Jeffrey Chedzoy	August 2019
Felix William Tickner, Grace Audrey Tickner	December 2019

Weddings

Robert Walker/ Anna Brice	October 2019
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Funerals

Tim Guernsey	October 2019
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Health and Safety

A reminder notice to all volunteers working in the church.

Personal Responsibility

It is the duty of each and every person using or visiting the church and churchyard to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others.

Specific Considerations

It is anticipated that a fully revised policy will be adopted at the next PCC meeting. Meanwhile in addition to exercising personal responsibility it is essential that:

- Anyone using a ladder or reaching high places is accompanied.
- Ideally "lone working" will be kept to a minimum. Any lone workers must have an operating mobile phone on their person and ensure that someone knows where they are and that they have returned safely. No one should enter the cellar (boiler room) or bell chamber (above the ringing chamber) or onto any church roof unless accompanied.
- No easily combustible materials or sources of ignition may be left unattended in the church.
- Those who close the church must check diligently that there is no one left in the church.

David Akerman and Mary Piers, Churchwardens

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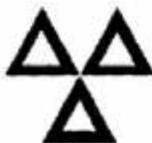
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Honorary Associate Priest	Rev'd John Tyler	01460 281574
Reader	Ralph Roberts	01823 490933
Churchwarden	David Akerman	01823 490234
Churchwarden & Verger	Mary Piers	01823 491434
Churchwardens Emeritus	Tony Brooker	01823 490422
	Janet Dare	01823 490747
PCC Secretary/ Safe Guarding	Helen Griffiths	01823 491298
PCC Treasurer	Rob Ellis	01823 490599
Tower Captain	Darren Woodyer	01823 690162
Flower List Organiser	Lorraine Bryan Brown	01823 491665
Events Bookings Secretary	David Walker	01823 491231
Produce Market Organiser	Anne Williams	07531 382078
Little Angels/ Electoral Roll	Jenny Satchwell	01823 490463
Choir	Jean Smith	01823 490961
PCC 200 Club	Sue Bethune	01823 490179
Magazine Editor	Rob Ellis, email: ncurrymag@gmail.com	

PCC (Parochial Church Council) Address, for general correspondences
St Peter and St Paul Church, Church Road, North Curry, Somerset. TA3 6LJ
(Post box by kissing gate, at vicar's parking area)

The church website is www.northcurrychurch.co.uk

Other useful numbers for North Curry

Coffee Shop	01823 491414	
Little Acorns	01823 491615	www.littleacornsnorthcurry.co.uk
Parish Council Offices	01823 490136	www.northcurry.com
Post Office/ Stores	01823 490261	
Primary School	01823 490423	www.northcurryschool.co.uk
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The views expressed in the magazine are those of the individuals/societies who send in items. The deadline for contributions is the 13th of the previous month. The editor reserves the right to change any copy provided without recourse to the contributor. Copyright 2019.

Gathering and use of information in carrying out its tasks, North Curry PCC is involved in collecting personal data, addresses etc. We take privacy and confidentiality seriously, and fully comply with the principles of the United Kingdom GDPR/ Data Protection Act 2018.

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