St Peter's Church Report

Thank you for asking me to give a report on the parish church.

I'm pleased to say that it is still there(!) and the long outstanding repair work has begun. Approximately £11K has been spent on the tower roof to make it watertight and it's good to see the great fish of Moulton re gilded swinging in the wind. A similar amount is being spent on leaks in other parts of the roof with work beginning very soon and so you will guess that reserves are almost exhausted though we have received some support from legacies grants and donations. The removal by the government Listed places of worship grant scheme whereby we could apply for refund of VAT on repair has been keenly felt so our building costs have increased by 20% in addition to the significant increases in building costs.

We continue to apply for grants and hope to build funds sufficient to finish the work at the West End of the church started about 12 years ago when the loo and servery were installed so that the vestry can be completed and badly designed flooring replaced. We also hope to repair the external walls and try to prevent the increasing water damage to the chancel walls which make the inside of the church look unattractive. We are also undertaking work on rotting internal floorboards.

You may have noticed that many of the displays from inside the church have now been removed because they had become faded and I felt the church looked like a museum rather than a living active place of worship. A children's area is being created which I anticipate will prove as attractive to church visitors as that in Gazeley church.

Indeed, there are many visitors to St Peters undertaking the three churches Walk and to capitalise on those visitors we have installed a permanent card reader which is proving a useful additional source of income.

We are very grateful to the parish council for their annual contribution towards the maintenance of the churchyard which is costly particularly bearing in mind the Flint wall repairs and we spend £220 per month for most of the year on our grass cutting contractor.

I must pay tribute particularly to Jane Horsnell our sole church warden who bears much of the responsibility for the building which should be shared by two people. On the other hand, Geoff Dobson as Treasurer and Paul Dixon as buildings officer do a sterling job in maintaining the building and the considerable amount of paperwork involved in repairs and grant applications necessary for listed building! Our Secretary John Ford is also very active in seeking grants.

We are also most grateful to the many other volunteers who arrange services clean and decorate the church as well as organised the fund-raising events the most popular of which

so far seems to be the Easter Monday egg hunt and refreshments in the church which raised just short of £1,000. It's always slightly embarrassing to have to admit that the church has to pay for me and although I now run 8 churches with 7 church councils Moulton is required to pay £13,000 a year. Of course, for the last two years and for the next year we have been and continue to be well supported by a full-time curate Fr Raul Arkaia. Other clergy support is welcomed. We have an extremely talented organist in Phillip Asher and additionally once a month Mr. Alan Walton from Kentford.

Attendances at our services have been slowly rising for the past couple of years so that we usually average around 25 twice a month but Easter day saw an astonishing 120 and Christmas Day 170 all for Communion.

On the other hand, funerals and baptisms continue their decades long gentle decline and surprisingly this year we have had many fewer weddings.

Raul and I visit several people in the parish on a regular basis and are happy to hear of more. I am happy to be the first point of contact for those seeking assistance from the Charity but they are very few.

We continue to have excellent links with our church school which has achieved the highest accolade from the National Inspection system for excellence in Spirituality and Christian Education.

Thank you all for your support for me and for the church in Moulton which seems to be in remarkably good heart and growing despite gloom and depression we hear so often about the Church of England and particularly the rural church.

Chris

Revd Canon Chris Childs Team Rector Forest Heath

18th May 2026