

Once again it is my pleasure to give a brief account of what has happened in the parish: not just to point out successes and strengths but also to identify and suggest where we should be going in the future, and I do with some trepidation as some of what I will be saying will relate to my successor at some time in the future, and I have seen too many cases where the legacy of the former rector has cursed the ministry of his successor! I begin by thanking the members of the Select Vestry for their hard work and dedication during the past year. Our sub-committee system which we have has worked well, both enabling Select Vestry members to use their skills to the best advantage and enabling the Select Vestry to work efficiently and often enjoyably. They also enable us to harness the gifts of parishioners outside the actual membership of the Select Vestry One member was overheard to say they were enjoying Select Vestry meetings, the crack was good! Certainly there have been no rows and a good deal of humour which has enabled vision to thrive.

It hasn't been an easy year and we are blessed with a number of very good behind the scenes sub-committee whose members have put a great deal of hard work outside the public eye. The Finance Committee is one example, where we have some parishioners with financial skills and experience in banking and accounting who not only give us great advice but also undertake such tasks as running the sustentation scheme through weekly envelopes and standing orders, which includes counting and accounting the cash and lugging it down to banks which increasingly don't seem to want to handle money! Brian Brown, our Treasurer, could not undertake his task without their help, advice and guidance. Being Hon Treasurer is no longer a matter of writing down figures and totting them up. We must now comply with the Charities legislation which involves a great deal of paperwork and online form filling but it does have some good points, including a future provision that we can reclaim VAT and hopefully from next year on, we should benefit in this regard, as well as from income tax refunds from donations which have become a major source of income for a number of years past.

We also have a Glebe Committee. This is under the guidance of our indefatigable Glebewarden, Ian Watkins. I do not think anyone who has seen Ian at work quite understands how he does it, while at the same time running a business and a growing family! I will give you some idea of the schemes we have undertaken this year: trimming the graveyard trees (one of which was collapsing into our neighbours garden), replacing the vandalised rectory hedge, underseeing improvement work in the Parish Centre, restoring the Old School House, repair of wall problems and ceiling problems in St Andrew's Church (two separate items both of which needed urgent and unexpected attention) and a major project in St Doulagh's Church, the latter being undertaken by Ken McAllister. This has been delayed by a year as we were not able to meet the onerous guidelines laid down by the County Council, but will be undertaken this year. The good news is that our grant will be far greater than we would have received had the project gone ahead as originally planned. We have also improved the exterior lighting of St Doulagh's thanks to the Friends of St Doulagh's and a grant from the Dublin Airport Authority Community Fund. Last year Ian said to me one day that we would have everything in shipshape order by the end of the year, and nothing much would have to be done for years: Ian is a hard worker but no prophet as no sooner said that bits fell off the ceiling in St Andrew's and the rectory hedge was vandalised! A glebewarden's work never ends!

We as a parish are employers, and the Select Vestry must not only pay and insure our paid staff, but also ensure that all employment legislation is adhered to, and a sub-Committee which works behind the scenes is the Human Resources Committee which tries to see that our employees and contractors are happy in what they do and that our responsibilities are exercised both legally and morally.

Another sub-Committee, headed up by Alan Jones and Claire Craig is the

Communications Sub-Committee. It looks after communications, child and vulnerable adult protection and data and privacy protection. Both these sub-committees work behind the scenes and it is only right that their work is recorded as people ask, well, who are these people and what do they do on the Select Vestry? A committee which also operates in the parish but is answerable to the Diocese is the panel for Safeguarding Trust, ensuring that we are compliant with regulations for child and safeguarding adult protection. For many years it consisted of myself, Susie Hall and Clive Brooks, and Claire has agreed to join this panel and has undertaken the necessary training, This will strengthen and ensure the link between Select Vestry and Safeguarding Trust during any vacancy in the parish.

There are many other names who deserve mention. A Church is not about committees, or buildings, but about worship and witness. During the past years we have been enriched by the preaching and spiritual ministry of our Lay Readers, Tom Healy and David Rea, and also I have been grateful for the cover provided by Kingsley Long and Ken Sherwood who have always been there when needed. Our Churchwardens have been active and present, and in St Doulagh's we have been blessed by John and Jennifer Young who have done so much to transform St Doulagh's into a welcoming church for those who come to it. John has a gift of a good sense of humour built on a strong spiritual and theological base. There is a phrase, 'a god-send': they are literally just that!

There are many new faces there, an increasing number drawn from the new housing developments being built in that part of the parish, and I will mention the help given with refreshments afterwards by Reet Dreimanis and Dr Lucien Pop, and the support given to John and Jennifer by Ken McAllister and Aimée Linehan.

Last summer contacts were made with many families who have recently moved into the southern part of the parish. These contacts have been very well received by people from many backgrounds, and there have been many interesting conversations. We do not seek to get people who attend other churches to transfer, but I hope that they will have a better understanding of what the Church of Ireland stand for. Some do turn up, and I have noticed they have tended to return and I suspect that is due to the hospitality that is evident! In this regard, thanks are due to Jonathan Stokes who has undertaken the design of a very attractive flyer.

Ministry in the southern part of the parish will be something which we will need to keep working on, and I presume that it will be included in our needs and achievements by the parochial nominators when a vacancy does occur. One of the things we must remember is that some 7000 houses have been or will be built in the Northern Fringe of Dublin city which is within our boundaries, but that that area extends from the Clayton Hotel to Clongriffin Station, but thanks to the airport approaches, will not be more than a mile deep. This does not include areas of Fingal which are already been developed along Kinsealy Lane and south of Portmarnock, and I suspect that we as the Church of Ireland will have to consider a separate presence in this area at some stage in the future, possibly jointly with Howth Parish. I hope that this will be taken with vision, both for a Church of Ireland presence, but also ecumenically, and to this end, I have been developing contacts with Fr Gerry Corcoran, PP of Donaghmede, which faces exactly the same problems and challenges.

Jemie Heffelfinger has been our youth worker for the past six years. Circumstances are changing, and Jamie will be finishing his time with us at the end of next month. Jamie and Katie have done a great deal of work, not always in the easiest of circumstances, but I want to outline what he has achieved. One is the Messy Church evenings each month, another is helping with the monthly toddler service and a third has been in exercising a very important ministry on behalf of the Church of Ireland at secondary school level in Scoil Íosa.

The new Select Vestry will have to look at how we will be able to go forward and build

on what Jamie has done. We have had offers from some of the early 20s in the parish to undertake Messy Church and Solome Keegan has offered to undertake this. Incidentally, Solome is probably the youngest member ever of the Select Vestry but has not been overawed by the range of grey heads and great talents gathered around the table! The Toddler Service will also continue with the help of Sharon Heath and that this very successful service has continued for many years is a great tribute to Karl Daly, whose idea it was over twenty years ago! Youth and children's ministry are a great challenge today: we need to remember that many of our youth groups were formed at a time when the '*Ne Temere*' decree and associated attitudes were strong, and it was necessary that our young people socialised together if the Church of Ireland was to survive. Many parishes that once had thriving youth clubs have lost them and problems facing us face many of our parishes today. The future may well be in parishes working together within a rural deanery and this is being discussed seriously in our own area.

Thanks are also due to all others who help in many ways: to Choir and organist in St Doulagh's and Richard McAllister and his team who operate the CD players in St Doulagh's, to Tom and Ruaidhri Delaney for their care with the graveyards and churches, to Olive Haynes and the Mothers' Union members, to Lesley McElhinney and her staff, and the Board of Management in St Andrew's School, to our faithful Parish Administrator, Anne Taplin whose grasp of every situation, and her tact even under pressure never ceases to amaze me, and to Ken McAllister, Vivien Pigott and the Friends of St Doulagh's

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