

Report on Visitor Experience at All Hallows for the APCM on 2 April 2017

The year 2016-17 was begun with the sad upheaval around Laurence's death. Much of the numerous, small practicalities involved in maintenance and presentation of the church needed to be taken up by others in the staff team and this took some months to work out. Firstly, realising all the myriad things that Laurence did quietly before any of us arrived in the mornings took a while and then working out how to allocate all those tasks elsewhere also took time to organise. We are now at a stage where the staff team has had elements of their job descriptions reorganised and we are all settling into these changes well.

- For Easter 2016 I wrote a new *Stations of the Cross* booklet that enabled visitors to guide themselves around the church in prayer. This was made freely available in Holy Week and was also used during the church's own observations. This will again be available in Holy Week this year.
- Summer activities for families took a change in direction in 2016 with tables of various activities left out permanently in the South aisle for the month of August. These were invigilated by the Volunteer Welcomers and myself and included the usual children's exploring trails (that are available at all times in the shop), a new trail designed (in collaboration with a local cartoonist) for visiting children who may not speak English and a Saxon Runes worksheet (for visiting children who may wish to just sit quietly). Added to all this was a worked out system of brass rubbing that allowed visitors to help themselves and leave a suggested donation for materials. All of this was accounted a success and we had many happy young visitors engaged in the church environment.
- November brought the latest Roman invasion from education theatre company Clio's. Fifteen classes of 30 children partook in this bi-annual project with good success. This project is a very well-oiled machine now and it brings solid numbers of school groups to visit us. The feedback is always most positive.
- The busy Christmas season was something of a challenge to the staff team with no Laurence, Angie's mobility being curtailed by her foot injury and changes to our catering arrangements of previous years. For our packed list of events, all hands 'manned the pumps' with spirit and energy and the venue was managed well. This was enhanced with the inauguration of the new audio-visual system allowing visitors seated in North and South aisles to see the Sanctuary on screen as well as live-streaming chosen events via our website. A practical side-note - the necessary decommissioning of the cookers in the upstairs kitchen came as a surprise to some accustomed to using that space for their annual events.
- A very happy and jolly lunch was held at the Vicarage in February to thank our Volunteer Welcomers and City Guides for all that they do to support the daily life of the church. Each member of these teams is usually alone (apart from staff on site of course) during their allocated times and so this was a most enjoyable chance for the whole group to get together, swap stories and catch up. Many thanks indeed to the Vicar and Revd Sophia who catered.
- February's half-term holiday saw a repeat of the laid-out activity tables in the South aisle for the whole of the week. It is planned to offer this to our visitors in the May half-term and for the month of August once more.
- Clio's company are currently in residence once more with their Saxon play. Fifteen more classes will be involved in this immersive theatre project by the end of March.

We are delighted to welcome two new Volunteer Welcomers, Reggie Haynes and Chris Ayliffe, to the regular team and we are also about to welcome two more City Guides to the rota when it begins in April. This aspect of the welcome All Hallows offers is vital and we continue to be enormously grateful to these kind and generous people.

In the matter of visitor resources, I continue to present information posters about Christian feasts and seasons on display in the church, we have a new personal guided tour app that visitors can download to a smartphone, and we are working to increase the number of languages our visitor leaflets are available in. I also continue to monitor and update all descriptions in the Museum as new information comes in to be incorporated and to respond to current events with prayer suggestions and resources.

Adey Grummet 22 March 2017