

ST MARGARET'S PARISH CHURCH, WESTHORPE

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2025

The Reverend Catriona Brinkley was licensed as our Priest in September 2024 and is settling down well in her new post. Catriona takes regular services at St Margaret's and is getting to know her parishioners. In April, Catriona visited the Westhorpe Craft Group to show her collection of embroidered stoles which form part of her clerical vestments and shared the stories and symbolism behind each one. Two services are regularly held each month with the bellringers in attendance before the service. Our Act of Remembrance in the churchyard and the Carol Service were both well attended.

Since the installation of the restored bells and the siting of our audio tour in the church, we have seen a marked increase in the number of visitors. Groups of bellringers from other churches have visited St Margaret's on several occasions and the U3A Church Interest Group from Bury St Edmunds spent a morning with us in April to learn about the history of the church building and the village of Westhorpe. Visitors from overseas include those from the USA and Australia – generally in search of family history.

The book table is an asset to the church and nets us a steady income. We are grateful to residents who keep us supplied with books in good condition. In March, we installed a card reader in the church to make it simpler for visitors to make donations. The gift of a votive candle stand was gratefully received in November and lighting a candle in remembrance of a loved one or as a prayer is providing comfort for many.

We were awarded a grant from the Quick Wins Diocesan scheme in March which has allowed us to replace the defective floodlights in the chancel. These have now been replaced with four LED lamps which give good lighting and a warm glow to the area. The repair and restoration of the north aisle windows is underway. Contractors have been appointed and work should begin in mid-July 2025.

