

Chaplaincy of St James, Fuerteventura

Annual General Meeting - Monday 22 May 2023

Church Wardens' Report - Graham Adgie and Robert Swift

APRIL 2022

We began our roles as Church Wardens after being appointed at the Annual General Meeting on 25 April 2022. Neither of us had prior experience of this role as we headed towards an interregnum with our Chaplain Bob Horrocks due to retire at the end of September 2022.

May 2022

A Vacancy Sub-Group of the Chaplaincy Council had been established months earlier to prepare documents for the appointment of a new Chaplain. The Chaplaincy Council at its meeting on 23 May approved the documents. Bob thanked all those involved in the work. The Council noted that they were now responsible for the next stages of the process under the direction of the Church Wardens. Bob outlined the procedure to follow with the Wardens and Secretary responsible for setting a time and date for a Vacancy meeting to implement the recruitment process.

June 2022

June turned into a busy month.

Bob was taken seriously ill with septicaemia at the beginning of the month. This involved a week in hospital and then a few weeks of enforced rest at home followed by a phased return to work during July. We were very thankful for the prayer support offered by so many during this difficult time and for those within the chaplaincy who covered everything during Bob's illness. It gave those in the chaplaincy team an idea of the breadth of what they would need to cover during the interregnum.

We held a special Vacancy meeting on 6 June to approve all recruitment documents, appoint 2 representatives who would meet with Archdeacon to finalise an appointment, approve an advertisement and also approve the process by which candidates would be chosen and appointed.

All recruitment documents were approved. An appointment process was agreed from 2 options provided by the European Diocese. Derek Brough and Merisa Machines were voted our 2 appointment representatives from 4 nominations. A draft recruitment advert was agreed to go in "The Church Times".

The Secretary in conjunction with the Church Wardens gathered the necessary documents together and submitted them to the Archdeacon on 22 June, for the recruitment of a new Chaplain to begin.

Meanwhile, the Church Wardens sent a letter to the Catholic Bishop of the Canary Islands seeking his permission for a woman priest to officiate in the Catholic Church used for Anglican services in Corralejo. This was a prerequisite of any appointment.

Arrangements and possible candidates for Locum Priests were discussed, to officiate during the interregnum. Other issues considered were: vacancy of the Chaplaincy house; preparation of an inventory of content; final inspection; cleaning; gardening; and, redecoration before a new Chaplain took office.

Earlier in 2022, some of us had engaged in small groups, while others chose not to, with the Church of England's "Living in Love and Faith" (LLF) course alongside a book study, on the topic "Homosexuality, the Bible and the Church". At the end of the course, several people submitted their feedback along with others in the Church to inform the decisions of our Bishops.

This raised a question of unity which we reported the Chaplaincy Council. Subsequently, the Council supported the current position of the Church of England on the traditional understanding of marriage as being between a man and woman and being the created context for sexual relationships. We also wanted to ensure this was the view of any candidate appointed as the new Chaplain of St James.

July 2022

A week after passing the recruitment details to the Archdeacon, an Extraordinary meeting of the Chaplaincy Council was called for 12 July. A suitable candidate had been come forward for the post of Chaplain, without an advertisement being placed. Altering the approved appointment process would enable the candidate to be considered further. A change in process was agreed so the candidate could proceed to make a formal application with references.

August 2022

With some people away visiting family in the UK this was a quieter month, time to catch our breath!

Fiona Goode, a trustee of the chaplaincy house, was holidaying on the island. It was an opportunity to carry out a joint inspection of Casa Bob, with Bob and Judie who were soon to vacate the property. An inventory had kindly been prepared by Judie beforehand. We considered: internal redecoration; occupancy during the vacancy period/insurance conditions; repairs outside and the removal of a tree to avoid damage to the foundations.

September 2022

Bob chaired his last Chaplaincy Council meeting as vicar before retirement. Clarification was provided on calling an Extraordinary Chaplaincy Council meeting, and where confidentiality may have been compromised.

Bob pointed out that the wardens had primary responsibility for getting things done then delegated tasks to individuals during his absence.

On 24 September, a retirement lunch was held for Bob at the Piedra Alta Restaurant, where Sunday morning services are held in El Cotillo. This was gratefully organised by Alison Adgie and June Boughtflower. Over 30 members and friends attended the celebration. His final El Cotillo service as Chaplain, was held the following morning. However, by early afternoon a cyclone arrived meaning it was dangerous to ask folk to travel to Corralejo later! Just as arrangements had been made to hold the final service the following week, both Bob and Judie were hit by Covid. Eventually, we were able to proceed with this service on the 16 October, and a very large congregation were able to witness Bob "pass on the baton".

October 2022

Our Lay Reader, Ruth Brough, ably prepared and led our services throughout the month with permission from the Archdeacon to provide 'Communion by Extension' on 2 of 5 Sundays, with other Sundays services of the Word.

Following the Chaplaincy meeting in September, Tom expressed concern about the amount of additional work that had been passed his way without him knowing. He was invited to tell us about his areas of concern. Between us we would decide what still to do, what not to do, and where to look for support from elsewhere. After his initial shock, Tom studied how to overcome the gaps in his knowledge to deal with the challenges he faced. The problem was therefore satisfactorily resolved. We very much appreciated him taking on these extra duties and responsibilities.

We placed on record our thanks not only to Tom, but to Ruth who had helped carry us through preparing many of the church services right up to next February. Also, to Derek and Marisa for the many hours spent grappling with the complexities of appointing a new Chaplain, and the regular updates they have gave us in confidence.

November 2022

Appreciation also went to those who turned out to help prepare the gardens and clean inside Casa Bob, prior to us welcoming Rev Brian Evans-Smith and his wife Mary on Saturday 5 November. They had very kindly agreed to come, at no cost to the chaplaincy in return for occupying the chaplaincy house and using the chaplaincy car. He would be our Locum priest for the next 3 months until the end of January, and was well known to us already as a preacher via video link.

Discussions had begun with a potential candidate as a second Locum priest, to follow on from Brian, beginning in February 2023. We reviewed the costs likely to be incurred appointing a new Chaplain, estimated at £9,000 at the time, plus a second Locum priest for 3 months at around £3,000. The high cost was due to visa changes and complications arising from Brexit. We decided it was too costly, when our total annual income was around £10,000. We felt able to cover the Sunday Services, when Brian left, as were blessed with plenty of able and willing volunteers, who would enable us to get through. Bob and Judie were also willing to

provide Holy Communion, under their Permissions To Officiate (PTOs) one day each a month from February 2023 onwards, after they had had no connections with the chaplaincy for a period of at least 3 months. In the light of these details, and the fact that the person in mind could not come for the initial 3 months envisaged, it was decided not to pursue a second Locum priest. We would have sufficient resources in-house..

Discussions took place with Fiona, as Trustee of Casa Bob, about finding suitable tenants in February 2023 for a short period rather than leaving it empty. Suitable tenants had possibly been identified although in the end they were not required.

Tom provided us with interesting data on our 'hidden congregation': the number of online views of our Sunday Services via YouTube between January and October 2022:

January	269
February	234
March	331
April	290
May	240
June	168
July	193
August	189
September	211
October	547
	2,672

In total 2,672 views of services (that is computers watching, not people). Assuming 2 people per computer, meant around 5,300 people with 546. It meant we had probably more people watching than actually attending services. The countries watching were: 1st Spain, 2nd UK, 3rd Ireland, 4th USA/Canada, plus other countries too small to be identified. We had 83 people subscribed to the channel (i.e. they are notified of all new live streams or videos posted): an increase of 4 over the year.

We considered whether Chaplaincy Council meetings should continue to be entirely by Zoom now Covid restrictions had been lifted. An all Zoom meeting required a non-member of the Chaplaincy Council to be present to co-ordinate the number of screens involved. The majority preferred meeting together in a single venue with a manageable 3 joining from abroad by Zoom. We believed that the Council meeting should not be entirely on Zoom, but together in person throughout the interregnum and Chaplaincy Council agreed.

Not using the Common Cup for communion and remaining seated for the peace were issues raised by Brian as Locum priest and that led to interesting discussions

at Chaplaincy Council. It was decided Graham as Churchwarden and Ruth as Treasurer would consult with the congregations at Corralejo and El Cotillo respectively, to obtain their views and report back.

More information was provided by Derek and Marisa on the post Brexit difficulties of appointing a new Chaplain.

The preferred candidate visited the island to gather more information, sort private health care, and see the chaplaincy house. The two Chaplaincy Council representatives, Derek and Marisa, signed the Chaplaincy's acceptance of the preferred candidate. The Churchwardens signed the Conditions of Appointment.

December 2022

We had a full programme of usual events planned in church, but this year we had additionally a couple of "firsts". We provided a carols, readings, and mince pies event in a restaurant/bar near the Chaplaincy House as an outreach event for over 40 people. It was led by Graham Adgie (churchwarden) and his wife Alison, who had previously helped with the event, ably backed by Ruth (treasurer) on computer for music and Brian giving a small talk. Our Sunday Christmas Day morning service was held in the house and garden of one of our wardens (Graham) as our usual venues were not available to us. This was our first such Christmas Day service.

January 2023

We were invited to consider sponsoring a person under the Ministry Experience Scheme for Interns but no action was taken since it was not ideal where there was a Chaplain vacancy.

Thanks to a significant input from Ruth, a Synod report was produced at the request of Synod reviewing the Chaplaincy in 2022. We were thanked for "a very uplifting report".

With Rev Brian Evans-Smith leaving at the end of January we approached the Archdeacon to ask that Ruth be allowed to provide Communion by Extension for two weeks each month during February to April 2023. Unfortunately, the Archdeacon declined as it was not intended for this purpose. It was intended for where there was a central church serving several hubs. He suggested we consider another Locum priest, or that Ruth could lead Services of the Word where there wasn't a priest present. This was a disappointment.

February 2023

We approached the Archdeacon again in early in February. We asked whether a Licensed Anglican priest, Rev Elsie Blair-Chappell, who would be here on holiday for a fortnight, might provide Communion when joining us. He replied that a priest of good character in their own Diocese, invited to take up duty for 7 days in any three months, was permissible. Our Bishop's office would need to be notified so they could send a letter so the priest's own diocese which could confirm that are of good

character. When we wrote to our Bishop's Personal Assistant he said that because a fortnight exceeded 7 days our request was not possible. However, he arranged for Elsie to apply for Permission to Officiate (PTO). She would still have to be interviewed by the Archdeacon and a letter of acceptability would need to be exchanged between the Bishops. All this was a frustrating and long winded process. We were very grateful for Elsie, who did officiate for two Sunday in the end, and her husband Stephen, who preached one Sunday.

We met at Casa Bob with Fiona Goode, a trustee of the chaplaincy house, to discussed occupancy/un-occupancy of the property during the current vacancy period, maintenance and other possible works, including issues over a rear boundary wall and a large palm tree to be removed.

As part of the 'Care for Creation" work, the Diocese was surveying its buildings in order to reduce carbon emissions from buildings used within the diocese. We completed two Building Surveys.

March 2023

The appointments Secretary at the Office of the Bishop in Europe provided the Churchwardens with appointment process documents relating to the preferred candidate.

Our response to the Bishop's Lent appeal was a generous gift of 500€ to help establish a Chaplaincy in Morocco.

We reviewed whether to continue gelling people's hands on entry to services. It was decided to stop doing so but provide gel at the front for anyone to use before communion.

Consultations were reported to the Chaplaincy Council over whether to return to the Common Cup, for wine at Communion, rather than individual glasses or move to "One Kind" (One Kind is where the bread/wafer is dipped in the wine by the person officiating then placed in the open hands of a person taking communion). A large majority were not in favour of returning to the common cup. Many preferred individual glasses and a few favoured One Kind. It was decided to defer any decision to change the current practice and leave the new Chaplain to decide.

Further consultation on whether to moving around, or staying seated for the Peace, showed a large majority preferred the to remain seated and provide a gesture of peace to others, as it was less disruptive than moving about searching to greet people who had left their seats.

April 2023

We organised the removal of the Palm Tree threatening the foundations of the Chaplaincy house, Casa Bob. Later, in the month, the interior of Casa Bob was completely redecorated by 2 painters in 1 day!

Organising Good Friday Services proved a bit of a challenge. As the day was Bank Holiday, Piedra Alta Restaurant in EL Cotillo was closed and the Catholic Church in Corralejo was initially fully utilised for Catholic services. Alternative provision was made for prayer stations to be provided at the homes of Ruth and Derek in El Cotillo and Graham and Alison in Corralejo. later when we learned that we had an advertised slot after all at the Catholic Church, Yvonne, Tom, Ruth and Graham (Adgie) read a four-part version of the Passion to those who attended with an introductory and closing hymn sung a cappella.

Our request for Rev Elsie Blair-Chapell to be granted Permission Top Officiate at the Chaplaincy of St James was granted by the European Diocese for one year from 27 April 2023. We look forward to Elsie and her husband Stephen joining us again when next on holiday in early August.

Last, but by no means least, a big thank you to everyone who has played their part in making a very difficult period run as smoothly as possible; particularly Derek and Marisa who have dealt with the complexities and challenges of appointing a new Chaplain after Brexit; for the preferred candidate who has stayed the course despite many anxious moments; for all who have given of their time generously, especially Ruth who continues to prepare and organise the services, Yvonne the rotas and Tom the power points. And of course Brian who joined us a Locum Priest for 3 months and his wife Mary, both of who have agreed to return and do the same again in May and June. We are eternally grateful and God Bless you all !!

Graham Adgie Churchwarden Corralejo and Robert Swift Churchwarden El Cotillon