

## *Church Uses Secular & Religious*



The PCC are acutely aware that they are caretakers of the church buildings on behalf of the residents of the village of Bishampton and Throckmorton, and that the building and churchyard belong to each and every resident, past, present and future.

St James, as the larger church within the Parish, recognized the need for community input. To this end, some years ago, a door-to-door survey was taken of the villagers asking what they required of the church and what facilities they would consider necessary in today's day and age. A meeting was subsequently held in the church to which all were invited. As a result of information gathered on this occasion, and as a result of the survey and with the setting up of a 'Friends Of St James' group the PCC set about meeting requirements of the village.

To this date we have created a warm accessible church building, suitable for religious and secular purposes. This is possible because the pews are now free standing and can be moved to make many and varied formations of seating. There are facilities to serve refreshments and wash-up within the church building, and also a purpose built facilities building providing a disabled toilet with baby changing facilities, additional kitchen facilities and storage area, alongside a small carpark. To further maximize the flexibility of the church and outside area the PCC has purchased a marquee complete with covered walkway to access the marquee from the north door without getting wet.

There is access from the car park to the church building via newly installed resin bonded paths, welcomed by wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs. Recent funding also enabled the addition of a memorial garden, and for the restoration of the bells to take place. St James Church is also in the process of installing audio visual equipment, including a hearing loop and permanent projector and screen.

The church community is aware that there are many villagers who have never experienced church worship and to conquer any fear of 'what happens inside the church building' we have provided many and varied events to encourage all to cross the church threshold and to dispel any anxiety.

The range and diversity of functions in the church building and in the church grounds accessed by paving or through the recently opened north door is vast. St James has a reputation for providing outstanding refreshments, and will on request provide lunches or teas for visiting walkers and cyclists. Just some of the events we have held in our flexible building include:

- Scalextrics for all the family
- Pancake Parties
- Pre-School parties and workshops
- Grand medieval banquets
- Simplistic rustic suppers
- Summer barbecues
- Funeral wakes
- Private parties
- Historical talks
- Music concerts
- Craft fayres
- Historic Society displays
- Village Fete
- Jubilee & Celebration Teas
- Flower Festivals
- Beetle drive and fish and chip supper
- Fashion Shows to highlight just a few.

On the religious side we do of course provide a variety of Sunday services, Eucharistic, celtic, informal, family services, one off ad hoc special celebrations etc. St James is the largest church building in a benefice of seven churches and often hosts Flyford Family benefice services, and indeed, the Flyford Benefice is part of a group of three benefices, totaling sixteen church and combined tri benefice services have been successfully held in St James. The Chapelry, Throckmorton regularly holds evensong services, which creates a very special service in this atmospheric church. We provide all the normal occasional offices, and rites of passage, and can provide refreshments, and indeed have done, following weddings, baptisms and funerals.