00Report from St Mary’s Community Team (formerly the Friends of St Mary’s Shrawley).

The most significant event in the last 12 months is that in May last year the Friend’s of St Mary’s was reconstituted as the St Mary’s Community Team. The change (facilitated by a change in the Church Representation Rules) allowed the Friends to regularise their relationship with the PCC (Parochial Church Council) in a way that was not possible before.

The primary purposes of St Mary’s Community Team remain similar to those of the Friends

* To raise funds particularly for the Church building of St Mary’s;
* To assist with the management of the Church building and church yard;
* To identify and bring forward projects to improve and sustain the Church;
* To assist the minister with the provision of services in the Parish;
* To cooperate with other local organisations to support and enhance the community in Shrawley.

 The biggest change is that all the funds are now held by the PCC.  Previously, monies from services and collections were passed to the PCC and monies from fund raising activities were held by our own treasurer, Chris Martin.  These accounts had to be separately audited and was a significant administrative burden given the sums involved.  Although our  fund raising money will be held by the PCC, it will be held in a restricted account, can only be spent on St. Mary’s, Shrawley and only in consultation with the St. Mary’s Community Team.

Due to other commitments, there was no significant fund raising activity this year (other than as part of the bluebell walks) but we have been able to cover the cost of the heating, lighting and insurance of the Church and also the mowing of the graveyards with support from the Parish Council for which we are most grateful. This has meant that the Church has continued to serve the people of Shrawley when they require services such as weddings, baptisms and funerals as well as carol services which many in the village enjoy. The vast majority of the cleaning, maintenance and gardening is done by a small band of volunteers to whom we are very grateful and we know from comments in the visitors book that many local people (who do not attend church services) appreciate those efforts when they come to find a moment of peace or to visit loved ones whose remains are in the Church yard.

Over the winter a tree on the boundary between the Church yard and the Millennium Green fell damaging Mark Burke’s fence. The Church has offered to pay 50% of the cost of repairing the fence and we await to hear about the costs.