

Historic outfits mark church's 1,000th year

CHILDREN dressed up in outfits to celebrate the past millennium as they helped to launch birthday celebrations at a 1,000-year-old church.

Pupils from Meonstoke C of E Infant School paraded to nearby Corhampton Church dressed in costumes ranging from Vikings to Victorians, from Saxons to suffragettes. They lined the churchyard path to welcome the Mayor of Winchester, Cllr Eleanor Bell, to the Saxon church and waved her off again.

The staff and pupils met the Mayor to help launch a needlework project that will be the centrepiece of next year's celebrations of the church's 1,000th birthday.

Corhampton Church is believed to have been built in 1020 and Christians have worshipped God there regularly for the past 1,000 years. It is thought to be the oldest church in our diocese in continuous use.

As part of a year of celebrations, pupils from Meonstoke C of E Infant School and members of the community will be jointly stitching a commemorative piece of needlework one day a week during this academic year, and their historic costumes aimed to embody that vision.

The idea is that the school is open each Thursday afternoon during term-time and villagers can volunteer to stitch the Corhampton 2020 tapestry alongside the pupils. Once finished, it will represent



Pupils from Meonstoke C of E Infant School pose in their historic costumes outside Corhampton Church to launch their tapestry project

Corhampton Church through the ages, and will be displayed inside the church.

As part of her visit, the Mayor of Winchester was also shown around the church by the rector, the Rev Tony Forrest, who showed her its Saxon chancel arch, historic wall paintings, and its font.

The 1,000th birthday celebrations - dubbed C2020 - will mostly take place during next year, and aim to foster inclusivity across the whole village. They will include worship services, music performances, a celebratory summer party, an art exhibition and a wild flower festival, as well as the tapestry.

The programme includes a visit by Bishop Christopher, which should include a walk through nearby villages and the blessing of a new icon; performances by the Madding Crowd and Winchester Chamber Choir; commemorative mugs being given to pupils from Meonstoke C of E Infant School; and a talk by a yew tree expert which will start at the ancient yew tree in the churchyard, which may also be 1,000 years old.

The PCC has been awarded grants by Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and Awards for All, to reflect their desire to bring together all members of the community for this series of cultural and heritage-based events.

Let's celebrate a millennium of worship

THE timetable of events to mark a millennium of worship at Corhampton Church includes the following events:

27 MARCH 2020: Talk on yew trees by national tree expert Toby Hindson, focussing on the yew tree in the churchyard.

29 MARCH 2020: Local singers and a choir will perform *Olivet to Calvary* by JH Maunders at St Andrew's Church, Meonstoke.

17 MAY 2020: Winchester Cathedral Chamber Choir will perform at St Andrew's Church, Meonstoke.

5-7 JUNE 2020: Wildflower display with musical performances in Corhampton Church, and roses and herbs displayed in St Andrew's Church.

13 JUNE 2020: Quiet day in Corhampton Church.

27 JUNE 2020: Celebratory village party, at the Old Vicarage, Corhampton, including drinks, dinner and dancing.

4 JULY 2020: Church fete, on Church Green, Meonstoke, with the sale of commemorative mugs designed by a local arts group

12 JULY 2020: Athanasian Concor

Choir at Corhampton Church.

19 JULY 2020: Visit by Bishop Christopher, which will include a walk from church to church.

13 SEPT 2020: Four Marks Folk Band on Church Green, Meonstoke, with a cream tea.

3 OCT 2020: The Madding Crowd will perform at Droxford Church.

7 NOV 2020: Exhibition of art created by local artists and display of locally-found artefacts at the Meon Hall.

For more information, see: www.bridgechurches.org.uk.



The Mayor of Winchester meets pupils outside the church

The church is remarkable in that it has never been dedicated to a saint, and has remained mostly unaltered from the Saxon era. It was built during the reign of King Canute.

The church is on a small mound, so it may have been built on top of a previous heathen temple from Roman times. The flint that was used came from

either Binstead or Quarr and was shipped up the River Meon.

Inside the classic Saxon chancel arch, there are wall paintings which probably date from the mid-12th century. They feature the ninth century St Swithun, and represent the most elaborate decorative scheme that survives in English Romanesque paintings.



Children from Meonstoke C of E Infant School parade from the school to Corhampton Church