

So many memories in our beautiful church

Maggie Johnson has experienced family weddings, baptisms and funerals at her village church – as well as learning numerous skills

Who am I? I am Maggie Johnson.

What church are you part of?

My church is St Peter and St Paul in Hawkley, a small village in the north-east of Petersfield, tucked away at the foot of the Hangers.

Why did you start going there?

We were invited to many family services and finally went, when we felt that the youngest could stay quiet long enough.

I went with our three children, but it wasn't until the vicar visited our home and invited my husband to join the choir that the whole family became involved.

What do you love about the church?

The church has been a mainstay for us. We came to Hawkley over 30 years ago. Now our children have grown up and left home, but returned to be married here and have their children baptised at the church. My husband Graham is buried in the churchyard.

The church and its faithful congregation have been there for me through both joyful and sad times and have been wonderful support to all of us. I feel very safe there, surrounded by people who care for me, and for whom I can care and with whom I can worship.

It is here that I learnt to ring the bells, sing in the choir, helped



Maggie Johnson at Hawkley Church; and (above right) with congregation members



involved in creating or mending.

The church building has always been well tended. It sits at the centre of the village and is open for anyone to visit during daylight hours. During the week, many visitors drop by. Some come to admire the yew trees, others the Teulon architecture, and for some it's a pleasant place to rest as they walk down from the Hangers Way. It is so good to see the interest people share in it.

with Sunday school, embroidered kneelers, and helped with many fundraising projects for restoration work on floors, roof, steeple, organ, bells, clock and churchyard.

My husband was a very 'hands on' churchwarden for about 15 years and consequently our lives were often guided by what was going on in the church at the time. If I have a moment to look around, it doesn't matter where I sit, I can see something my family has been

One Saturday a month there is a story time for little ones and their parents and carers, with singing and music all led by Ven Peter Sutton, our vicar. Every Tuesday from 10am-12noon we hold Coffee and Chat in the village hall, opposite the church. Anyone can drop in to enjoy homemade cake, coffee and a chat with a fabulous view.

Gone are the days of family services – nowadays people of all ages are welcome at every service. I hope you will come to see for yourself.