Hilary Collard

I have been part of this church since 1987 and, in that time, it has been my pleasure to serve as secretary/administrator alongside three previous Vicars. I have supported numerous staff and organised rotas for many volunteers who, like me, were committed to the priesthood of all believers. I have engaged in parish life in many ways, from hosting and co-leading house groups to being leader of the Parish outreach events team. I was privileged to be elected Churchwarden from 2010 to 2014, at the end of Colin Cooper’s incumbency and the beginning of Andrew Hargreaves’.

As we anticipate another interregnum from October, it has been suggested that attributes of Churchwardens holding office during such a time might include: previous experience of handling parish matters, some leadership/management expertise and good communication skills. I would say I am known by many in the congregation, who have proven confidence in me – a ‘safe pair of hands’.

I want to be part of a church in which prayer is a priority, where we listen to God both privately and corporately and wait for Him to reveal His plans for the future of Whitfield Parish and beyond. I would encourage everyone, including wise counsellors, knowledgeable planners and discerning managers, to use their Spiritual gifts within the fellowship to inspire direction and growth (see Romans 12). I will continue to serve alongside the helpers, administrators and implementers amongst us and believe honest communication and the development of teams of like-minded, Spirit-filled, passionate disciples will be crucial in the months and years ahead.

Bob Jackson in his handbook *Growing Through a Vacancy*, suggests it may be wise for Wardens to concentrate on leading the church through the vacancy while others draft the profile and act as parish representatives in the appointment process. The next year or two will bring uncertainty, however there will also be opportunity for growth. In fact, the main focus of vacancy life ought to be on thriving as a church.

**Heavenly Father,**

**will you help us to share responsibility, grow in faith, love one another,**

**care for those in need, reach out to others and welcome newcomers.**

**Lord Jesus, guard and grow this parish as we serve you together. Amen.**