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PRIEST IN CHARGE OF WARDLE AND SMALLBRIDGE.
ANGLICAN MINISTER OF WARDLE VILLAGE CHURCH (LEP)

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10th August, 2009.

Ms Jane Rickards,
47 Alpine Drive,
Wardle, Rochdale.
OL129NY.

Dear Ms Rickards,

I am in receipt of your letter of 7th August addressed to the Pastoral and Redundant Churches Officer. However, as the maintenance of churchyards is the responsibility of the Church Council, not the Diocese, your letter should have been addressed to me, so I am replying to it.

It is my understanding, and in correspondence with the Local Authority and talking to local Councillors their understanding also, that the maintenance of the top end of the Churchyard is the responsibility of the developers of the church building and the officers of the authority are pressing for this obligation to be met.

The bottom end of the churchyard is very difficult terrain, it is tiered and slopes in two directions. To hire contractors to maintain it, is beyond the means available to the church. (For the record, £1000+ has been spent by the church in recent years seeking to keep some semblance of tidiness.)

More recently, I have discussed the problem with Councillor Dearnley and others and the Probation 'Pay Back' Service has agreed to do the work on the understanding that a toilet is provided. This work will begin next month after I return from my holiday.

However, my fear about hiring a 'portaloo' is that it will be vandalised or stolen. Here is where you or members of your Society might help. Can you think of anywhere near the graveyard where a 'portaloo' could be safely and securely placed or, better still, do you know of anyone living near the graveyard who would allow a downstairs or outside toilet to be used whilst the work was in progress? This would reduce costs and there would be no vandalism or theft.

Finally, a number of people have spoken to me directly about this matter and I have been able to assure them that the problem is being addressed. I have been told about the discussion of this matter at your last meeting and would gladly have come and spoken to your members about it, had I been invited.

The Area Dean and Archdeacon (Cherry Vann not Mark Davies) are away at present and I am forwarding a copy of this letter to them and to the Pastoral and Redundant Churches Officer in Manchester.

Yours faithfully,


ANDREW HOWELL