

01937 842559

9, Prospect Bank,
Bramham,
Wetherby,
West Yorkshire.

12th July 2001.

Rev. H.N. Lawrance,
19, Chapel Lane,
Clifford.

Dear Mr. Lawrance,

I write, having sent copies to Secretary and Churchwardens, to put you in the picture about youth activity in the Churchyard. As you will doubtless know, we have at present some very unruly teenagers around the village, about whom the Police are concerned. Some youngsters, not necessarily these, have taken to using the lychgate as their meeting place after school and in early evening. Here they sit on walls and steps, but have recently begun to use the Church path for roller blading, and the lawn around the cross for various forms of play.

As you know this is one of the most sacred spots in the Churchyard, as the place where ashes are buried and consecrated. On Monday evening I had a pleasant chat with the lads, explaining this and asking them to move out of the Churchyard; they shuffled off without comment. I hid the scaffolding pole they had found lying about and used. By Tuesday they, and others, were back, roller blading up the path, leaping over the metal bar, trampling around the cross. On Wednesday evening, on my way to Parish Council, I passed them all again, but, knowing our village constable would be there, hurried on to the meeting. P.C. Jon Kinroy went to have words and take their names.

I write with a number of thoughts and suggestions:

a) You should know, if you don't already, about these activities, as the PCC needs to make decisions on protecting Church property, and on how you want intruders to be dealt with. Others will doubtless help if you set the rules and take the lead. Of course, when the Vicarage was a few yards away, Derek dealt without fuss with these and many other problems which arise in the Churchyard. You now have another situation, which needs to be addressed.

b) You might think that anything which could be misused should be under lock and key ; at present there are a few items around the Church perimeter which are a temptation to idle minds.

c) Perhaps you take a different view altogether , that these youngsters need somewhere to play and that this is a God - sent embryonic start for a Church youth club. If so , it needs organisation and supervision --- and no opportunity for misbehaviour.

d) You probably know that teenagers [not all from Bramham -- some come from Boston , Clifford , Tadcaster as well] make use of various spaces around the village , notably the children 's playground on Freely Lane , where damage is frequent and needles , etc. , have been found . Furthermore , the arsonists of the Boston Spa Comprehensive are 10 year olds from the village . From next week , they will all be looking for interesting ways to pass their days free from school .

e) You may find the following phone numbers useful :

PC Jon Kinroy , via Wetherby Police , 01132 322 096 or 041
or 01937 582 667

[unlikely to receive immediate attention , and subject to other emergencies]

For 15 minute response to serious or on - going problems , 999

For noise pollution [pilot scheme , Thurs., Fri., Sat . nights only] ,
the Environment & Health Agency 01132 407 361

I trust you find these thoughts useful . None of us wants to face the aftermath of hooliganism , nor to give cause for it ; indeed , explanation and encouragement coupled with adult supervision often work , as do the old adages about ' carrot and stick ' . What rarely if ever works is the ostrich - like blind eye .

Best Wishes ,



