

# SPOTLIGHT ON

## LINDA RUSH

### CHRIST CHURCH, EMERY DOWN



**What do I do to support the Church?** *When we moved from Buckinghamshire to Emery Down about 13 years ago I used to organise the church flower rota, but this has been streamlined now and the flower ladies all concentrate on Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas to make the church look stunning, relying on lovely silk flowers to keep the church looking attractive the rest of the year. I am on the church cleaning rota and like to help with fund raising events that are often held in the village hall especially making sandwiches when required.*

**What do I do when I am not helping out at church?** *My husband Michael and I are sadly no longer horse riding, which was our prime pastime for many years. Michael is still President of the Chiltern Society, an environmental group where I actively help him. He started up a very successful fund raising program for the charity fifteen years ago which is still bringing in regular funds to support the Chiltern Society in Buckinghamshire and adjacent counties. In the past I was on the catering committee for the RNLI branch in Lymington, again helping to raise funds which I enjoyed*

*I am a member of The Arts Society in the New Forest, enjoying the monthly lectures, and special interest days along with cultural visits and holidays that they hold, I am interior house manager here at Northerwood House and administer the routine cleaning staff, also any social events that we hold here in the grounds.*

*Now the role I have taken on in the last few years is secretary to Windmill Boldre Riding for the Disabled group. They meet every week during term time at Brockenhurst Park, or Ford Farm in the winter months. I love this role which is most rewarding and humbling. I enjoy helping our trustees with the special events especially when Father Christmas comes to visit the children. I provide the refreshments and also keep a photographic record which I have made into a photo book of the achievements the children have attained over the years.*

*My pastime since we have been in lockdown has been cooking and I seem to be drawn to the kitchen at the slightest opportunity! Cooking is a hobby of mine so volunteering to help with fundraising events is most enjoyable. Keeping in touch with our family and friends on the phone, and emails with our children who are scattered across the globe, is special and like many families we now enjoy our Zoom get togethers. I hope that this will also become a norm for many people in the future.*

*I have enjoyed re-kindling contact with old friends from the past, especially anyone who is sadly living alone where they have lost a partner. We can always find so much to chat about.*

**What made me want to help at the Church?** *I attended a catholic convent for my entire schooling until I was expelled. Although the standard of education was not very brilliant for me, I loved it. Being a committed christian, it was instilled by my parents and school that the most important task in life was to be as helpful and generous to everyone, be willing to step up to the plate in volunteering for any duties that were needed with love and friendship.*

At our previous church where we lived, I was a church warden until we moved to Emery Down, so when it was apparent that Sara and Michael were retiring, I felt maybe I could offer to fill the vacancy to the best of my ability. David assured me it is flexible and that our family must still come first. But due to the Corvid-19 this has now been postponed until the end of October.

**What do you enjoy most about it?** I love the way this beautiful Victorian church seems to wrap itself around me when I enter, instilling a calmness and peace as I breathe in the atmosphere, this means so much to me. Over the centuries this pretty church could tell wonderful stories about the people who have been involved with the church. I never get tired of studying the Stations of the Cross on the walls and the wonderful stained glass windows that look so beautiful. I remember one Christmas Eve we walked across the small heathland from Northerwood House where we live. It was snowing and the windows looked stunning glowing in the cold night air and inviting us to join in the service to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

It seems strange that we have now been in isolation since 16th March and as Michael is considered vulnerable we have been confined almost totally but we are relaxed and just potter, taking each day as it comes. But we do miss the friendship when not being able to worship at the church and cannot wait to be enjoying the uplifting services that David gives.

**One thing I would like to see happen in the light of changes in Lockdown?** We are very lucky to have David as Priest in charge and I am excited that he has wonderful ideas to really move our church forward into the twenty first century. I feel the church should be the heartbeat in a village and we hope that many more people will come and experience the the innovative ideas he and his team have to help a create a much more welcoming versatile and exciting new life for our village church. I would like to be a part of this transformation!

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