

Ex-PM May says country 'will get through' Brexit at church

Erin Lyons

elyons@nqo.com

THERESA May has confidently predicted the country will 'get through' Brexit on a visit to the Oxfordshire church where her dad served as vicar during her childhood.

The former Prime Minister was speaking on Saturday at a community day organised by St Mary the Virgin Church in Wheatley to launch an appeal to raise £600,000 for a major refurbishment of the 162-year-old building.

Mrs May, who attended the event with her husband Philip and is a patron of the church, shared memories of her time in the village and of her father Revd Hubert Brasier's role in the community.

She recalled how her mother had once been looking for a pie dish to make lunch only to discover her husband had used it in one of his lively sermons. Mrs May, who was also married at St Mary's in 1980, added: "It is great to see this project doing so well because if you think about it in times past the church has been the centre of village communities."

She also revealed her father had been keen for his young daughter not to be actively seen to be promoting political views as he was 'the vicar for everyone' but Mrs May added: "I think I've made up for it since."

The Conservative MP for Maidenhead, who was replaced by Boris Johnson as leader of her party in July after failing to get her Brexit deal with the EU through Parliament, was unable to escape the issue on her visit.



Theresa May with Revd Nigel Hawkes at St Mary's Church in Wheatley, and, below, Mrs May addresses the congregation.

Pictures: Ed Nix

CONNECTION: MP is patron of St Mary the Virgin Church where her dad was vicar during her childhood

Jean Gould, 86, said she was a 'staunch supporter' of Mrs May and, as she shook hands with the MP, lamented the 'stupid men' who had voted against the Withdrawal Agreement three times.

Mrs May smiled and commented only: "We'll get through. We'll still get through it."

Mrs Gould, who has lived in Wheatley since the 1960s, said she remembered her mother being impressed with Mrs May's mother Zai-dee when they met and that she had followed the political career of Theresa May for years.

Revd Nigel Hawkes said Mrs May had been 'very generous with her time' and that the church had used her attendance as a way to showcase to as many people as possible what they had planned.

He said since the church started fundraising earlier this month they had already raised around £150,000, with another £25,000 raised at the Saturday event. Improvements are set to include underfloor heating, better lighting and a community meeting room. To see the plans or to donate visit revivalatstmarys.org.



Cafe responds over cockroach hygiene report

A POPULAR city centre cafe has sought to reassure customers it is pest-free after a hygiene inspection found cockroaches in its kitchens.

The Vaults and Garden Cafe, which is based opposite Oxford's Radcliffe Camera, was given a two-star rating following a surprise visit by Oxford City Council's health team on May 28.

As well as the pests, a report following the inspection raised issues with cleanliness, out-of-date food and water leaks.

The business owners have now said that when the visit took place the cafe's pest control contractor had already identified the presence of cockroaches and was in the process of delivering 'an intensive course of treatment to remove the pests'. It added:

"Following a thorough assessment, we now have four months of records to prove that there has been no evidence of activity.

"It has been a valuable lesson to our team. We take these issues very seriously. We have previously held five stars for our food hygiene certificate and we are confident that we will regain this rating at our pending reinspection date." It concluded: "The entire team at the cafe is very passionate about freshly prepared food and drinks made and served with the highest food hygiene practices."

The head of the pest control company used said at the beginning of May he found evidence of German Cockroaches and started treatment straight away. He added he was 'satisfied' that the treatment carried out in May and June had 'completely eliminated all pest populations' as there has been no activity for the past three months based on his regular site visits.