

# CHRIST CHURCH EATON



'A welcoming church, willing to make sacrifices and room for others'

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2020

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**PART ONE – CHRIST CHURCH REPORTS**

**THE PARISH OF EATON, CHRIST CHURCH  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**September 2020 – April 2021**

<b>Clergy</b>	The Rev'd Dr Patrick Richmond	ex officio
	The Rev'd Shawn Tomlinson	ex officio (left 18/10/2020)
<b>Readers</b>	Mr Alistair Bolt	ex officio
	Mrs Bridget Archer	ex officio
<b>Wardens</b>	Mrs Vivien Humber (and Deanery Synod)	Elected 24/04/2016 (ex officio)
	Mrs Catherine Jeffries (and Deanery Synod from 8/2/2021)	Elected 30/04/2017 (ex officio)
<b>Deanery Synod</b>	Mr John Harrison (and PTO as Reader)	Elected 30/04/2017 (ex officio)
	Prof. David Scott	Elected 30/04/2017 (ex officio)
	Mr Garry Wheatley <b>Treasurer</b>	Elected 29/04/2019
	Mrs Susan Mitchell <b>Secretary</b>	Co-opted 30/04/2017, Elected 29/04/2018
	Mr Chris Mitchell	Elected 29/04/2018
	Mr Ian Parkes	Elected 29/09/2020
	Mr David Archer	Elected 29/09/2020
	Mr John Ladd	Elected 29/09/2020
	Ms Caroline Gibbs	Elected 29/09/2020
	Mr Peter Smith	Elected 29/09/2020
	Mr Richard Middleton	Elected 29/09/2020

## **VICAR'S REPORT ON 2020**

2020 was an unprecedented year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with all of the suffering and restrictions it brought. Nonetheless, as you read on, I hope you will agree we have achieved a lot as a church in challenging circumstances. Notably, we made significant progress in our communications and pastoral contacts, and of course in using technology. With all that has been going on, not least the increase in online and written communications, I have ended up writing this report in Holy Week, so I hope you will forgive a series of brief points rather than a flowing essay. I am so grateful to you all for supporting us in numerous ways and hope you will be helped by reading these reports of an unprecedented year.

2020 began with us celebrating Epiphany and Candlemas as normal.

Shawn started Baby&Me on 13<sup>th</sup> January and it quickly became successful. Thank you so much to all who were involved.

Thank you to the Friends of Christ Church for holding the quiz and chips on 7<sup>th</sup> March, as the pandemic loomed.

Our final service in church was a Choral Evensong on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The lockdown meant that we could not celebrate Mothering Sunday in church. The Church of England instruction was to vacate church buildings.

We started to experiment with video conferencing by Zoom. Soon we were holding two services on Sunday using it, as well as Morning Prayer during the week, with early attendances in double figures (unheard of in normal times!) and meetings and special services as well. We marked VE Day, had a deanery Ascension Day service, a joint Trinity Sunday service, a day of prayer and a Lent course all by Zoom. Many Sunday morning services had over 50 people attending, with ten or more at evening services.

Thank you to Alistair Bolt, Ros Wright and John Ladd for their assistance in using the technology involved, and to Catherine Richmond in preparing the service sheets and resources.

I put videos of Sunday morning and other special services on Facebook.

We experimented with small “breakout” groups, settling on groups of about four people, before and after the service. Some have found it easier to get to know a wider range of people through these groups.

Thank you to Ros Brown who initiated and compiled recordings of various choir singers and accompaniment, to which I sometimes added video. Thank you also to Matt and the choir and music group who managed to produce music in new and unusual ways.

The pandemic led to the postponement of Chat over a Cuppa and Baby&Me and the Lent lunches and Food Bank collections had to stop.

Care homes suffered particularly in the pandemic and John Harrison and I had to stop our monthly communions at Chiswick House and Hawthorns nursing home.

With Communion in church impossible, we were delighted that Shawn was able to broadcast communion from her “upper room” chapel on Maundy Thursday and Easter Day.

Vivien Humber, Catherine Richmond, Phil Rodd and I had prepared Easter Cards for the parishes, but sadly they could not be delivered.

Communications in other ways advanced. I sent Emails with a “Thought for the Day” on the readings and other information a several times a week. These still go to over 180 people twice a week and are in addition to the notice sheet that Catherine Richmond produces and puts on the website.

Our Information technology developed. Thank you to Catherine Richmond for setting up new parish, office and magazine email addresses. I set up a charitable Office 365 account for the parishes office, with backup to the cloud. We brought in professional IT support to coordinate local and online backup in the Parishes Office.

Thank you to Ros Wright for putting articles in local print media and to her and Catherine Richmond who helped increase our content on Facebook. 250 people follow our Facebook page and our adverts e.g. for activity packs have reached literally thousands. Catherine also set up a Twitter account.

I am sorry that those without internet connection were at such a disadvantage, but pastoral care expanded even to them, with a telephone buddying system and much practical help provided. Thank you to Vivien and all who have cared and called. People also watched and listened to services on local and national media.

We were grateful to Catherine Jeffries and Mike Brookes for maintaining the church whilst it was closed during the spring lockdown and preparing it for reopening and to Catherine for being our “site manager,” performing many reviews of risk assessments.

8am communion services in church resumed in July. With the need for hygiene, numbers were restricted, congregational singing was not allowed, and attendance was reduced. We continued the Zoom services too. We began to alternate between 8am and 630 communions in September.

In August, Shawn our curate went on an extended placement at the Launditch and Upper Nar benefice and, with the retirement of the incumbent there at Christmas, decided to complete her curacy there. We are so grateful for all Shawn’s ministry,

her pastoral presence at church during the week (which encouraged us to get broadband internet there) and her leadership in starting the prayers for prison and founding Baby&Me. We were able to get her some gifts to help her in her priestly ministry and are looking forward to a formal farewell service once restrictions have lifted.

Our 2020 APCM was delayed from April to September, but, unlike many parishes, we did not cancel it and so, with some attending on Zoom, we were able to hold our elections. We thank David Archer who stepped down as Treasurer at the APCM on 29<sup>th</sup> September and Garry Wheatley for taking on the role. We welcomed Caroline Gibbs, John Ladd, Richard Middleton and Peter Smith as new members of the PCC elected at the APCM in September and thanked Tony Grubb and Kathy Ladd who retired.

In October we had a communion service in church each Sunday, with 19 and 20 attending at 8am and 29 and 24 at 6.30pm.

The second lockdown began in November. We marked Armistice Day, broadcasting from the war memorial. We broadcast from Church, with Archdeacon Karen preaching, for the Feast of Christ the King and for our Advent, Memorial and Christmas carol services. The Christmas midnight and 8am communions used pre-recorded music from Matt and the choir. 84 people attended the church services in Advent and 49 attended the midnight and 8am services at Christmas. My thanks to Alistair Bolt for pioneering remote broadcasting on Zoom. We are looking to invest in reliable hardware in church to allow two-way interaction.

The pandemic meant that we celebrated only two weddings and three Christenings. Mercifully, we had 16 funerals in the year, no more than 2019, but we have had to say goodbye to several members of the church community, including Tom Fraser, Denis Locke, Vera Croghan, Mary Burdett, Betty Trendell and, in 2021, Vandra Ahlstrom, Iris Colin, Mike Trendell and Enfys Chalmers. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

We had 151 people on our electoral roll and 176 who regularly worshipped with us before the pandemic. We estimate more than a hundred of these latter are aged over 70. This age profile shows how many of our community are vulnerable to the virus and our need to value and welcome children, young people and families.

The pandemic has had a devastating effect on our work with schools and I'm very grateful to Shawn, Geraldine Verschoor and Caroline Gibbs for the work they have done to stay in touch with children and their families.

We welcomed Lucy Stone, St Andrew's Children and Families Worker in November

and are very grateful for her help to the Youth and Children's Committee. The Committee provided children's activity packs in the Summer, at Harvest, Christmas and Easter 2021 and a joint Christingle service on Zoom. Kathy Ladd was the creative lead for the activity packs for children. I am so grateful to all involved.

Thanks go to Caroline Gibbs for being our safeguarding officer and to all who have helped and done safeguarding training. Please remember that keeping children and vulnerable adults safe is part of Christian love and care and everyone's responsibility.

When restrictions have ended, one of main challenges will be to build on the new contacts we have through activity packs as well as restarting relevant activities we have done in the past and building on them.

The pandemic also posed a financial challenge to the church at national, diocesan and parish levels, reducing cash flow and income. Thanks to all of you who support the church financially, especially by standing order, we paid our parish share in full.

I am very grateful to Catherine Richmond for organising online giving and donations via the website, since giving in the collection plate was much harder.

Because of the lack of special Christmas collections that usually raise money, the PCC has decided to give the same amount to our two Christmas Charities as last year, £960 to each.

Thank you to Catherine Jeffries for organising for us to have a credit card reader for donations in church.

A Zoom auction was organised by John and Kathy Ladd on 15<sup>th</sup> August, raising £950 for Church Mission Society. A sale of crafts in Christ Church on 5<sup>th</sup> December organised by Kathy Ladd with strict hygiene and social distancing raised £1,100.

Thank you to Mike Brookes and Chris Mitchell for overseeing the fabric of the church, and of Kinchen Hall, together with the Beehive nursery who use the hall, and of the adjoining cottage that we rent out.

We had significant repair work done on several parts of the church roof, notably on the north transept and around the bell tower, and major work was done on the internal plaster, external woodwork and flint.

Thank you to the Friends of Christ Church and their management team who contributed a wonderful £3,237 towards the repairs. Kathy Ladd made anti-Covid masks, raising money for the Friends.

As usual I am very grateful to Phil Rodd, vicar of St Andrew's. We have seen a lot of each other on Zoom!

I am also grateful to the Group Council, especially to Rosemary Hanson, outgoing Chair and to John Ladd, incoming Chair, and to all involved in coordinating our joint activities, the Parishes Magazine Team and the Mother's Union, with Vivien Humber chairing both of these.

Beyond Christ Church, I continue as Rural Dean, I am on General Synod, Diocesan Synod (now as Chair of the House of Clergy) and the Bishop's Council and am Chair of Science and Faith in Norfolk. As you have guessed, these all presently meet on Zoom.

Personally, I am relieved and grateful that we were able to enter and endure the lockdown safely together as a family. Despite a bike accident last year, dermatitis from sanitising and reduced sleep from too much frustrating technology, I have stayed thankfully safe and well most of the time.

I am also so grateful to all who have stayed faithful in these challenging times. I hope and pray that, as you read on, you too will find your gratitude increasing and will be encouraged to think how we can all seek God's kingdom and do his will as the restrictions lift and new possibilities emerge.

**The Rev Dr Patrick Richmond – Vicar**

## **REPORT OF PCC SECRETARY FOR 2020**

Christ Church's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of working co-operatively with the vicar to promote in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building, Kinchen Hall and The Cottage.

The PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and tries to help people in the parish grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and in service to others. It maintains and develops the building and keeps it open to the public throughout the year, subject to Government restrictions and Church of England guidance.

The PCC met ten times in 2020. Due to the coronavirus pandemic meetings have been held by Zoom video conferencing since April and business agreed by correspondence. The average PCC attendance at meetings throughout the year was 12 out of 15 members (80%).

We are grateful to Vivien Humber and Catherine Jeffries for continuing in their role as Church Wardens in 2020. We thank David Archer who stepped down as Treasurer at the APCM on 29<sup>th</sup> September and Garry Wheatley for taking on the role.

We welcomed Caroline Gibbs, John Ladd, Richard Middleton and Peter Smith as new members of the PCC elected at the APCM in September and thanked Tony Grubb and Kathy Ladd who stepped down. We thank all other PCC members as they continue to serve.

There were 151 parishioners on the Electoral Roll declared at the APCM in September. The Electoral Roll will be revised for the next APCM in 2021.

The parish share has once again been paid in full. A budget has been prepared and the accounts for 2020 will have been approved by April. The Church Terrier and Inventories will be inspected and presented at the APCM and reports from PCC committees and other groups are in this Parish Review.

The Treasurers have submitted regular and detailed updates on the accounts to 2020 meetings. With sound management Christ Church finances at the end of the year are looking very encouraging given all the problems posed by the pandemic. The assets of Kinchen Hall and The Cottage are a consistent source of revenue. During a very challenging year we are more than usually grateful for the regular giving of our parishioners which has increased, together with the generous donations received, in order to meet our running costs. Through generous donations the PCC were able to pursue the purchase of new vestments matching the new altar frontal as agreed at the APCM.

We are also grateful to Mike Brookes as Fabric Officer for overseeing the buildings maintenance, including many urgent repairs needed to the fabric, with assistance from Chris Mitchell. Heavy rain in 2019 caused damage to the plaster work around the chancel arch, with further damage appearing in the south aisle and vestry during this year. Repair work was carried out over the summer, plus later roof repairs, external woodwork redecoration and repairs to the bell funnel which was letting in water. We were grateful to Catherine Jeffries and Mike Brookes for maintaining the church whilst it was closed during the spring lockdown and preparing it for reopening.

Throughout the pandemic the PCC has reviewed and discussed the continued provision of services with a mix of Zoom services and some limited church services when permitted, which were broadcast on Zoom. We are grateful to Alistair Bolt, Ros Wright and John Ladd for their assistance in using the technology involved and increasing our presence on Facebook. We are also grateful to Patrick our Vicar for conducting the Sunday Zoom services, with assistance from Catherine Richmond in preparing the service sheets.

Issues relating to the parish employees were as usual considered and decisions made on salary increases and contracts, including fees for weddings and funerals.

Our Safeguarding and Health & Safety Policies were kept under review, with thanks to Caroline Gibbs as the Safeguarding Officer and to Ian Parkes for conducting safety checks.

Minutes and reports were regularly received from the Kinchen Hall Committee, the Donations Committee, Eaton Parishes' Group Council, the Magazine Team, the Worship Committee, the Youth and Children's Committee, Norwich South Deanery Synod and the Diocesan Synod. We are appreciative of the efforts of all concerned to continue to meet online and reach out to everyone in the parish in difficult circumstances.

Lastly, the PCC has found time to discuss mission and pastoral care, giving additional sums to supplement fund raising and support our mission partners the Seeds and Church Mission Society, and the War Memorial Appeal.

Thank you to all PCC members who have taken their turn to write a short report of meetings for the parish magazine each month and to Vivien Humber for organising its distribution.

**Sue Mitchell - PCC Secretary**

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults complies with the current requirements by the Diocese of Norwich. David Hughes at St Andrews completes the DBS checks and securely keeps records for both parishes. All volunteers who are working with children or with groups where there might be vulnerable adults should undertake a training session every three years. C0 and C1 training is available online and should be undertaken by anyone helping with such groups. Those in a position of responsibility should undertake training up to and including level C2. PCC members should also undertake training at levels C0 and C1.

Unfortunately, a C2 course planned for early April in Christ Church, primarily for members of Christ Church and St Andrew's, had to be cancelled because of Covid 19 restrictions. The Diocese is now running virtual C2 courses, although there is great pressure on places. The Parish Safeguarding handbook and information about courses can be found on the Norwich Diocesan website/Safeguarding. Although in this last year groups have not met very much in person since March, many groups have been able to meet virtually, and safeguarding remains an important issue to keep in mind even in these unusual circumstances.

Thank you to all those who have cooperated with the form completions and training sessions this year. Please remember that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility.

There are first aid kits located in the kitchen cupboard above the sink unit and in the choir vestry.

**Caroline Gibbs - Safeguarding Officer for Christ Church**

## **CHURCH WARDENS' ANNUAL REPORT**

As churchwardens we are legally responsible for all the property and movable goods belonging to the church and its buildings and must keep an up-to-date inventory of valuables which is updated annually for the APCM.

In 2018 the quinquennial review was carried out by our architect, David Lemon, setting out a programme of work to carry out over five years. This was complicated by the exceptionally heavy rainfalls in 2019 and 2020, making clear which places water could penetrate the fabric. A considerable amount of work has been done but there is still more to do. Furthermore, the church is not the only building for which we have responsibility; some repairs and renewals were also needed at Kinchen Hall and its adjacent Cottage.

We have a deep debt of gratitude to our excellent Fabric Officer, Mike Brookes, working with his deputies, Chris Mitchell and Ian Parkes who have continued their brilliant work in 2020 during logistical problems beyond our control.

We have four excellent Deputy Wardens - Ruth Vaughan, David Scott, John Harrison and Jeff Arden, who provide us invaluable support. We are also grateful to our sides people and to Alistair MacDougall as leader and co-ordinator of the team and rota, operating in strange times.

With COVID-19 came a new role for Catherine: that of Venue Manager. The church had to be closed to all except them. Even Patrick, our vicar, wasn't allowed to visit for several weeks. As required, the heating and water were turned off and fridge emptied. The bell was rung once a week when the nation was "clapping for carers". Once we were able to open for private prayer again the church was re-organised, and a new risk assessment carried out. Prayer books, hymn books and bibles were all removed. The pews and children's area were roped off and easily cleanable chairs were put out. Who would have thought the church would have a QR code (for Track and Trace purposes)? Catherine had to do yet another risk assessment when we were allowed to have services in church. We also had to work out how many people we could safely have in church for the services and keep records of those people.

On a positive note, in addition to the services, weddings and funerals, it was lovely to be able to host an Eaton Concert in October with people in every available pew and about 50 present.

Thanks to Kathy Ladd for her continuous supply of masks for the church and to all those who helped with the locking and unlocking of the church, particularly Simon Back, but also Mike Brookes, Ruth Vaughan, Tanya Page and Jeff Arden.

Our thanks to Richard Rivett as organiser of the team keeping the outside of the church in good order and to the continuing diligence of Sue Harris as cleaner and vergier for funerals.

Our thanks go to all who make our church an effective witness for our faith, often quietly, behind the scenes.

We will carry out a revised terrier and inventory before the APCM in April 2021.

We are sorry to have to record the deaths of some long-standing, and much missed members of the congregation, including Tom Fraser, Vera Croghan and Betty Trendell.

It is a pleasure to serve the church in this way and we continue to have such wonderful support from the congregation.

**Vivien Humber and Catherine Jeffries - Church Wardens**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Returning to the post of Treasurer after a break of 12 years is rather like my experience of hill climbing. You reach a point in the climb and then look back, marvelling at the distance covered, but on turning to face upwards again the task ahead seems even more daunting.

I must pay tribute to the work of David Archer in developing the scheme of accounts and for the work which has been necessary with the staffing changes in the parish office. While paying tributes I must also include those many church members who assist the treasury function in such important ways.

As one of the Church Wardens, with Vivien Humber, Catherine Jeffries has for many years administered the Planned Giving Scheme but during the Pandemic the wardens have had to take on a much wider role, not least in preparing the church to make it a safe place for worship. And, of course, we rely on Mike Brookes to keep careful watch on the state of the fabric of the church and other buildings.

The Treasurer also has to rely on the input of many church members, such as Gerald Cooke collecting the offertory each week and making the bankings. The treasurer-

ship relies on the advice and opinions of every member of the PCC and, in spite of the uncertainty of the future, the results for 2020, still only at the management accounting stage, show a resilience which will stand us in good stead for 2021, whatever it may bring.

Our new financial assistant, Sarah Barley, has brought a fresh and highly competent approach to the accounts for the benefit of the PCC which has to work by them.

I expect to give a full report on the accounts and also on the budget which will be constructed so as to meet the unprecedented challenges for everyone in the parish.

Finally, I look forward to the time when the office can return to normal working but in the meantime give thanks for our administrator, Ruth Thorp, coping so well in these difficult conditions.

**Garry Wheatley - PCC Treasurer**

## **MUSIC AND CHOIR REPORT**

Strange, different and Zoom. Here ends my report, thank you for reading!

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Reading through the old music lists and my book of voluntaries I see that January and February at Christ Church passed in much the same way as previous years. We journeyed through Epiphany, Candlemas and were just settling into Lent when things started to change. No communion wine or after service coffee being early casualties as the virus began its spread. We continued holding Evensongs in the Sunday School room, our usual practice now in the bleak midwinter, a warmer and more intimate environment for the hardy dozen or so attending each week. Our final service in church was a Choral Evensong on March 15<sup>th</sup> and our final hymn was 'Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war', chosen because of its relevance to a reading, but also strangely appropriate as we entered the unknown world of lockdown and virtual services. The orders of service for Mothering Sunday had been printed before the suspension of services and we'd made plans and were well into rehearsals for Holy Week & Easter. By the end of March, we'd experienced our first Zoom service and they look set to continue well into 2021.

Initially I provided some live hymns and short voluntaries from home on Zoom, but the sound quality (and our internet) wasn't great. These evolved into recordings from church and then after we got told off for misinterpreting the rules about playing as opposed to maintaining the organ (oops), were recorded from the conservatory in soaring temperatures. It was a challenge finding appropriate music, but I was inventive (my homemade organ added visual interest – a keyboard

balanced on top of a piano!) As the rules began to be relaxed, churches were allowed to reopen, and organists (and others) were definitely allowed back in! Live services in church began again in July, and we reintroduced live organ music from the middle of August. We managed four evening communions with a socially distanced choir in the south aisle and it was disappointing that we had to stop for the second lockdown in November. Our planned outing to sing Choral Evensong at St Peter's Sheringham in July had to be postponed until 2021.

Early on in lockdown 1.0, choir member Ros Brown suggested that we should try a choir anthem with the parts recorded remotely and knitted together in some clever software to form the finished article. I recorded the accompaniment, we had contributions from across the country and the Christ Church Lockdown Choir made its debut in May with Bach's Jesu joy of man's desiring. It was a great success and we made ten recordings in all, mostly popular, well-known works, with up to twenty singers joining each time, some even recording multiple voice parts. We completed the project with two contributions for Harvest at the start of October, thinking that things would soon be getting back to normal. Thank you to all who sent in recordings and especially to Ros who did a huge amount of work to make the recordings sound as if we were all in the same room. Sadly, Ros has decided that she'd like to experience some other churches and would like to concentrate on completing her PhD. She has been a great asset to the church and choir and we hope to mark her 'retirement' in person when normal services resume.

We'll also be marking Shawn's departure at some point and we'll miss her wise words and encouragement in the vestry as well as her kindly presence and friendship. I'm quite conservative in my views and I have to confess I was worried at the prospect of a female curate, but Shawn made such a difference to the church in so many ways, she gave the church a much warmer and friendly feel, and we wish her well in her new adventures in mid-Norfolk.

Lockdown 2.0 meant no services in church again, at least not with a congregation or choir. The Archdeacon preached at Christ the King and we broadcast from church. The following Sunday evening, Advent Carols came live from Eaton and by the start of December we were able to invite a small congregation for a poignant memorial service, with the annual opportunity to light candles and hang memory baubles in memory of the departed. I provided organ music on all three occasions.

At the end of October, the choir was able to meet to record hymns for Zoom services and it was lovely to get together again, filling the nave (socially distanced) with song. We had another session early in December, recording music for Advent and Christmas, plus rehearsing for an unusual carol service. The Christmas Carol service is usually our biggest service of the year – the largest congregation, a full

choir and lots to sing. For 2020, we sang to a screen and an empty church (bar the readers and technical crew) as with the rules still saying that congregations couldn't sing, it felt the safest option in the circumstances. All the other Christmas services were on Zoom or had recorded music in church and it was strange not needing a nap on Christmas Eve afternoon in preparation for the Midnight Communion!

I'd like to thank the choir for their hard work and enthusiasm when we were able to meet and for their good humour and friendship as always throughout the year. Thank you too for the encouraging words and appreciation, either in person or through Zoom. Finally, thank you to Patrick for not furloughing me and for the church for continuing to pay my salary. At the time of writing 2021 isn't much better than 2020, but let's hope for continued good-health and a return to something resembling normality later in the year.

### **Matt Wright - Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church**

#### **BABY & ME**

The new baby group, Baby&Me, was launched in Christ Church on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and we were delighted to welcome 17 babies with their mums/carers. It was free to attend and we served drinks and porridge, toast, fruit and pastries. Shawn sang action songs and showed them baby yoga tips. It was a happy group and friendships evolved.

We had 16 babies at our last session on 9<sup>th</sup> March. There was talk, of course, of coronavirus on that morning and we waved the babies off wondering whether we would see them the following week. On 12<sup>th</sup> March the Church of England issued its advice to suspend baby groups. There were 36 babies on the register, and everyone was contacted to say we were suspending the group. The following Monday morning was spent cleaning and sterilising the toys and putting them away.

The team produced a weekly video of songs for the mums/carers which was distributed on a WhatsApp group. The final video, a nativity story, was sent out just before Christmas. We decided that, by then, most of the babies were now toddlers and therefore, sadly, not our target audience.

We are determined to restart Baby&Me as soon as we are given the green light and feel it is safe to do so.

Thanks are due to Shawn Tomlinson, Alison Green, Leisa Devlin, Carrie Phoenix, Dee Scott, and Ruth Vaughan for producing the videos and being on the rota; along with Rebecca Calcutt-Saunders and Jennie Nowell.

#### **Catherine Jeffries**

## **CHAT OVER A CUPPA**

We continued every Monday afternoon until 9<sup>th</sup> March when COVID restrictions came in. Normally between 18-20 people come for a chat and tea but on 13<sup>th</sup> January we had a New Year Tea Party with sandwiches, cakes and music and 45 people came. There are many wonderful helpers and always a lovely friendly atmosphere. We look forward to being able to resume Chat Over a Cuppa again.

**Stephanie Brookes**

## **PASTORAL CARE AT CHRIST CHURCH**

During 2020 pastoral and community care work has been expanded to meet the needs of these unusual times.

Normally gifts are taken at major church festivals to parishioners who are frail or housebound, unwell or lonely and to residents of local care homes and hostels.

Since the Spring this has been expanded to include people who are not normally on the list but who have been affected by the government's injunction that we *Stay Home; Protect the NHS; Save Lives*. A telephone buddying system has been set up and offers were made to shop and collect medication where this is needed.

At Easter, a flowering plant and an Easter card from the church were delivered, whilst observing the social distancing rules in place at that time and following guidance from the Archdeacon on safe delivery.

At Harvest and Christmas gifts were delivered which included a flowering plant or a Christmas hyacinth which could be planted in the garden in the Spring. At Christmas other items were included in the pack such as Christian colouring sheets, pencils and a pencil sharpener.

At Harvest produce (similar to items requested by the FoodBank) was taken to local hostels (Leeway, YMCA My Place and Archway) and a range of presents for adults and children was donated at Christmas. This is a regular event but even more produce was donated this year than usual, despite logistical difficulties, and we are very grateful for the generous response.

In the Spring a Quilt of Kindness group was set up to make a "lockdown" quilt following the example of the women interned in camp in Singapore during World War 2, who used what they had to make a lasting work of art. Two quilts are in production and it has been a wonderful way for people to meet on Zoom as well as contributing to this project. A men's fellowship group was also set up on Zoom and meets regularly.

Pastoral and community care is only possible because of the efforts of parishioners. 2020 has been challenging but it is a challenge which we hope has been met.

Particular thanks are due to Pastoral Care Team members Anna MacDougall and Jacky Sutcliffe, all those on the telephone buddying list and those who helped prepare gifts and distribute them. I am also grateful to the team at St Andrew's with whom we work so happily over the Harvest and Christmas distribution of gifts to the local hostels.

### **Vivien Humber - The Pastoral Care Team**

### **CHARITABLE GIVING 2020**

This has been an extraordinarily difficult year in so many ways. Our Charity of the Month collections in church effectively came to a halt in March with the first lockdown, although there have been some cash donations in the times when services in church were resumed. Patrick has highlighted the Charity of the Month in his weekly email, encouraging people to give individually, and recently very helpfully including the online link to the charity in the email. The link to the charity also appears in the notice sheet each week. There is no easy way of knowing how much our congregation donated to the various charities after March, but it is to be hoped that people are responding to the suggestion to give individually.

The Donations Committee of two (John Harrison and Caroline Gibbs) met twice in 2020 to discuss which monthly charities to recommend to the PCC. The aim as always is to keep a balance between local, national and international concerns and to support mainly Christian charities. Christ Church has traditionally supported five or six priority charities every year; these are indicated by an asterisk in the list below showing the amounts sent from cash collections when there was one:

January	Norwich Youth for Christ	£100 (plus £12.75 reclaimable tax)
February	Water Aid	£140 (plus £18.75)
March	Magdalene Group*	£100 (plus £12)
	Mothering Sunday collection for Mothers' Union	No service in church, people encouraged to donate individually

April	Bishops' Lent Project -Vehicle for Dogura in Papua New Guinea	as above
May	Church Army*	as above
June	Practical Action (in memory of Norman Sidebottom, his favourite charity)	as above
July and Sea Sunday	Mission to Seafarers	as above
August	Scripture Union*	as above
September & Harvest Festival	Tearfund*	£40.00 and as above
October	Bible Society*	as above
November	Mission Aviation Fellowship	as above
December	Break/Families House*	as above
Christmas Collections	Church Urban Fund	as above
* Christ Church priority charities		

In view of small socially distanced congregations and fewer Christmas services in church this year it has been proposed that any donations made to charity should be made up from church funds to £960 each for the Church Urban Fund and Break Families House, our December and Christmas charities.

Other charitable giving from Christ Church includes £700 from church funds each year for our CMS Mission Partners Dick and Caroline Seed in Kenya. The May coffee morning and the Autumn Fayre to raise extra funds for them could not take place, but there was a very successful Zoom auction organised by the Ladds on 15<sup>th</sup> August, which raised £950 for them. A sale of crafts in Christ Church on 5<sup>th</sup> December organised by Kathy Ladd with strict hygiene and social distancing raised £1,100 to be shared between our CMS mission partners and Global Mission through Local Leaders. It was agreed that £300 should be added to this amount from church funds, to bring it up to the usual amount raised at the Autumn Fayre.

The 2020 Lent Lunches, organised jointly with St Andrew's, had to be cancelled after the second lunch because of Covid-19. The two which did take place raised a total of

£282 for the Bishop's Lent appeal and £217 for Tearfund. (In total, the Diocese raised £20,000 for the people of Dogura in Papua New Guinea, the Bishops' Lent Project.)

From March sadly Covid-19 prevented the sending of used postage stamps to Leprosy Mission (Vivien Humber) and of unwanted spectacles to Specsavers for recycling to fund eye care in developing countries (Jacky Sutcliffe). Christian Aid week was restricted to encouraging people to give individual donations online or by post. Patrick has also been encouraging us to give online to the Norwich Food Bank rather than collecting food at the back of Church.

The Donations Committee would be glad to welcome new members. We have two meetings a year at most, and members take turns to write for the parish magazine about the Charity of the Month. Do let us know if you might be interested.

### **Caroline Gibbs - Donations Committee**

**Committee members: Caroline Gibbs, John Harrison**

### **FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH**

The Friends of Christ Church, Eaton has been fundraising for three years to raise money to support projects related to the fabric of the church building which have been approved by the PCC. Money is paid into a separate Friends fund (and may not be used for general running costs). These funds help towards the cost of the preservation of the fabric, repairs and the replacement of major items.

As a result of COVID-19 the Friends' Management Team met in March to revise and review our programme for 2020.

**2020 Project:** when the bell tower was repaired, there was water damage to the plaster above the South Altar and the south side of the Chancel Arch. Then, as a result of exceptional rainfall, plaster blistered on the north side of the Chancel Arch above the pulpit. The area was roped off because plaster had started to fall, and urgent repair work was required. It was agreed that this was the Friends' priority project for 2020.

The church's architect assessed the damage in both areas and the necessary repair work was carried out successfully during the summer.

**Fundraising for the 2020 project:** we had planned a programme of fundraising events in support of this essential work but, inevitably, it was severely curtailed because of the pandemic.

We were able to hold the first fundraiser of the year, a very successful Quiz and Chips evening on 7<sup>th</sup> March, at which £767 was raised. This should have been followed by an evening of Progressive Suppers (16<sup>th</sup> May), the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Friends (17<sup>th</sup> July) and the Autumn Concert (17<sup>th</sup> October) which were all unavoidably cancelled.

However, the Friends were asked to support the 2020 project by making donations and the records show that we were able to contribute a very helpful £3,237 towards the cost of our 2020 project.

We are very grateful to our Friends for continuing to support us in the vital work of maintaining this much loved and valued building. Membership of the Friends remained steady throughout the year.

We are sorry to report that one of our founding Patrons, Robin Eaton, died on 6<sup>th</sup> November. She will be greatly missed.

### **Management Team members, 2020**

David Scott (Chair)	Roger Glenwright	Vivien Humber (Secretary)
Catherine Jeffries	Paul Lancaster	Carrie Phoenix
Sarah Scott	Rosalind Wright	

Grateful thanks to Bridget Archer who stepped down from the Team during 2020. We were delighted that Roger Glenwright was able to accept an invitation to join us.

**David Scott - Chair of the Management Team, Friends of Christ Church, Eaton**

## **FABRIC REPORTS**

### **Church**

We are now halfway through the Quinquennial Inspection (QQI) cycle. The next QQI report is due in August 2023.

The major item of work this year has been the repair of the cracks to the Chancel arch and the removal of the detached plasterwork to this area. Unfortunately, further staining has appeared due to rainwater leaks to the area of the bell turret. This hopefully will be resolved in the spring.

Further roof leaks have also been attended to, mainly to the area of the valley of the south aisle.

Patches of flintwork mortar replacement have been carried out to the NE end of the building.

External redecoration to doors and seats has also helped improve the appearance of the building.

The 5-year electrical test to the system has been executed. This requires minor updates and repairs.

### **Kinchen Hall**

Demolition of two flat roofed outbuildings has taken place. At present this provides an additional play area. The long-term intention is for the provision of a mobile classroom.

The intended pebble dash replacement to the south elevation was postponed due to the expense of the boiler replacement in December 2019.

### **Colman Road Cottage**

The cost of heating the cottage has been an issue for the tenant. The approval to use the fireplace in the lounge will hopefully reduce the cost over the winter period.

There have been no major fabric issues and the tenant seems settled.

### **Generally**

I feel "team Brookes/Mitchell" is working well. A big thanks to Chris Mitchell for his support and for reporting to the PCC.

### **Mike Brookes - Fabric Officer**

### **NORWICH FOOD BANK**

Our collections from church stopped in March 2020.

Those who still wanted to give food items were requested to take them to their local supermarket collection points. Those who wanted to make a financial donation were directed to the 'Donate Online' page of the Norwich Foodbank website. Patrick sent the link out again before Christmas in his email to the congregation.

We are looking forward to restarting collections when normal church services resume.

### **Anna MacDougall & Jacky Sutcliffe**

## **PART TWO – REPORTS COVERING JOINT ACTIVITIES WITH ST ANDREW’S CHURCH**

### **GROUP COUNCIL - The Parishes' Group Council Joint St Andrew's with Christ Church**

***Mission Statement:** The Group Ministry of St Andrew and Christ Church seeks to Collaborate, Co-operate and Communicate in the Eaton Community*

The Diocese established a Group Ministry for the Parishes of St Andrew's and Christ Church in 2007. Its Group Council is the vehicle by which they ‘consult together on any matter of common concern’. It has no decision-making power and acts in a consultative and advisory role to the two PCCs. In 2010 the then Bishop of Norwich said that the Group Ministry should, firstly, facilitate what the people involved wanted to do to benefit and develop church mission in Eaton and, secondly, serve the future development of both churches.

Ongoing activities within the Group Ministry include:

- communications such as the parishes' magazine, Christmas and Easter cards
- supporting Mission Partners, through prayer and fund-raising events
- joint children and youth activities including the Easter Workshop and Summer Holiday Club
- events such as the Garden Party/Summer Fair & Garden Service, Remembrance Day and Lent Lunches
- the Parishes' Office
- Groups, including the Mothers Union and the Julian Group.

These subjects feature regularly on the agenda of Group Council quarterly meetings and the minutes of its meetings are circulated to both PCCs for report and/or response.

Despite the unavoidable cancellation of a number of planned activities, the two parishes continued to communicate with their congregations and the wider communities in 2020, albeit sometimes in different ways. We have also discovered innovative ways of delivering many of the Group Ministry’s objectives.

The Mission Partners have been supported through prayer and two fundraising events, which raised a very creditable sum of money. Although the Easter Workshop and Summer Holiday Club were cancelled, we communicated with a growing number of children through Activity Packs in August, October and Christmas, reaching over 130 children at Christmas; we were also able to Zoom a joint Christingle Service.

In 2020 the joint parishes' Remembrance Service was held at the War Memorial on 11 November, with very restricted attendance due to COVID-19. We are grateful to David Scott for continuing to organise these Services and for the clergy from the two parishes who lead them.

More detailed reports on joint activities e.g Mission Support, children and youth work, the Office and the magazine, can be found in the later reports.

Thanks to all members - whether continuing, retired, or new to the Group - for their enthusiasm and support. Vivien Humber continues to provide support as Group Secretary.

Rosemary Hanson stood down as Chair during 2020 and we are grateful to John Ladd for agreeing to take over this role (chairmanship alternates between the two parishes). Grateful thanks to Rosemary for her term in office, which she fulfilled diligently and has been much appreciated.

**John Ladd and Rosemary Hanson**

**Incoming and Outgoing Chairs, Group Council 2020**

## **PARISHES MAGAZINE TEAM ANNUAL REVIEW 2020**

The parishes' magazine is an important part of the Eaton churches' communications package, providing an accessible Christian message to a broadly-based readership. Its aim is to offer subscribers with articles on subjects of interest ranging from church to local community matters, as well as information on the goods and services offered by advertisers.

The Team supports the magazine editors and the advertising secretary by reviewing contents, production, circulation and revenues at the two meetings which are held each year. The Vicars are ex officio members.

I would like to thank all members of the team for their enthusiasm and commitment in 2020.

Despite many changes in government guidance since the first lockdown in March 2020, the magazine has continued to be printed and distributed; sometimes copies were left for collection rather than posted through front doors, but we carefully complied with the Archdeacon's advice on safe deliveries. We also posted an online magazine on the websites of both churches, so it was accessible to those who experienced problems collecting their usual copy, and this has worked well.

We are grateful to all those who contribute articles, many of which have deliberately focussed on supportive and encouraging themes, with particular thanks to our regular columnists.

The magazine could not function without its advertising secretary so thanks to Christine Mortimer who works so ably with the advertisers and printers. We are also most grateful for the sterling work of those unsung heroes, the magazine distributors and the Office staff, who have worked seamlessly with them. Thanks also to the printers, BD&H, who maintained their excellent service, uninterrupted.

Finally, the magazine continues to generate a surplus which is used to support the work of the two churches. We are grateful to Richard Holcombe for his work on the magazine accounts during the year.

### **Vivien Humber - Magazine Team Chairman**

### **EATON PARISHES OFFICE**

The year 2020 will be indelibly imprinted on our minds, and as the pandemic quickly changed everything about how we do 'life', this naturally impacted the Parish Office and how we could work.

The year began as usual. But what is 'usual'? As you may not be aware of the range of things which happen in and through the office, let me give you a flavour of my role as administrator:

- regular liaising with the vicars
- daily checking of telephone & email messages (often work generating!)
- St Andrew's Hall - manage all hall bookings, time consuming - a few hours each week
- funeral admin - keep records of who, what, when, where; write burial register entries; process memorial stone applications; update burial ground records
- weddings – deal with all admin from initial wedding enquiries through to wedding day, guide couples through the admin; write up wedding register entries, marriage certificates
- Thursdays print day – print notice sheets for both parishes, plus any additional materials required; plan in advance of major festivals to ensure time / supplies to fulfil additional printing needs eg posters, special service sheets
- monthly - prepare wedding and baptism anniversary cards; magazines - batch up for distribution, keep admin up to date eg changes to round lists; print prayer calendar from Diocese for both churches

- quarterly - send off Marriage Returns to the Registrar (documents all weddings which have taken place), print the CYM (Children's Youth Magazine) leaflets for Christ Church
- annually - produce Parish Reviews for both churches, ahead of APCMs; magazine subscription renewal letters
- many other things crop up, so flexibility important!
- finance – all things finance carried out by the finance assistant (more later)

By mid-March, as the inevitable lockdown approached, I backed-up work files to a memory stick and set the office phone to be accessible remotely. Later that day, lockdown was called, so those preparations proved timely. I set up a home office in a bedroom and began to work from home.

In early 2020, we recruited for Lynn Glover's replacement. Sarah Barley was appointed just before Lockdown - and the only time I have met her in person was on the interview day! Lynn adapted how to handover to Sarah, training her via zoom instead of in the office. This was a difficult way for Sarah to learn the job, but she rose to the challenge and has made the new role of Finance Assistant her own. Lynn retired at the end of April - we all wish her a long and happy retirement.

Office news in 2020:

- New office job titles - I started as Administrative Assistant, whilst Lynn was Office Administrator (office management alongside finance). With the change in personnel, job specs were adjusted. I am now Parish Administrator (including office management), and Sarah's role is Finance Assistant
- 'Business Continuity Plan' – Sarah, myself, both vicars have worked hard to develop this, to cover eventualities when the office may need to be run by others at short notice, e.g. staff sickness or a snow day. This is now in place. I'm not sure we needed a pandemic to focus our attention on this, but it did bring the need for it into such sharp focus!
- Office IT systems - upgrading of systems (not hardware), with new email addresses and online cloud storage. Everything worked on at home can be easily continued in the office. This also provides us with improved data security, along with hard disk back-ups locally in the office
- Covid restrictions & workplace guidelines prompted a change in office layout to increase the space between desks – with the added benefit that Sarah no longer needs to squeeze behind my desk!
- During the summer, I worked in the office on Monday and Thursday, as Sarah works Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. This minimised Covid-risk. The remaining days I worked from home.

- I must pay tribute to Sarah for the amazing way she has stepped into the finance role. She and I regularly meet on zoom, meaning queries are readily sorted. She is also kindly printing the weekly service sheets for St Andrew's - I am very grateful.

The main thing missing from office life in 2020 was - office life! I have missed face-to-face contact with people, and I am enormously grateful for the encouragement and support I have received over the months - thank you.

As 2020 morphed into 2021 and things have continued in the same vein, I carry on working from home, grateful that I can continue to do (most of) my job, but I look forward to being able to be back in the office at some point.

### **Ruth Thorp - Parishes Administrator**

### **EATON EVENING MOTHERS UNION**

We planned topics and speakers for our 2020 monthly meetings and the year started with promise. There was an enjoyable evening talking about and showing our favourite frocks, with a bring and share meal, in January. This was followed by a presentation by Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Service on its important work in February. Sadly, the meetings for the rest of the year had to be cancelled because of COVID-19.

The branch supports many of the Mothers Union's wider work programme, including:

- preparation for marriage;
- fundraising, principally for Away From It All holidays;
- offering practical help for refugees relocating to Norwich.

The Branch has supported the Angel Tree project for many years and has again this year. It is organised by the Prison Fellowship at HMP Wayland with the support of the Prison Governor, staff and chaplaincy whereby prisoners can have a present bought for their child or children which are then wrapped and sent to the children in time for Christmas.

This year our branch was asked to buy a car for a boy over 10 years of age and Ruth Vaughan kindly purchased a remote-controlled car with batteries. This is another excellent outreach project where the MU works alongside other organisations to help the men and their families stay in touch.

Like other branches, we are on the rota for monthly midday prayers at Norwich Cathedral, again impacted by the pandemic.

Our thanks to our clergy, who take the Holy Communion Service at 10am on the 3rd Thursday of the month when this has been possible.

Branch vision for the future:

- to continue to work for all that Mother's Union represents supporting families and marriage
- to provide inspiration for members in the year ahead.

The Eaton Branch Committee hopes to devise a programme of meetings and speakers for at least part of 2021, but this will depend entirely on the situation concerning COVID-19. Meanwhile we are maintaining contact with Branch members through emails and letters.

**Vivien Humber - Branch Leader**

## **YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE**

The work of this committee continued through the long months of the Covid restrictions. There were four meetings throughout the year, and from June onwards, the committee decided to meet more regularly than usual (via Zoom), in order to discuss what might be done instead of the usual joint activities which could no longer take place. You can read the detail in the report by Lucy Stone, St Andrew's Children and Families Worker, who joined the Committee as soon as she began her employment in November. (Her report follows immediately after this one.) We are grateful to her for all she was able to achieve in the run-up to Christmas. Thanks are due also to Alistair Bolt (CCE) and James Cook (SAE curate), who both attended one or more of the meetings during the year, to Vivien Humber who continued to serve as the committee's secretary, and to Kathy Ladd (CCE) and all those who worked with her on the new forms of outreach that were devised (again, see Lucy's report below for the details.)

**Phil Rodd and Patrick Richmond - Joint Chairs**

## **YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK –**

### **REPORT FROM ST ANDREW'S CHILDREN & FAMILIES WORKER**

Youth and children's work carried out jointly between St Andrew's and Christ Church has continued to go ahead this year despite the restrictions. Though the usual events such as holidays clubs were cancelled, we were still able to effectively reach and serve the parishes together.

**Activity Packs:** The Youth and Children's Committee approved an alternative suggestion to do something to show our continuing interest and involvement, despite COVID-19. Vivien Humber heard that the Aylsham group of parishes were offering activity bags for children, leaving them for collection outside the church. So, packs were created for the children over Summer and reached over 100 children, they were also made in Autumn and for Christmas, each time receiving more demand. (Thank you to Vivien for this information.)

I had the joy of working with the team on the Christmas packs and it was amazing how creative the ideas were. We managed to reach almost 150 children each time with these packs and they have been an excellent way of reaching out into the community and letting them know that the Church and God are there for them. We are hopeful we can build on these links in 2021 to provide more for them.

**Christingle:** We decided to do a joint Christingle. This was a service on Zoom, with children having received packs (alongside their Christmas packs) containing all the parts of the Christingle ready to be made. Some made it during the service when I did, others made it before. At the end of the service, we all lit our Christingle and had a special moment reflecting on Jesus being the light of the world. We had a good turnout and I believe it was a special time for many.

**Lucy Stone – Children and Families Worker at St Andrew's**

## **OVERSEAS MISSION SUPPORT**

Our Church Mission Society (CMS) Mission Partners

### **1. The Revd Dr Dick and Caroline Seed**

They have been based at George Whitefield College in Cape Town, South Africa since August 2018. They work with the Overseas Council Australia's (OCA) Mile Deep Programme to run lecturer training courses for Anglican Universities and colleges across Africa. Dick is an ordained clergyman in the Church of England and has a PhD in Theological Education. Caroline is a trained teacher with a PhD in Theology. The ministry they ran is called Theological Education Development Services (TEDS).

In March 2020, when South Africa first went into lockdown because of the virus, George Whitefield College and they had to transfer all their work to an office that they set up in their small flat in Cape Town. All their lecturer training courses had to be transferred online which took far longer than they anticipated. They were able to prepare for, and give, online Phase One of their lecturer training successfully in Tanzania in October for lecturers from St John's University and eight of the diocesan colleges.

Since then, they have arranged for Phase One of this course to be given online for Santiago, Chile in January 2021. They have also been invited to run training at George Whitefield College and in Tanzania for Phase Three of their course.

Because of the pandemic they have been unable to have their home leave from October to December. As they were unable to visit our two Churches on the weekend of 28th/29th November they suggested a Zoom Meeting with them and about 15 of us. This took place on Saturday 28th November and we learnt from them about their online courses and plans.

## **2. Global Mission through Local Leaders**

In 2020 both of our two Churches have been supporting this CMS venture.

Before the lockdown in March, we had an email about some of the Local Leaders we have been supporting. Since then, because of the pandemic, we have not received any further emails about them. Information about some of these Local Leaders is shown in the CMS Call Newspaper and Prayerlines where they are known as “Local Partners”. I have put a supply of these, when they have been available, in St. Andrew’s Church Porch so that members of both Churches can pick up a copy to use in their own prayers.

When the pandemic is over, we hope to start receiving emails again from Local Leaders.

### **Mission Focus Meetings**

These have not been taking place since the March lockdown because of the virus restrictions. We intend to resume them either on Zoom or in the normal way once the restrictions are lifted.

Sadly, we have lost two members of our Team, Revd Shawn Tomlinson and Muriel Rodd. Shawn has moved on from Christ Church to another Parish and Muriel went to Heaven in August. This brings our regular membership to seven.

This year we have fortunately been joined by Kathy and John Ladd from Christ Church in raising money for our Mission Support. They have been an inspiration to us and enabled us to hold a Zoom Auction on 15th August which raised £950.00. We also held a Christmas Sale in Christ Church on 4th and 5th December which raised £1,200 (total £2,150). This has more than made up for not being able to hold the Spring Coffee Morning or the Autumn Fayre this year. Last year these events raised a total of £2,000.

### **Jane Carey - Leader, Mission Support Group**

## **NORWICH SOUTH DEANERY SYNOD**

In January the new Bishop Graham visited the Deanery and led a Holy Communion service at St Andrew's at an open meeting of Synod.

The June meeting was held by Zoom. It was announced that Deanery and Diocesan elections had been suspended due to Covid 19 restrictions. The meeting was divided into small groups to discuss new activities that were being done under lockdown and about the re-opening of churches when restrictions eased.

At the November meeting Sandra Isaac was elected lay chair, but there were no nominations for the position of secretary. Small group discussion was centred on worship during lockdown first. Zoom or live streaming was working well, but it was not easy to give support to church members who did not have computers. The Emerging Diocesan Vision paper was also discussed with the aim of churches being "transformed by Christ prayerfully, pastorally and prophetically".

### **Chris Smith - Member of Deanery Synod**

## **NORWICH DIOCESAN SYNOD**

The Diocesan Synod consists of the bishops, archdeacons and elected laity and clergy of the diocese. I became the chair of the house of clergy at the beginning of the year, having been elected unopposed.

Normally we meet three times, in March, June and October, but due to the pandemic the March meeting was cancelled, and the other two synods were held on Zoom.

- In June, it was agreed that the Synod could meet virtually. No reservations were expressed but there will be an opportunity to revisit resolutions passed online when we can meet physically again.
- We discussed in small groups a paper about the diocese's response to the COVID-19 crisis. Some of the staff of diocesan house had been furloughed. The archdeacons wished they had realised how long the pandemic and restrictions would last. This might have affected whether the diocese produced videos rather than podcasts. Zoom was used to keep in touch and support clergy and staff. Questions were asked about why the church's guidance to close churches went further than the government's. There had been a desire to give a clear lead and example to keep people safe and well.
- There was no presentation of the budget, which would normally happen in June, but Synod noted that payment of parish share was reduced, requiring the

diocese to think about how to sustain cash flow and seek loans from the church commissioners and the bank.

- There was discussion of what had been discovered through the crisis and what, old and new, might be stopped after it. There was a huge loss of sacramental ministry, music and personal contact but new connections had been made and sometimes more quality time could be spent by clergy with people since there were fewer meetings to travel to.
- There was a presentation about environmental concerns and the five marks of mission, the fifth mark of mission being to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. The new diocesan environmental policy was delayed by the need to calculate the cost realistically, but the presentation was preparing the way for it.
- Ingworth and Sparham deanery urged the diocese to be prophetic and to declare a climate emergency and to seek to be carbon neutral by 2030, as General Synod had recommended.
- Bishop Graham was committed to the environment but was conscious that the finances of the diocese were generating grave concern in the pandemic and we needed more information to make wise decisions.
- Synod approved a new scheme for quinquennial inspections of churches and parsonages. The DAC, the Diocesan Advisory Committee on the care of churches, would keep a list of approved architects but parishes would now have the option to employ other architects, though the DAC could decline to pay for them.
- Synod approved a scheme revising the constitution and function of the parsonages board which is legally required to look after parsonages.
- At the October meeting the Covenant for clergy Care and Wellbeing, agreed at General Synod, was promulgated (publicly announced). The Covenant is a commitment by the church to look after its clergy, and would be discussed at the March 2021 Synod. I am on a group convened by Canon Keith James and Mrs Jane Keeton the diocesan counsellor, seeking to encourage engagement with this covenant by the whole church.
- Synod gave broad agreement to the emerging diocesan vision that Bishop Graham has formed, “transformed by Christ, prayerfully, pastorally and prophetically”, with a priority for the poor, children, young people and families, and the excluded. PCCs were encouraged to use the Vision to choose what they wanted to focus on each year. There were questions about including the young in traditional church, buildings and the meaning of radical Christian inclusion, amongst others.

- Synod agreed the new policy reviewing clergy deployment. This seeks a 10% reduction in stipendiary (paid) clergy posts. Not all posts are filled all the time in the usual course of events and curates are deployed separately. It has seven principles, prioritising deprived parishes and parishes of large population, reducing posts and central costs, developing a wider range of ministries, reducing the burden of buildings and consulting with local deaneries. The Archdeacon of Lynn reassured us that the changes would be gentle and should be achieved through retirements rather than “redundancies”. The system of parish share would need to be reviewed to reflect the new policy.
- Bishop Graham introduced a review of how the diocese is governed. I had been involved in the working party under Mary Chapman, a former member of the Archbishops Council who has expertise in governance. Synod would debate the full report and proposals in March 2021 but an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and a Remuneration Committee were already being introduced to report to the Diocesan Board of Finance executive.
- Synod members are members of the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance and agreed *nem con* (none against) the delayed annual report and accounts for 2019 and the 2021 diocesan interim budget.
- Synod received an update on the Environment Policy motion from Ingworth and Sparham Deanery and agreed we face biodiversity and climate emergency and committed to producing an attainable, costed, timed and outcome-focussed strategy to care for creation as part of the delivery of the Diocesan Vision.
- Synod encouraged PCCs to engage with the EcoChurch award scheme and join the Norfolk EcoChurches Facebook Group.
- Synod said farewell to the Bishop of Lynn at his last Synod before his retirement.

**Patrick Richmond, Chair of the House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod and on General Synod**