

## **The Parish of Acle, St. Edmund's**

### **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, held at 12.15pm on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in St. Edmund's church.**

**Members present:** Rev'd Martin Greenland, Elsie Barber, Brian Bemment, Rosamund (Jean) Codling, Maureen (Mo) Dagnall, Angela de Robillard, Richard Futter, Emma Hare, Patricia Hobbs, Ellen Johnson, Ann Mackie, June Oldfield, Joan Palfrey and Susan Utting.

The Rector welcomed the parishioners to the meeting, once again held just before the joint benefice Annual Parochial Church Meeting, which is to take place on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The meeting opened with a prayer.

- 1. Minutes.** The minutes of the last Annual Meeting of Parishioners, held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018, were read, approved and signed as a correct record.
- 2. Election of Churchwardens.** Sadly, there were again no nominations for Churchwarden, and no appointment could be made. The Rector urged any interested party/ies to contact him in this respect. The Rector reiterated the gratitude of the PCC to Michael Turner for his voluntary work on the boiler project in his role as Fabric Officer on the PCC. The Rector also expressed his gratitude to the sidesmen and authorised worship assistants of St. Edmund's.

The meeting was declared closed at 12.20pm.

Minutes of the Acle and Bure to Yare Benefice joint Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the short meeting of the Acle PCC held thereafter, on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at Acle St. Edmund C of E Primary School, Acle.

**Present (Acle):** Revd Martin Greenland (MG), Dr Rodney Edrich (RE), Mrs Ann Mackie (AM), Mr George Nicholls (GN), Mrs Angela de Robillard (AR), Mrs Jean Codling, Dr Michael Pitt

**Apologies (Acle):** Mr Michael Turner (MT), Mr Vic Tasker-Walsham, Mrs Christine Tasker-Walsham

### Plenary session

The seven parishes within the Benefice were represented. The opening address concerned the adoption of a new Safeguarding policy, which the Benefice consented, as one, to accept. The role of the church as a support to victims and survivors, and safeguarding as the responsibility of all, was emphasised. Individual parish Reports followed from Churchwarden and other parish representatives, and then the Deanery Synod Report from Revd Martin Greenland, emphasising the role of the Synod in drawing parishes together.

### Acle Parish session

- 1. Electoral Roll.** AR reported that the number on the 2019 Electoral Roll stood at 30, compared to 41 in 2018. Five new people had joined the Roll, but fifteen had left, and there had been one demise, meaning that the numbers on the Roll were down by eleven overall.
- 2. Nominations to the PCC** were as follows:

	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
Dr Rodney Edrich	AR	Vic Tasker-Walsham
Mr Vic Tasker-Walsham	Christine T-Walsham	Jean Codling
Dr Michael Pitt	Jean Codling	AM
Mrs Angela de Robillard	RE	Dr Michael Pitt
Mrs Ann Mackie	Vic T-Walsham	AR

#### **Appointments to the PCC:**

Mr George Nicholls

Mr Michael Turner

#### **Appointment of officers of the PCC:**

**Vice-Chairman** Dr Rodney Edrich      AR      AM

**Secretary** Mrs Angela de Robillard      RE      AM

**Treasurer** Mr George Nicholls      By appointment of the PCC



## 2019 Annual Report for the Parochial Church Council of St. Edmund's, Acle

St. Edmund's continues to aim to promote the whole mission of the Church, and provide a welcoming and safe environment for the regular congregation and visitors to the church, both local and from further afield. The Church Hall continues to provide a hub for local clubs and businesses, and hosts the monthly Farmers' Market which is very well attended. The PCC has responsibility for the management of the hall, which funds itself from income raised for the hire of its facilities.

**Electoral Roll and structure, governance and management of the PCC.** The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Edmund's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our rector), churchwarden (once again vacant in 2019), a vice-chair, the reader, members elected by churchgoers whose names are on the church electoral roll, and members appointed by the PCC (Treasurer and Fabric Officer in 2019). All those who come to our services are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the PCC, which comprises six members of the laity as dictated by our congregation size. In 2019 a new Electoral Roll was created, with the unfortunate result that the number on the Roll dropped to 30, despite parishioners receiving a personal letter encouraging them to re-apply for inclusion, and with only one new applicant.

The PCC met five times in 2019, including the APCM, with most meetings attended by all members. PCC members serving during 2019 were: *ex officio* members: the incumbent, Revd Martin Greenland, the reader, Mr Vic Tasker-Walsham; elected members: Dr Rodney Edrich (vice-chair), Mrs Angela de Robillard (secretary), Mrs Ann Mackie; appointed members: Mr George Nicholls (treasurer), Mr Michael Turner (fabric officer). The PCC is responsible for making all decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how the funds of the PCC are spent. Please see the exhaustive Finance Report attached to the Financial Statements 2019 for detail of income and expenditure.

The PCC had received a request in 2018 from a member of the public to purchase from the church a small piece of land known as Clerk's Piece, which is situated on Damgate Lane, Acle. The PCC lets the land annually to a local farmer, for a nominal fee. After discussion at the PCC, and after consultation with the Acle Parish Council Clerk, who related that the Council would like to be able to tender for the land as a potential green space in the village should we agree to sell, it was decided that we would not consider selling before a proper land survey was carried out to ascertain the true value of the land.

Please see the separate Rector's Benefice Report 2019 and Deanery Synod Report 2019 for information regarding **Worship and Prayer** and **Ecumenical Relationships**.

**Safeguarding.** The PCC has complied with its legal duty under Section 5 of the *Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016* to have due regard to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The explanatory note prepared by the Diocese of Norwich in this regard was read and discussed at PCC level. A safeguarding policy was agreed at the APCM of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019, a copy of which is held in our files and on the Benefice website. St. Edmund's appointed Mrs Kate Ashcroft as the Parish Safeguarding Officer, and all PCC members, as automatic charity trustees, successfully gained their DBS enhanced certification in 2019.

**Fabric of the Church and Churchyard.** Clearly the maintenance of the fabric of the church is vital if it is to be preserved for future generations. In 2019 a great deal of money has been spent on a principal project, the replacement of the boiler. The incumbent and the PCC are very grateful to an anonymous private individual for providing funds for this project, to replace the existing underground boiler with a new model in a purpose-built external cabinet. Completion of the project has been a major issue, and it has taken rather longer than expected because of issues which were beyond the compass of the PCC and involved contractors and the like. Even now the boiler has not been officially commissioned and we look forward to the final act in this saga in the not too distant future. One thing is certain: the church is now warm and welcoming and there is no longer the threat of a sudden heating breakdown causing the disruption of services. The Quinquennial report in October of this year pointed out that other remedial work needed to be done on the church fairly urgently, particularly the replacement of the thatch on the north side of the nave roof (the south side had been re-thatched in 1995). Some improvements were made to the disposal of rainwater, gullies were cleaned and better provision made for the waste water from the sink at the back of the church. A very badly eroded quoin stone in a buttress near the new boiler housing was replaced. Other similar repairs were made to the nineteenth century chimney which served earlier generations of boiler. By August 2019, quotations were being sought for the re-thatching.

**Acle - St. Edmund**

**Financial Statements  
of the  
Parochial Church Council**

**For the year ending**

**31 December 2019**

**Acle – St. Edmund PCC**  
**Receipts and Payments Account**

**For the period from 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2019**

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
<b>Receipts</b>						
Receipts from generated funds						
Voluntary income	18,190.87	315.68	50,944.87	—	69,451.42	25,180.63
Activities for generating funds	1,067.20	68.00	—	—	1,135.20	1,616.07
Investment income	1,372.65	—	302.74	—	1,675.39	1,805.33
Receipts from charitable activities						
Statutory Fees retained by PCC	1,636.00	—	—	—	1,636.00	1,769.00
Bookstall, Lettings, Magazine etc	2,643.60	8,695.00	—	—	11,338.60	10,656.87
Other receipts	1,249.69	—	—	—	1,249.69	1,526.50
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>26,160.01</b>	<b>9,078.68</b>	<b>51,247.61</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>86,486.30</b>	<b>42,554.40</b>
<b>Payments</b>						
Cost of generating funds	157.08	—	—	—	157.08	474.25
Charitable activities						
Parish Share	24,750.00	—	—	—	24,750.00	22,750.00
Salaries, Honoraria	—	—	—	—	—	525.00
Expenses of Clergy etc.	1,437.17	—	—	—	1,437.17	1,370.86
Mission and Evangelism Costs	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	12.00
Regular Church Running Expenses	2,934.27	337.60	64.00	—	3,335.87	5,465.76
Church Utility Bills	1,458.56	—	—	—	1,458.56	1,289.80
Cost of Trading, Magazine Hall and Bookstall	24.63	3,839.43	—	—	3,864.06	2,947.54
Governance costs	87.00	—	—	—	87.00	108.00
Other payments	—	—	34,316.70	—	34,316.70	10,539.23
Mission Giving and Charitable Donations	20.00	—	—	—	20.00	25.00
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>30,968.71</b>	<b>4,177.03</b>	<b>34,380.70</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>69,526.44</b>	<b>45,507.44</b>
<b>Excess of receipts over payments before transfer</b>	<b>(4,808.70)</b>	<b>4,901.65</b>	<b>16,866.91</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>16,959.86</b>	<b>(2,953.04)</b>
<b>Transfers</b>						
Gross transfers between funds - in	1,787.00	20,500.00	287.00	—	22,574.00	—
Gross transfers between funds - out	(20,500.00)	(2,074.00)	—	—	(22,574.00)	—
<b>Net receipts/payments before other gains/losses</b>	<b>(23,521.70)</b>	<b>23,327.65</b>	<b>17,153.91</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>16,959.86</b>	<b>(2,953.04)</b>
<b>Other recognised gains/losses</b>						
Gains/losses on investment assets	6,887.60	—	—	532.97	7,420.57	(993.08)
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(16,634.10)</b>	<b>23,327.65</b>	<b>17,153.91</b>	<b>532.97</b>	<b>24,380.43</b>	<b>(3,946.12)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Bank current and deposit accounts at 01 January	34,455.33	9,974.30	11,676.22	2,890.58	58,996.43	62,942.55
Bank current and deposit accounts at 31 December	17,821.23	33,301.95	28,830.13	3,423.55	83,376.86	58,996.43

**Acle – St. Edmund PCC**

**Balance sheet (Separate funds)**

**As of: 31 December 2019**

	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	This Year Total	Last Year Total
<b>Current assets</b>						
Investments	25,418.44	20,500.00	22,202.99	3,423.55	71,544.98	40,661.60
Cash at bank and in hand	(7,597.21)	12,801.95	6,627.14	—	11,831.88	18,638.64
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>17,821.23</b>	<b>33,301.95</b>	<b>28,830.13</b>	<b>3,423.55</b>	<b>83,376.86</b>	<b>59,300.24</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>						
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	—	—	—	—	—	303.81
<b>Net current assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>17,821.23</b>	<b>33,301.95</b>	<b>28,830.13</b>	<b>3,423.55</b>	<b>83,376.86</b>	<b>58,996.43</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>17,821.23</b>	<b>33,301.95</b>	<b>28,830.13</b>	<b>3,423.55</b>	<b>83,376.86</b>	<b>58,996.43</b>
<b>Total net assets less liabilities</b>	<b>17,821.23</b>	<b>33,301.95</b>	<b>28,830.13</b>	<b>3,423.55</b>	<b>83,376.86</b>	<b>58,996.43</b>
<b>Represented by</b>						
Unrestricted - General fund	17,821.23	—	—	—	17,821.23	34,455.33
Designated - Church Building Preservation Projects	—	20,500.00	—	—	20,500.00	—
Designated - Parish Hall	—	9,791.88	—	—	9,791.88	6,578.31
Designated - Acle Bells	—	2,179.45	—	—	2,179.45	2,084.01
Designated - Farmers Mkt Fund	—	400.69	—	—	400.69	544.45
Designated - Acle Organ	—	202.40	—	—	202.40	500.00
Designated - Copier and Computer	—	227.53	—	—	227.53	267.53
Restricted - Agency collection	—	—	(108.00)	—	(108.00)	(108.00)
Restricted - Acle Church Fabric	—	—	7,522.75	—	7,522.75	7,071.47
Restricted - Acle Heating Boiler Replacement	—	—	16,403.24	—	16,403.24	—
Restricted - Acle Roof	—	—	2,620.02	—	2,620.02	2,268.02
Restricted - Organ Restoration/Replacement	—	—	2,100.00	—	2,100.00	2,100.00
Restricted - Religious Education	—	—	128.65	—	128.65	128.65
Restricted - Acle Flower Fund	—	—	163.47	—	163.47	216.08
Endowment - Fletcher Acle	—	—	—	3,423.55	3,423.55	2,890.58
<b>Funds of the church</b>	<b>17,821.23</b>	<b>33,301.95</b>	<b>28,830.13</b>	<b>3,423.55</b>	<b>83,376.86</b>	<b>58,996.43</b>
<b>Current assets</b>						
Barclays Deposit Account					1,221.38	1,201.83
Barclays Current Account					10,610.50	6,426.39
COIF Charities Deposit Fund					—	11,010.42
CBF Deposit Fund (Short Term)					30,202.99	—
CBF Church of England Investment Fund (Diocese)					3,423.55	2,890.58
CBF Church of England Investment Fund (Shares)					37,918.44	37,771.02
Agencies money in transit					—	(303.81)
<b>Current assets of the church</b>					<b>83,376.86</b>	<b>58,996.43</b>



## Acle – St. Edmund PCC

### Description of Funds 2019

*Pre-2009 information is an understanding gained from inspecting previous annual reports.*

#### **Unrestricted Funds**

**General Fund [General]** General unrestricted funds for most day-to-day transactions.

#### **Designated Funds (Unrestricted)**

**Acle Bells [Acbells]** Balance derives from £2000 set aside in 2006; receives donations from visiting bellringers and a fee if bells are rung at a wedding.

**Acle Organ & Piano [Acorg]** Used for maintenance (including tuning) of both organ and piano at St. Edmund's.

**Church Building Preservation Projects** Created in 2019 by earmarking unrestricted legacies received in previous years, to set funds aside for any important maintenance work that may be needed.

**Copier & Computer [Copcomp]** Created 1991; funds set aside to replace the parish photocopier (replaced 2012) and computer.

**Farmers Mkt Fund [FMF]** New fund 2013: created to hold the funds of the Farmers Market.

**Parish Hall [PH]** Income from hall lettings; used to pay the hall expenses.

#### **Restricted Funds**

**Acle Church Fabric [ACF]** Created 1997 for maintaining the fabric of St. Edmund's Church.

**Acle Floodlighting [AFlo]** Created 1992: holds surplus money raised for St. Edmund's floodlighting scheme.

**Acle Flower Fund [AFF]** Created 2011: for flowers for St. Edmund's Church. The small cash element was expended during 2012.

**Acle Heating Boiler Replacement [AcHeat]** Created 2011: holds money raised for the replacement of St. Edmund's Church boiler.

**Acle Roof Fund [Acroof]** Created 1994: residue of money raised for rethatching and roof maintenance.

**Organ Restoration/Replacement [Orgbuild]** New fund 2011: created to hold funds raised for future restoration or replacement of the organ in St. Edmund's.

**Religious Education [RE]** Created 2010 to hold a grant received from the Acle C.of E. Religious Education Fund to support religious educational activities with children.

#### **Endowment Funds (Restricted)**

**Fletcher Acle [Fletacle]** Dr. Fletcher's legacy of 1989. Held by the Diocese in a separate CCLA CBF CofE Investment Fund; income to **Acle Church Fabric** Fund.

## Independent Examiners Certificate

Report to the trustees/ members of:	THE PCC OF AULE ST. EDMUND
On accounts for the year ended:	31 DECEMBER 2019
Charity no (if any):	249318

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2019

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### Independent examiner's statement

~~[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [ ]]. Delete [ ] if not applicable.~~

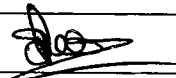
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:



Date:

20 MAY 2020

Name:

STEPHEN PEASE

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any)

FELLOW OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS (ACCA)

Address:

5 SCHOOL LANE
DELSHAM
N219 1LR

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose

## Finance Report

### Introduction

The financial reports are based solely on receipts and payments during 2019 (i.e. not adjusted for any amounts owed to us, or by us). This is the simplest form of accounting, and is allowed by the Charities Act 2011 for PCC's with gross annual income less than £250,000.

2019's accounts reflect the substantial increases to both receipts and payments arising from the project to replace and re-site the church boiler. We were fortunate enough to receive a generous anonymous donation of £50,000 to fund this project, and, though the work itself was substantially completed during the year, some contract payments remained outstanding at the end of December. This is the main reason behind the £24,380 increase in our overall reserves (see Net Movement in Funds on the Receipts and Payments Account). Approximately £16,400 of this is committed to the boiler project (see balance Sheet [Separate Funds]) and is therefore restricted. Most of the remaining increase is due to an unexpectedly large rise in the value of our investments (see IV.1 below).

### Receipts and Payments Account

#### I. RECEIPTS

**Overall Picture.** The total 2019 income of £86,486 includes the £50,000 donation mentioned above. To see how our regular income compares to last year we should exclude this donation and the £7,000 we got from legacies in 2018. The resulting figures are very similar:- £36,486 in 2019 compared with £36,353 in 2018.

1. **Voluntary Income.** Excluding the anonymous donation over half of our receipts came from Voluntary Income, £19,451 in 2019. This is slightly up on the 2018 figure (adjusted for legacies) of £18,181. The £1,270 difference is attributable mainly to 2 items:-

- a A successful Gift Day appeal which raised £845 more than last year (with online giving being a small but growing proportion [13%] of the total).
- b A grant claim of £607 for reimbursement of some maintenance expenditure under the Listed Places of Worship scheme. (No claim was made in 2018.)

The implication of a & b is that other regular sources of income (plate collections etc.) have shown a small decline, a continuation of a trend from previous years.

2. Of the PCC's remaining receipts most comes under the heading of **Bookstall, Lettings, Magazine etc.** which at £11,339 is slightly up on last year.

- a Parish Hall lettings are most of the total (71.5%) and, at £8,105, were £438 up on 2018. The net revenue, after hall running costs are taken into account, continues to provide a valuable source of funds to the church.
- b The steady income provided by St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church for the use of St Edmunds church building is the next most significant item at 23% of the total.
- c Income from the Farmers' Market, at £590, appears to be up on the previous year, but is largely offset by payments (see Cost of Trading II.3 below).

3. **Investments Income.** This year's accounts show an adjustment in presentation compared to 2018. This line now shows only dividends and interest on our investments. Increases in their market value are now dealt with further down the page under Other Recognised Gains/Losses (see IV below). The £1,675 received during 2019, although down by 7% on 2018, is a useful, steady contribution to church income. Low interest rates and the need to realise some investments to fund operational costs are the reasons behind the slight reduction.

4. **Remaining Receipts.** Fund-raising activities, though slightly reduced, continue to generate a modest but useful income of £1,135. The 'Other Receipts' figure of £1,250 mainly comprise reimbursements from other parishes regarding benefice-wide expenditure incurred by Acle PCC.

## II. PAYMENTS

**Overall Picture.** As with receipts, 2019 total payments of £69,526 are significantly up on last year (+53%) because of activity related to the boiler replacement project. Delays to the hoped-for timetable meant that, although the boiler was in use by the end of the year, some expenditure still remained outstanding. Costs for this project fall under the Other Payments heading.

1. **Other Payments.** The figure of £34,317 is all boiler project expenditure. A few significant payments were pending at the end of the year (mainly on the building works element). Further *net* expenditure (i.e. including some retrospective grant claims) of up to £16,400 is forecast.
2. **Parish Share.** Apart from 1 above, parish share, the parish's contribution to the overall cost of providing clergy, is the largest item of expenditure. We managed to pay all the parish share requested in 2019, £24,750.
3. **Cost of Trading, etc.** – This £3,864 mainly comprises the running costs of the church hall, with non-recurring maintenance jobs being the main reason for the increase over last year. The total also includes some payments, totalling £498, connected with sharing the Farmers Market proceeds amongst other parishes in the benefice, some of which related to 2018.
4. **Regular Church Running Expenses** – 2019's low expenditure of £3,336 (39% down on 2018) reflects a fortunate year of very little minor maintenance work, and other periodic bills not falling due within this year.
5. The remaining headings show no significant variations apart from Salaries, Honoraria, where, at £0 for 2019, we now have a complete year benefiting from the, now donated, services of our regular organist.

## III. TRANSFERS

1. The PCC decided to set aside £20,500 of its unrestricted funds into a new designated fund for Church Building Preservation Projects. This figure is equivalent to the unrestricted legacies we have received in recent years, and the aim is to add to this fund annually thus ensuring that the accounts reflect the constant need to channel resources towards maintenance of the church building. The latest quinquennial inspection report was received during 2019, identifying not only the urgent re-thatching need (potential cost of £40,000: see Future below), but also another £20,000-£30,000 of work requiring attention in the next five years.
2. Most of the remaining transfers are annual contributions to the church's General fund from the Parish Hall and Farmers Market funds.

## IV. OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS/LOSSES

1. Previous accounts have included within Receipts and Payments the financial gains and losses that come from revalued assets, mainly changes in the value of investments. Because they have not resulted from church activities they should be shown separately outside of this heading. In 2019 gains from investments were particularly significant due to unusually strong market conditions throughout the year, highlighting the need to report them appropriately. Whilst the £7,421 rise in value is a welcome contribution to the PCC's

reserves, a note of caution should be made as more erratic market conditions in 2020 may see a reversal of some of these gains.

2. It should be noted that towards the end of the year, in anticipation of less favourable market performance, £8,000 was transferred from our CBF Investment (Shares) account to the CBF Deposit account.

## Balance Sheet

As stated in the Introduction, the sudden £24k increase in the overall size of the balance sheet to £83,377 incorporates a number of issues which need to be separated out to get a sense of our ongoing operational health:-

1. Whilst the amount in the General Fund (our only **Unrestricted** fund) appears to have nearly halved to £17,821, the main reason for this was the £20,500 transfer to designated funds to create the new fund mentioned in III.1 above. However, the unusual surge in the value of our investments (see IV.1 above) offset this to some extent. If we disregard these 2 factors there is an underlying fall of just over £3,000 in the unrestricted reserve. This continues a trend that has been identified in previous years.
2. The new Church Building Preservation fund (£20,500) and the Parish Hall fund (£9,792) comprise over 90% of the £33,302 in **Designated** funds balance. Of the former £7,500 is already committed towards the thatching work planned for 2020 (see Future below) and other upcoming quinquennial work (see III.1 above) will create demands on it. The Parish Hall fund continues to be a steady operation providing valuable contributions to church income.
3. As far as **Restricted** funds are concerned, the year-end position with Acle Heating Boiler Replacement fund (57% of total Restricted) has already been mentioned. Completion of the project in 2020 is expected to use almost all of the £16,403, with any remaining approved for transfer to the Acle Roof fund (£2,620), which in turn is entirely committed to the urgent re-thatching of the nave north-side roof in 2020. Acle Church Fabric fund (£7,522) is intended for more minor maintenance work, and has remained relatively untouched this year.

## Future

Looking forward to 2020, two major impacts on the PCC's finances are planned for: the completion of the boiler project and the roof re-thatching. The latter may cost up to £40,000 and will require grant applications and donation appeals as well as drawing on some of our financial reserves. However, the coronavirus crisis has changed almost every aspect of normal life so that forecasting future financial trends is impossible. The boiler and thatching projects, while challenging, may well be the only aspects of PCC finances for which forecasts can be made in 2020.

## The Rector's Benefice Report 2019

We began the year by saying farewell and thank you to Lorna and Peter Allies. Their legacy includes the *Friends of Wickhampton Church*, which took formal shape during the year; and the toilet at Freethorpe, dedicated by Bishop Alan on his visitation in February. That facility has enabled increased use of the church, notably a monthly drop-in, *Coffee, Cake and Chat*.

The House for Duty post at Reedham was to remain vacant for the whole of the year: I'm grateful to everybody within the Benefice who has helped make that manageable; and to visiting clergy. The Sunday load has been shared by our own Readers and Authorised Worship Assistants; it was wonderful to be able to prepare two more AWAs at Limpenhoe in Simon Ash and Sarah Mules. Their desire to grow the church was evidenced in the increasingly successful additional services they conducted through Advent. Prior to this Simon needed to be Confirmed, joining Simon Pittam and the rest of the innovative Deanery Confirmation Preparation group.

Sadly numbers of Baptisms dropped, with only one at Acle and 6 in the Benefice as a whole (one of them at Tunstall, thanks to the arrival of Robin More). So did weddings (3: all at Acle); although this ministry is still worth celebrating, with one couple particularly appreciating the welcome they experienced on Sundays at St. Edmund's; and two renewals of wedding vows during the year – one of them Freethorpe's Australian friends.

The number of funerals conducted at crematoria or cemeteries (7) also continued to fall, as civil celebrants take an increasing share. The resultant drop in fee income is worryingly affecting finances at both parish and diocesan level; against that background, the fact that in 2019 we still managed to pay 95% demonstrates the Benefice commitment to Parish Share.

Against the national trend, the number of funerals in church held up (22). That is partly due to our open churchyards (thank you to those who oversee and maintain them); but it's clearly an aspect of our ministry which is valued within our communities. Every death is significant; among those of more than local impact were the loss of retired Reader Peter Trueman; *Mother's Union* stalwart Jean Cunnington; retired funeral director Tony Moll and Dr. Nick Ireland.

On a brighter sacramental note our Benefice (or its predecessor) did have a hand in an ordination: that of James Gilder, resulting in a joyful visit to Chelmsford Cathedral.

Our church bells (including Acle and Halvergate) sounded more frequently during the year, with the continuing revival of *Reedham Ringers*. Towards the end of the year they celebrated their first anniversary; but also marked the passing of a former tower captain, Peter Luckins.

Compared with 2018, Sunday congregation numbers appear stable. Working with children in the Church is often an up-and-down experience: *Reedham Chill Church* had variable numbers through the year; but a particular highlight was the visit to Norwich Cathedral and its helter-skelter installation. The experiment of holding a floating, monthly evening service in the Benefice didn't justify making this a permanent feature. The most successful of these slots was taken by the Benefice Choir's Easter celebration, *Thy Lord is Risen*. The Choir also took up an invitation to sing Evensong at Norwich Cathedral; and for Halvergate's *Book of Common Prayer Day*, marking its continuing contribution to Anglican worship in and beyond our Benefice.

We continue to strengthen our ecumenical links. Reedham hosted the July service for what is now to be known as *Freethorpe & Area Churches Together* (that's a FACT). This celebrated the national anniversary of *Open the Book*, which continues in three of our Primary Schools (although new team members would be welcome). We said farewell to Steve Cullis and welcomed a new local Methodist Minister in Andrew King. Members of St. Edmund's joined Acle Methodists for their Covenant Service (relocated to the Recreation Centre by building work at the church); on Good Friday and for occasional *Just Desserts* (conversation with calories).

Building work also impacted some of our congregations during the year. Most significantly, Beighton's superb fundraising efforts successfully gave way in July to the start of work on their *Rethatching & Improvements Project* (now not programmed to end until September 2021). Much smaller in scale (though, frustratingly, equally long-lasting) Acle's underground heating boiler was replaced with a new one in a purpose-built cabinet. Funded by the Parish Council, Acle's clock mechanism was renewed; and Halvergate's crumbling plasterwork was attended to. Thank you to Fabric Officers and Churchwardens for their care of our places of worship.

The Church of England managed to find another Bishop Graham to fill the vacancy in see; some church members were able to meet him when he visited the Deanery within a week of his enthronement. I think he's finding the Diocese to be in good heart; as is our Benefice.

Martin Greenland



## Report on Deanery Synod 2019

Meetings in 2019:

07.02.2019 at Acle –

A meeting focussing on the Celebrate strand of our strategic plan. A presentation by two of the Norwich Diocese communications team focussing on dealing with social media; and then a presentation on the Deanery Newsletter.

13.06.2019 at Reedham –

Focussing on the Empower strand, a presentation on the theme of Building Dementia-friendly Communities: by Rev Gill Wells, Team Vicar from Shipdham, dwelling on problems of memory & perception that affect people with dementia, and by Gaye Hailstone from Yare Valley Churches about how her parish has striven to be dementia friendly.

21.09.2019 at Blofield –

Deanery Resourcing Day. Unfortunately, this event coincided with Readers' Day at the Cathedral, so I was unable to attend!

17.10.2019 at Blofield –

Focussing on the Empower strand, a presentation from Sue Smith, sub-warden of Readers for Norfolk East, on the role of a Reader. "I have come realize that God invites every human being to offer something to the life of the world, some unique task, or something done in our own unique way – a 'song to sing for others' that is our own" – an interesting point to explore.

Further consideration given to the Deanery Newsletter, looking at content, helpfulness, ease of access & width of distribution.

13.11.2019 at Lingwood -

Visitation by the new Bishop, Rt Rev Graham Usher: a mutual introduction of the bishop & the deanery.