

APCM 2020 Summary of reports

Annual Report

Katie Cowen (KC) on behalf of the Church Wardens reports: As is the common experience, 2020 was a remarkably frustrating year. Most of the things planned in 2019 and early 2020 had to be cancelled because of the Pandemic.

At the beginning of the first 'Lockdown' in March, all Church services were suspended, and church buildings closed. From June, we were allowed to open the buildings, for private prayer, but were supposed to clean the church between openings unless there was a gap of 72 hours between. As there are very few of us available to do this – either 'elderly' and therefore vulnerable or with heavy work and domestic commitments – this was limited to just Saturdays. From July, Services in church were permitted, but with many rules to prevent infection, such as no congregational singing, the wearing of face coverings by any not actually conducting the service or reading, and 2 metre distancing of the seating for each household group. The Communion Cup could no longer be shared, and a one way system adopted to move to the altar rail. By Christmas, the temporary easing led to a Carol Service with a choir – but again the congregation could not join in the singing and the choir numbers severely curtailed in order to provide the requisite 2 metre distance between each singer.

However, our Christian worship did not cease. Many of the congregation have been joining the Zoom service at 9.30am on a Sunday morning, others using broadcast or streamed services available on Television, radio or on-line.

A feature of this year's Church life has been the increased co-operation between the Benefice parishes. This is increasingly so in the Zoom services, and it has been a pleasant side effect that we are getting to know members of other congregations who we would not normally meet. Members of the congregation have joined with others from neighbouring parishes to produce a Benefice Video for Remembrance Sunday which was available on line and seemed to be much appreciated. This was followed a Christmas Video Nativity Play for the local schools, which then became part of a Christmas Carol Service Video for all the Benefice. Many, many thanks to Simon Ash from Limpenhoe for his technical expertise, commitment and being a very memorable 'Joseph'.

Members of our congregation have also been active in support for the community at this time, in particular with the Reedham Covid 19 Team, which organised shopping and other services for those isolating, and recently have been helping with transport to inoculation centres. The Food Bank collection point is back, although in the church porch rather than the church itself. Outlook magazine, which also functions as a community newsletter for Reedham and nearby villages, has continued in production, but for the May to September 2020 and the February and March 2021 editions it was produced as an on-line version only because of the risks of producing a paper copy and then distributing it. However, the information in it was not always accurate as the Regulations always changed just after it was published, to the Editor's great frustration. It also became very thin of content as most activities closed down and even the advertisers stopped wanting their slots.

The Reedham Ringers could no longer use the Church Tower bells for much of the year, and then only three bells at a time to comply with the distancing requirements. However, nothing

daunted, Zoom practices were introduced using 'Ringing Room' and hand bell ringing has been going ahead when allowed. Some remarkable progress has been made by some of the team, while others have, we hope temporarily, fallen by the wayside.

May 2020 was the 400th Anniversary of the creation of the Berney Baronetcy, and celebrations had been planned, including a Service with buffet to follow. During the Service, two memorial plaques, one to Sir Julian's father who died in the Korean War and another to his great grandfather, killed in the Boer War, would have been dedicated. These were eventually installed in August 2020. Very generously, Sir Julian has also funded a new carpet for the church, which was laid in September – and very pleasing it looks, and much easier to vacuum. The brass of Elizabeth Berney, a fifteenth century ancestress of the Baronet, has also been taken ready for it to be refitted in the grave slab beside the Berney Chapel altar. This will be funded by grants and any short fall made up by the Berney family. The family are also trying to arrange for the head of the brass of her husband to be 'long loaned' by Norwich Castle Museum so it can be mounted beside her.

Problems with the leaking roof increased during the year. However, this March builders managed to repair the leak on the north side and attend to other shifted tiles on other parts of the roof. Unfortunately the hydraulic platform they used to access the north side of the roof sank into the sodden churchyard grass and created deep depressions across it. This the builders have filled in and re-seeded, but the short path from Church lane is still rather uneven and probably needs more attention.

The rabbits which have long plagued the churchyard have been attended to. Many thanks to David Hales who suggested that Norfolk Warreners might be able to help. There are still rabbits about – they are in all the surrounding areas as well – but the main areas of damage have been cleared and rabbit netting put down to discourage recolonization. The new churchyard certainly looks a great deal better.

Two great losses to the Church community have been Rosemary Bedding, our extremely skilful and dedicated flower arranger, and Mike Brook. Mike was for many years a member of the Reedham PCC although of late he was Church Warden of Limpenhoe and Cantley. However, he was a member of the Reedham and then the Benefice Choir and still often attended services at Reedham when he could.

To sum up the year- there have been great losses, which we all have felt in one way or another, but there has also been a great determination to adapt and learn new ways and skills. The hoped for Assistant Priest is unlikely to be appointed now, and this means we will have to reduce the number of services we have at Reedham, but it is hoped that the spirit of co-operation with other parishes will continue and we will all be stronger for it. Many thanks to all who have helped to keep the Church up and running, even when the church was shut; and to Martin for his remarkable efforts and efficiency with the new technology.

Church Electoral Roll Report

Rachel Holt (RH) reports that the electoral roll was reviewed on 21st April 2021. It remains unchanged from 2020 and currently stands at 27 on roll.

Financial Report

Charlotte Lonsdale (CL) provide a report on the Financial Statements for Reedham PCC for the year ended 31 December 2020.

This year has been very different with Covid and the fact our church has been closed for a significant portion of the year. With this you would expect the financial statements to be very different to the prior year,- they are - and, in particular, with a substantial excess of payments over receipts.

The reality is that whilst the church has seen a significant reduction in receipts, it has also seen some payments reduce which has somewhat counteracted this.

Receipts

In 2019, there were one off receipts for the phone mask and one off bell fund donation totalling £2.3k. If you exclude these receipts are down across the board by £4.7k.

Payments

Again in 2019, there were one off payments for Chill Church, Church and Churchyard works and fixtures and fittings totalling £12k. Excluding these, payments are slightly down on the previous year – we have switched electrical supplier (£500 reduction) and magazine costs are down (£400 reduction).

Funds

Overall, the financial statements show the position being an excess of payments over receipts of £2.5k.

Report on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments of the Church

Edward Gilder(EG) Fabric Officer reports that a number of items from the last quinquennial review have been addressed in the past year or are in the process of being addressed.

Most importantly the roof has had an overhaul by Phoenix Build. They have reset a number of high level tiles “ruffled” by high winds. Replaced others which have been lost or broken and re-felted a section of north facing roof on the aisle and refitted the tiles. This should now mean that the roof is watertight again. Internal decoration was done to cover an unsightly area of black stained ceiling resulting from the leaking roof.

This work was done from a “Cherry Picker” rather than using scaffolding which resulted in a very significant cost saving, but some damage to the surface of the churchyard for which Ashley has apologised. This damage has now been made good and re-seeded. Thanks are due to Diana Gilder for her work in levelling the path.

Ashley has inspected the defective coping stones on the east wall abutting the vestry roof and also the very decayed stone mullion to the vestry window. Both items identified for attention by the church architect. He has priced this work and his price has been accepted. It will be commenced as soon as he can fit it in to his busy schedule.

In addition, he has been instructed to consider ways of strengthening the balustrade to the ringing chamber and to repair leaking rainwater goods. Again I await details of how the balustrade might be strengthened and a start date for the work to the gutters.

Work planned postponed from 2020/21 includes new drawer runners for the kitchen drawers, some low level plaster repair and redecoration following removal of the old heaters.

Safeguarding Report

Diana Gilder (DG) Parish Safeguarding Officer reports

Safeguarding training:

With very little physical church happening, no further training has been undertaken in the past year. The 24 church members concerned have already received training to the required level, although some may be due to undertake refresher training (C5). However there is no evidence of this currently being offered.

DBS Checks and Confidential Declarations:

All DBS checks are up to date, except for one Open the Book team member. That will be updated before OTB resumes.

All Confidential Declarations are up to date.

Policies and procedures:

The church is up to date with almost all of the requirements.

The PCC has had due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Data Protection Report

Jonathan Lonsdale (JL) reported that Data Protection continues to be reviewed and adhered to in line with the Diocesan Guidelines, there have been no issues reported.

Deanery Synod Report

An extraordinary year in the life of the synod. After a meeting in January 2020, the Coronavirus epidemic meant that there were no further meetings either physically or by Zoom for the rest of the year. However, in December came important developments:

- (i) Rev'd Martin Greenland, joint Rural Dean, announced that Rev'd Peter Leech, his fellow, would not renew his role at the end of their term of office; that Peta Cunnane, Deanery Synod Secretary, would step down at the end of December; and that Keith Gerrard, Lay Chair, would not seek re-election in 2021.
The Synod will need to find a new Secretary & Lay Chair.

- (ii) Bishop Graham Ussher has initiated the development of a new Vision for the Diocese – “Transformed by Christ: Prayerfully – Pastorally – Prophetically” and of nine priorities that flow from it. The Vision is under discussion by Diocesan Synod.
- (iii) The pattern of deployment of stipendiary clergy is under review. Seven principles have been put forward. They will affect us, so I list them:
 - (a) Deprivation – financial support for our lowest income benefices;
 - (b) Population - seek to focus resources in areas of greatest opportunity, measured by the population of a benefice;
 - (c) Reduce stipendiary clergy numbers to 90% of current [October 2020] levels;
 - (d) Review central support costs to make substantial savings;
 - (e) Ministry – identify, develop & resource ‘a wider range of ministry possibilities’;
 - (f) Buildings – reduce the number of church buildings that remain in regular use for worship;
 - (g) Local consultation – local conversations at deanery & archdeaconry level to work out how best to apply these principles.

Some synod members had an informal conversation on Zoom on these matters in January 2021, but the new synod will have to grapple with them in much more depth.