

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Yarm

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the Year Ended 31 December 2019

Administrative Information

St Mary Magdalene's church is part of the Deanery of Stokesley in the Diocese of York within the Church of England and is situated in West Street, Yarm TS15 9BU. The parish joined in November 2019 with the Parish of Kirklevington with Picton and High and Low Worsall to create a new Benefice of Yarm with Kirklevington with Picton and Worsall. The PCC of Yarm remains the governing body for the Parish Yarm.

The correspondence address is c/o The Rectory, 6 Westgate, Yarm TS15 9QT

PCC members who have served as Trustees - 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2019:

		Dates
Incumbent	Revd Canon John Ford (SC – Chair)	(2012 ongoing)
Wardens	Mrs Marion Johnson (SC)	(2017-2020)
	Mr John Rhodes (SC)	(2015-2020)
Elected Members	Mr David Yates	(2017-2020)
	Mrs Jayne Gregory (SC - Secretary)	(2017-2020)
	Vacancy	(2017-2020)
	Vacancy	(2019-2020)
	Mr Peter Monck	(2018-2021)
	Mrs Doreen Bancroft	(2018-2021)
	Mrs Margaret Nicholls	(2018-2021)
	Vacancy	(2019-2021)
	Mrs Ros Carling	(2016-2022)
	Mrs Elaine Huggins	(2016-2022)
	Mr Martin Huggins (SC - Treasurer)	(2016-2022)
	Vacancy	(2019-2022)
	Representatives on	Mr David Local
Deanery Synod	Mrs Avril Rhodes (Deanery Reader)	(2017-2020)
	Mr John Rhodes	(2017-2020)

SC – Member of the Standing Committee

Custodian Trustee

The York Diocesan Board of Finance for the inalienable property of the church.

Bankers

Barclays Bank 76, High Street Yarm TS15 9AH

HSBC UK Bank, 60 Albert Road, Middlesbrough. TS1 1RS

Lloyds Bank, Stockton-on-Tees Branch, High Street, Stockton. Ts18 1SG

Independent Examiner

Philip Atkinson 30 Nursery Gardens, Yarm, TS15 9UY

Examining Architect

Mr J Niven, T.O.h.P. Architects, The Old Hall, 57 Front Street, Bishop Auckland DL14 9HL

Structure, Management and Governance

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

St Mary Magdalene Yarm PCC is a body corporate and operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Day to day management of the Church was exercised by the Standing Committee: Revd Canon W.J.Ford, Chairman; Mrs M. Johnson, Churchwarden, Mr J. Rhodes, Churchwarden, Mrs J Gregory, PCC Secretary; and Mr M. Huggins PCC Treasurer, contactable through the Rector (tel 01642 964664) or the Church website (<http://www.yarmchurch.co.uk/>)

Objectives

St Mary Magdalene's PCC has the responsibility for promoting the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the ecclesiastical Parish. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Parish Church in West Street Yarm.

Achievements and performance

1. Church Attendance

As governed by the Church Representation Rules the Electoral Roll was renewed prior to the 2019 APCM. There were 122 parishioners on this new roll compared to 150 in 2018. On 31 December 2019 there were 118 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll 54 of whom were not resident within the parish.

During 2019, St Mary Magdalene Yarm as the Parish Church has continued to be the focal point for Anglican worship in the Parish.

A total of 360 services were held, including 155 Holy Eucharists, in all there were 5210 communicants of whom 1200 received communion at Home or in the Care Homes. In 2019, 41 people were Baptised, there were 8 weddings and 12 funerals in the Parish Church and a further 8 in the Crematorium or Cemetery.

The "Pram Service" on Mondays at 10am continues to thrive with an average attendance of 7 adults and 6 children, and this has been supplemented by "Pram Service Plus" during School holidays. These continue to be very successful.

On a "normal" Sunday the average 16+ attendance was 85 with an average of 83 communicants. On Easter Eve and Day 139 people over 16 and 19 people under 16 attended Church and 139 people received Holy Communion and at Christmas the 16+ attendance was 183, the under 16 attendance was 76 and there were a total of 74 communicants. During October 2019 the average 16+ attendance on Sundays was 80, under 16 attendance was 5 and the average number of communicants was 81.

2. PCC Review of the year

During 2019 the PCC met 7 times; average attendance was 78.5%. The Standing committee met 5 times during the year. The Parish Plan a copy of which is in the Annex has been the basis for planning and the structure of PCC meetings in 2015. The PCC continued to arrange meetings so that half the meetings were mainly on mission rather than business.

Worship. Public worship is based on Common Worship patterns, the 9.30am Sunday Service using Order 1 and the 8am Sunday and 9.30am Wednesday services using Order 2. On Monday mornings an informal "Pram Service is held at 10am. The Pram Service, which attracts pre-school children and mainly mothers, continues to flourish, with some of the younger children and families attending the monthly Family Eucharist on the first Sunday of each month. The "Pram Service+ service" in school holidays is proving very successful in giving children more time and engaging older siblings. The PCC is grateful to John Bancroft, members of the Family Service planning group and the Mothers ' Union for all their work and support of the Pram Service initiatives. The Organist and Choir director has enhanced the music in the services and the choir is developing under his direction.

Mission activity. The PCC affirms its intention to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who are currently outside of the existing electoral roll/congregation. During 2019 the PCC has continued to support a Parents 'group, professionally managed by Home-Start, delivered from Layfield Children's Centre with excellent results. There has been a partnership agreement between Home-Start Teesside and the PCC on behalf of the Parish Church since 2012 which is reviewed annually. The PCC also supports the ministry and Mission in the Diocese of False Bay.

Buildings and environs The building remains in good order, well maintained, lovingly tended, cleaned and decked with flowers. We thank all those whose efforts contribute to this. Maintenance has proceeded in accordance with the guidance of the Examining Architect.

Clerical and Lay ministers. The rector is supported by Avril Rhodes, who is licensed as a Deanery Reader and David Local and Kate Brown who have PTO's as Readers..

3. Churchwarden's Report

The churchwardens for 2019 were Marion Johnston and John Rhodes and together we have endeavoured to support Revd Canon John Ford and our Readers, Kate Brown, Avril Rhodes and David Local to exercise their ministries here in Yarm and the wider Benefice.

2019 started with the formation of the Benefice of Yarm with Kirklevington, Picton and Worsall. Yarm continued to operate as a separate parish with its own Churchwardens; however, we used the opportunity to work collaboratively wherever possible. A benefice service was instigated for the fifth Sunday and a start time of 10.00am was adopted. When the Benefice service was in Kirklevington or Worsall, the churchwardens ensured that someone was in Yarm signposting people that were not aware of the change. The Redemptorist "Sunday" has become established and a big thank you to Avril Rhodes for distributing the readers sheets. The reverse of the Redemptorist sheets are used to provide notices and thanks go to John Ford for carrying out the photocopying and ensuring they are distributed throughout the Benefice. The notice board has been amended to indicate the usual Sunday service time is 9.30am.

The church fabric has been maintained according to the PCC schedule. A condensing microphone has been purchased to replace the failing hand held microphone. A new tap was fitted in the refreshment area sink and the outside tap behind the church repaired. Although not required by statute, the fire blanket has been secured in the refreshment area to allow it to be used easily. In addition the blanket itself was replaced by one that meets current standards.

In the churchyard the Town Council continue to maintain the grass cutting to a high standard. The outside lights failed and the cables were repaired and new bulbs fitted. The leylandii in the beds outside the church have been removed and replaced with shrubs that tolerate shade and spring bulbs. There appears to be a

tree that is dying in the churchyard, the boundary requires cutting to fence height following a complaint from a neighbour, the fenced off area on the west side is growing weeds and ground elder and the growth on the wall and around trees requires removing. Work is in hand with the Town Council and thanks go to Councillor Monck for expediting the matter. Further thanks go to Avril Rhodes for clearing the parking area of overgrowing vegetation.

A major piece of work was conducted in the entrance area with the laying of slip resistant flooring in the porch and carpet inside the side door. The loose wooden blocks on the floor were also considered. The Diocese granted permission to repair loose blocks and an initial test area was completed at the front of the north aisle. The churchwardens are waiting for the contractor to repair the remainder of the church floor. The round tables have been replaced with smaller rectangular Gopak tables to make better use of the space.

The contract with Orca for cleaning has gone very well leaving the congregation to carry out two supplementary cleans for Easter and Christmas. Many thanks go to all who helped. Conyers School again donated a Christmas tree and this was put up by the congregation at the Christmas clean. The opportunity was taken to rationalise the lights and decorations and the decision was taken not to replace the failing outside lights. The weekly Wednesday opening was continued between Easter and Harvest with two teams of volunteers per open day. The churchwardens would like to thank all who took part in the rota. We do not get many visitors; however, those that do enter are very appreciative of the welcome they receive. This year we have looked at the welcoming at our services and encouraged sidespeople to engage with strangers as they enter the church. We have received positive feedback from those coming to hear banns read. The distribution of the elements and the arrangement for receiving at the front of church has been amended and the Eucharistic ministers report that it is easier to ensure everyone receives the chalice. The Churchwardens would like to thank all the sidespersons for the wonderful job they have done at the regular services and the extra services at Easter and Christmas. The readers and intercessors have similarly helped deliver regular and extra services to a high standard. We would like to thank Avril Monck for helping with drawing up rotas.

Safeguarding

Mrs Judy Dent continues to serve as the Parish Safeguarding Officer and maintains the register of those who are DBS checked and carried out safeguarding training. Training for levels C0 and C1 are available on line and several members of the congregation and PCC have found it easy to use and complete. DBS checks have been carried out on all Trustees and those in positions of responsibility. There were no safeguarding notifications at St Mary Magdalene during 2019.

Conclusion

Our church building is in good order and the congregation are very supportive. The churchwardens are grateful to all those who support the work of the church on a regular basis, whether by reading a lesson, interceding, cleaning, providing refreshments, acting as sidespersons, washing and ironing the linen, arranging social events, setting up for services, arranging flowers, staffing the church on open days, working in the churchyard, serving, taking part in Eucharistic ministry, booking in baptisms and arranging and delivering anniversary cards or by volunteering to do any of the multitude of odd jobs which our parish community needs.

Marion Johnson and John Rhodes: Churchwardens.

4. Rector's Remarks

2019 has been another exciting year and the PCC have started to make inroads into the implementation of the Parish Plan which seeks to interpret the Diocesan vision "Generous Churches, Making and Nurturing Disciples" into a reality in Yarm. The PCC set up a group to review stewardship and during the year embarked on a successful campaign, GOLD, to begin to make the Parish financially sustainable.

2019 has seen several deaths of members from the regular congregation and so there has been a small decline in average attendance. Our regular visits to the local Care Homes and with the “Pram Service” continues to be important parts of our ministry. 2019 also saw the death of the Reverend Peter Elliott who has been a constant support to rectors of Yarm over many years, Peter will be missed in the Parish especially among those home communicants with whom he had a special ministry.

We continue to work in Partnership with HomeStart in the “Parents Linking at Yarm” scheme which is providing much needed support and advice to families in need in the parish and our partnership provides funding and volunteer workers who provide the services alongside the paid worker. The partnership also enables St Mary Magdalene’s Church to reach out to people it would otherwise not be touching with God’s Love, and we have seen several families bring children for Baptism who otherwise probably would not have done so.

My personal thanks to the Churchwardens, PCC members especially those on the Standing Committee for all their support in 2019, to the Eucharistic Ministers for their work across the parish, especially in the Care Homes, to the servers, Tanya Brackenbury, Carolyn Smith and Paul Muranganwa and also to every member of the parish who makes the work of ministry in Yarm so special.

Finally, as I retire as Rector I want to thank everyone at Yarm for your work and support over the past 8 years. This has been a very enjoyable journey together and I wish you all the very best as you continue to move forward in God’s mission in Yarm.

John Ford, Rector

5. Financial Review

General Unrestricted Funds

Total unrestricted income was £90,941 (£89,499 in 2017) and is detailed in the financial statements. Of this, £61,376 (was £60,995) was pledged giving and includes associated tax relief, and represents 67.5% (was 68.1%) of the total income. If Tax Relief is excluded, then pledged giving has decreased slightly from last year. In addition, our accounts show a further £6,353 (net) (was £6,549), came from fund raising, which included the proceeds of the Summer and Christmas Fayres. The remaining income came largely from collections, donations and fees, and at £19,060 was up on 2017 (£18,002). This increase of £1,058 compared to 2017 came from significant increases in special collections and yellow envelope Gift Aided donations, which were partially offset by a smaller amount from fee earning activities. Additionally, we have received £1,940 from the Plurality as their contribution to the expenses of the Rector.

Total expenditure was £102,638 (was £91,480). Of this, the major expenditure was our Freewill Offer to support the Mission in the Diocese, which we raised to £69,360 (up by £9,360 – 15.6%) to show our commitment to the work of the Diocese as a whole. This Freewill Offer was paid in full, and is a very significant 76.3% (67.0% last year) of our total income from all sources and has now proved to be unsustainable. In addition, Diocesan fees for weddings and funerals in our Church have added £5,078 (£5,818) to our total giving from the Parish to the Mission in the Diocese (£74,438). The cost of running the Church building was £9,890 (£8,310), which now includes the cost of cleaning the Church weekly and has also involved a significant maintenance cost for repairs to the outside lights. The upkeep of services cost a further £4,144 (£4,484), which is fairly stable. We have also continued our support of the Home-Start PLAY scheme in Yarm for the seventh year, with a £5,000 donation. Expenses for clergy amount to £2,736 (£3,323) - after allowing for the contribution from the Plurality. Other expenditure was £7,501 (£7,110), which included provision of new tables for use in the coffee area, plus a 50% contribution to the cost of refurbishment of the toilets, the other 50% coming from the Restoration Fund.

Net result for the year was an excess of expenditure over income of £11,696 (£1,981 in 2017). This is an understandable and planned change, as we have funded a £9,360 increase in Freewill offer to the Mission in Yarm and in the Diocese, as well as the purchases referred to above. We must however note that our 2

major fund-raising events helped to make this possible (yielding £4,236) together with the ability to draw on our reserves.

This financial performance is generally as planned and provides a base to continue to fund the Mission in Yarm and in the Diocese. However, this now needs reinforcing with more Planned Income, if we are to continue to make progress.

The total balance of unrestricted funds at 31st December 2018 was £29,152 (£40,849).

Restricted Funds

From the Restoration Fund, the main restricted Fund, we have funded 50% of the cost of refurbishing the toilets, as well as some floor repairs and the architect's bill for the internal reordering work completed last year. These items have cost a total of £10,260, which has been funded from our accumulated balances and from the VAT refunded from previous work done (£3,754). This meant that the net expenditure for the year was £6,326.

The balance of the Restoration Fund at 31st December 2018 was £31,448 (£37,775 in 2017), which will be available for future work and for keeping the Church in good order. This should be enhanced by a further claim for VAT refund from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme to the value of £1,514.

Restricted funds were also collected and paid out to individual charities from collections at funerals as specified by families concerned, and from special events arranged by the Church for nominated charities. The total amount was a pleasing £4,702 (£3,532) and was in addition to the £5,000 paid to Home-Start from our general Unrestricted Income

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds, which equates to three months' unrestricted income, to cover emergency situations which may arise from time to time. The balance of £29,152 in unrestricted funds at the year-end exceeds this target (currently £22,575). It should however be remembered that this position was made possible by the legacies in 2009, 2012 and 2013 amounting to £23,500, and that we have received no further legacies since this time.

Additionally, we recognise that the maintenance of a historic building requires periodically significant sums of money to carry out important restoration and maintenance work. Although we had a significant legacy in 2011, we have spent considerable sums on successful restoration and renovation projects, leaving our reserves for this aspect of our work at just over £30,000. The use of this money needs to be carefully regulated and monitored, and it would be good if it could be augmented by individual efforts and some new legacies.

M J Huggins, Hon Treasurer

REPORTS TO THE APCM 2019

BENEFICE MAGAZINE: Trident

This is the first full year of Trident, the benefice magazine covering the three churches. The editorial team comprises Kate Brown, Ros Carling, Debbie Gravestock, John Rhodes and Jay Yates. 10 editions of Trident were published. The magazine arrived in churches on the last Sunday of the appropriate month. We meet a week before to assemble the edition and plan the contents of the next edition. Thank you to all who have provided contributions. This year we said goodbye to a faithful and reliable contributor; Peter Elliott. John Rhodes spoke with David Smith (Rector) in April, a delightful half hour reminiscing.

The number of pages has varied dependant on the number and size of the contributions, however, we have published all individual contributions. We continue to use calibri 12 point font for the majority of the content to allow it to be easily read by as many people as possible. It does mean that the number of pages is slightly greater than a standard publication. Copy was handed or posted to any member of the editorial team or sent electronically to our email address, (churchtrident@gmail.com). We have requested that all source material is referenced in any article submitted and that was published. We tried to prevent infringement of any copyright by following the UK Copyright Service advice:

News reporting

Using material for the purpose of reporting current events is permitted provided that:

The work is not a photograph.

The source of the material is acknowledged.

The amount of the material quoted is no more than is necessary for the purpose.

The editors are aware of safeguarding and do not publish unnecessary names and contact details. We also endeavour to ensure permission is granted for photographs to be included, especially of children.

Mentioning children, we are delighted to receive contributions from young budding journalists. We can assure readers that the work is not influenced in any way by parents, albeit that the standard is high.

We are indebted to our advertisers who allowed us to keep the cost at £5.00 per annum for 2019, Gill Waller who collected the advertising renewals and the printers TopPrint have been stars. Ros Carling received the magazine and ensured copies were available in church and given to the other distributors (Jay Yates, Avril Rhodes and Neville Tate) so thanks go to all who assisted. It is important that our advertisers know that you support Trident by thanking them for advertising in our magazine. We must remember that they do not do it solely to support the church, but to attract customers like us.

Trident is your magazine and an important tool in our outreach. Please share your copy with your friends and encourage them to purchase a copy for themselves. We try and provide news and articles about events and activities taking place within the parishes. The camera has covered a number of memorable events; the induction of the new Methodist minister, Martin Ramsden, Picton Show, Kirkfest, harvest and lent lunches. We are conscious that it is a church magazine and therefore should have some theological content. Thank you to Avril Rhodes for writing a regular column about how the bible is applicable today in a column entitled 'What the Bible says about ...'. We have many regular contributors and without you the magazine would not be enriched by such diversity.

We thank all of you who subscribed for the year as it does help us to provide the correct number on the stall. We have an exchange scheme with other churches and please feel free to read their magazines, and if taken away it would be appreciated if they could be returned for someone else to read. Please do ask a friend to consider taking out a subscription so more people can benefit from our efforts.

Thank you one and all for your support.

Trident Editorial Team

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

Bible Reading using the BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship) publications continues to thrive within the congregation at St Mary Magdelene and numbers have remained steady, some gained and one or two sadly missed. In November 2018 as noted previously we commenced a new initiative by holding a short monthly informal reading and discussion group for our BRF users and anyone else interested. A year and more has now passed and these monthly 'Get Togethers' with coffee, tea, and cake continue to be well supported. Our Readers David and Avril have supported and prepared additional material for these, and many thanks are due to them.

In 2019, there were 21 subscriptions to the church order for BRF bible reading notes booklets, and this implies 30+ members of the congregation using daily readings and prayers, several subscribers being couples. We hope this will grow in 2020.

- 3 read ' Guidelines', weekly reading and topic(s) for study.
- 17 read ' New Daylight', daily readings.
- 1 reads ' Day by Day with God', daily readings ' –rooting women's lives in the bible'.

In Lent 2019 BRF set up a phone APP, and this has enabled one or two of us to 'go mobile' and try an additional medium for God's word.

Finally I would note that our church members who are using one of the BRF publications find them valuable, often enjoyable, sometimes challenging, and always useful; and those of us who use the booklets recommend them to all.

David Yates

CHOIR

The choir and supporting instrumentalists, including chimes, guitars and flutes have all continued to show great dedication and team work. The resulting music has been filled with enthusiasm. We continually need to invite new members to support us to ensure a long-term provision. Harry Brown has been a huge asset as Organ Scholar and has added much to the life of music in the church via his musical liveliness, warmth of personality and undoubted commitment. We have been grateful for the chance to gain quotes to maintain the organ for the long-term, although the timing of this, simply a result of misfortune, was sadly just before 'lock down'. We look forward to gradually re-establishing musical activity as a part of worship, commencing with organ voluntaries before and after services and building from there the very moment Government allows us to.

Dr Robin Harrison PhD BMus (Hons)/GradRNCM FNCM ARCO LTCL DipLCM PGCE(QTS) MISM Organist and Choirmaster

CRAFT GUILD

Our Tuesday afternoon group continued to meet fortnightly during 2019 – our twelfth year in the Fellowship Hall. Sadly we lost a loyal member early in the year when Kathleen McKenzie had to go into nursing care. Our regular Tuesday crafters number 15, and the loyal band of outworkers continues. All contributions, including materials, are very gratefully received.

We continue to enjoy opportunities to visit other local craft outlets, events and workshops. In 2019 these included Gateshead, Newton Aycliffe, Birmingham and Doncaster. New skills and ideas for crafty fund-raising are shared and developed.

For our Christmas celebration we returned to The Royal Oak, Great Ayton.

As well as regular card sales and goods made for Yarm Church fundraising, we again took our stall to Kirklevington Church autumn fair and Swainby Church Christmas fair. We were warmly welcomed at both venues and were able to reach new audiences with our goods. We have a large variety of items for sale and always try to display our stock to advantage. We had a much better space this year at the Yarm Christmas Fair.

Those regularly attending Tuesday meetings paid an annual subscription of £10 each which went towards the church's use of the hall. Members continue to donate 50p per meeting which goes towards cost of our refreshments.

The friendly fellowship and laughter, with celebration of important birthdays and events for members continue. We are happy to welcome new members, whether church-goers or not. Avril Monck continues to act as our contact point.

Carole Wilson

DEANERY SYNOD

There were three synods in 2019 as follows;

- 11 February – Faceby
- 19 June – Great Ayton
- 15 October – Hilton

Revd Canon John Ford and Mrs Kate Brown are Area Dean and Lay Dean of synod respectively and conducted the business. David Local, Reader at Yarm is secretary of synod. Bob Ardley from Stainton, undertook his first full year as Deanery Treasurer in 2019. Martin Bailey is Deanery Financial Adviser. There was lay representation from Yarm at all of the above meetings.

Two items regularly on the agendas were funding the mission (relating to the position with the freewill offer and financial and procedural updates) and parish events, giving members an opportunity to publicise upcoming events. Other items included continuing discussion of the deanery plan, organisation of Lent services, consultation prior to the appointment of the next Archbishop of York, and the early notice of, and preparatory work towards, the "Come and See" mission planned for 2020. Deanery synod invited Bishop David Wilbourne (Hon. Asst. Bishop of York) to give a series of talks during Lent in Great Ayton and the headings for these were:

Worthy worship; Weeping with those who weep; Ambassadors for resurrection; I do know the man!

Bishop David is a lively teacher and delivered these talks in a relaxed and witty style, whilst getting serious points across. The events also included an act of worship and collections were made for Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland. David Local organised and led a staged walking pilgrimage as part of the "Thy Kingdom Come" period of prayer leading up to Pentecost. This year it was within the Deanery visiting all the churches for prayer and reflection, where a warm welcome was received. In all 18 people walked some stage of the pilgrimage and it was an opportunity to get to know the locality (as well as parishioners and church buildings) better for all those who took part or assisted.

Deanery synod had guest speakers at each meeting. In February there was a presentation by the Diocesan Generous Giving Team (Jo Beacroft-Mitchell, David Smallwood and Sammi Tooze), which Yarm also experienced at first hand via the GOLD campaign in 2019, in which we were particularly assisted by Sammi Tooze. In June the presentation was given by Revd John Lee and Dr Ben Walker on reaching those in their 20s-40s, later becoming known as "multiply". Their purpose was to explain the strategy for reaching this group, which is under-represented in the Church of England. They announced the creation of new posts for this work, and during the year Revd Nik Stevenson who was appointed as one of the multiply ministers, based in Ingleby Barwick. The key idea behind these appointments is to enable someone to concentrate on this demographic group in an experimental and innovative way. The speaker in October was the Rt

Revd Dr Jonathan Frost, Dean of York Minster. He used the “Reach, Grow and Sustain” strategy on which to base a mini-workshop where synod members looked back at what had influenced their faith and personal development.

Several clergy changes took place in the Deanery, including the moving on of Paul and Alison Hutchinson, and Vivienne Hatton, the arrival of David Sudron, and adjustments to the parochial responsibilities of Robert Opala and our Rector, John Ford, meaning amongst other changes bringing Yarm, Kirklevington and Worsall into one benefice. Yarm’s lay representation on Deanery synod was unchanged as listed below. Anyone may attend the addresses at synod meetings, before the business part of the meetings. We are always pleased for other Yarm church members to participate and we are happy to make transport arrangements.

Deanery Synod Representatives, David Local Avril Rhodes and John Rhodes

FLOWER GUILD

It has again been a fairly quiet year for weddings, we are looking forward to a few more this year. We have a very dedicated team of five plus a few keen helpers from the congregation who we can call upon.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with flowers and to Diana Kaye for supplying our needs.

Katherine Simpson

MOTHERS’ UNION

Yarm Branch of Mothers’ Union began 2019 with 25 members on roll. During 2019 Carole Wilson became a Diocesan Member and Beryl McCabe, Pauline Tate and Gill McCarthy were welcomed into our Branch. This means we ended 2019 with 28 Members.

Over the year 2019 there were 9 meetings or events on Monday afternoons and there were 8 meetings on Wednesday evenings. The meeting in Holy Week saw the Branch leading reflections on the Stations of the Cross when several members of the congregation joined us.

We welcomed visitors for various events and activities and also reached out to others whenever possible. For example, members have supported the weekly Pram Service, were involved in befriending those bringing their children for Baptism, welcomed those booking weddings and co-ordinated the collection of donations for “Charity in Kind”. Members have given freely of their time and expertise towards fund-raising activities for various charities including local, national and international causes and initiatives.

We had good attendances at the Lady Day Service in York Minster as well as the Archdeaconry and Deanery Festivals. Several members also attended the Spring and Autumn Retreats at Wydale. These events are always informative and inspiring as well as pleasurable.

Our Wednesday Morning short prayer service continues to do well and the friendship with coffee and biscuits afterwards is good to see. Our Wave of Prayer and Advent Services were well attended. The tea after the Advent Service went well as we had guests from local Mothers’ Union Branches as well as Yarm Methodist Church. Our Hymns and Pimms Afternoon was a huge success with lots of visitors from other Branches and Churches

Jennifer Local – Branch Leader

P.L.A.Y. [Parents linking at Yarm] Annual Report

What we have done

During the period of Jan-Dec we have supported 20 families (27 children) through coming to the group. I

took over as Family support co-ordinator for the group in May and it has been a pleasure getting to know these families and seeing them on a weekly basis. Within the group we have a range of ages from new born babies to three/four year olds. Due to working parents a range of Mums, Dads and Grandparents attend which helps make the group diverse and inclusive. In the summer we saw a small drop in numbers as some of our longstanding children have moved up to full time school.

The partnership with the school

We continue to hire the room at the school and have this secured for the foreseeable future. Within the school there has been lots of changes within their staff structure but this hasn't affected the running of the group. Families continue to pay a £1 contribution per session which covers any additional running costs. The school continues to be a good central location for the group to run from as it's easy to access by foot and by car and especially for mums dropping off older children at school.

How the group supports families

Our aim is to have the group as a warm, welcoming and relaxed space for all parents to bring their children. We are supported to do this by our team of dedicated volunteers. Within The group parents support each other as well as being given advice and reassurance from the co-ordinator and volunteers. We are able to offer a listening ear, sign post to other organizations. Most importantly complement them on parenting, praise and let them hear other people say nice things about their children, often in society this is not expressed enough.

How the group helped the Smith family

Cheryl first came to group in August with her daughter after seeing its advert at the school. Cheryl was new to the area. Cheryl's husband worked away though the week and came home on a weekend. This left Cheryl feeling quite isolated and lonely which impacted on her mental health and confidence.

Cheryl and her daughter soon became regulars at the group and she started to make good connections and friendships with other parents. Cheryl voiced very early on at how welcome and comfortable she felt within the group and looked forward to Wednesdays. A couple of months later Cheryl told us she was expecting her second child, this was unexpected and quite a shock to mum but also very exciting. We supported mum emotionally in the group and she shared her worries about having two young children very close in age. When Cheryl went for a second scan it became apparent that her unborn baby had a complex medical condition, after a heart breaking couple of weeks mum lost her baby.

Understandably this had a huge impact emotionally and physically on Cheryl. The group supported mum with kindness and warmth through this really turbulent time for the family. During group sessions mum would get to talk to parents or myself while other parents played and entertained her daughter. This support helped Cheryl to keep going and get stronger. Cheryl started to meet some of the other parents outside of the group for coffee and play dates and this too helped mum emotionally cope with what was happening. Cheryl continues to attend group with her daughter and feels comfortable in asking us for support.

Providing a comfortable, friendly safe environment for both parents and children is key to the group. This gives the families a good experience and why we have such continuity in them attending weekly. We continue to celebrate the children's birthday throughout the year, and lovely cakes have become part of this tradition. In June we worked alongside the Book Trust for their Pyjamarama event. They supplied us with books, crafts and nursery rhyme sheets for our families. We had lots of fun in our pyjamas, and made lovely star and moon hats and enjoyed lots of singing and nursery rhymes.

Home-Start would like to thank the church for their ongoing support enabling us to run P.L.A.Y. All names in this report have been changed to protect the family's identity.

Molly Tuffery, Family Support Co-ordinator Home-Start Teesside

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We held all our usual social and fundraising events and raised a lot of money for our Church outreach work and other charities. At the same time, we had some fun and cemented the bonds of fellowship we have at St. Mary Magdalene.

During Lent we organised a Lunch, a Coffee Morning and a raffle to raise money for two charities – Shelter Box and The Labyrinth Café in Stockton. Thanks to everyone's hard work and generosity we were able to present cheques to both charities. Shelter Box were able to purchase a complete box of items to help people survive in disaster areas and The Labyrinth Café were able to continue their support of vulnerable people in our local area. We were also able to help the latter charity by donating and filling handbags with essential items for women who found themselves homeless or in difficult circumstances. Sadly, the Café has had to close in Stockton but the great work they did has continued at The Five Lamps in Thornaby and we continue to support them there.

We held Beetle Drives in the February and October half term weeks which were very enjoyable for children of all ages!! We also organised a Domino Drive with a pie and peas supper – a little more sedate than the Beetle Drives but very enjoyable all the same.

The Summer Fete and Open Day was held in the Church and Churchyard – a very enjoyable event with a barbecue, strawberries and cream and many traditional games. The Christmas Fayre continues to be profitable and enjoyable attracting many people from Yarm. The profit we made at these two events helps us to support our ongoing work with Home Start in Yarm – we currently give them £5,000 per year so they can continue their work with families in our community.

In August we had a return visit from Phil Philo and this time he gave us a most interesting illustrated talk about Captain Cook and his first voyage to the South Pacific. Phil is passionate about this subject and we were able to ask questions and chat over a glass of wine – most of us there felt it would be good to ask Phil back to talk about Cook's second and third voyages!

In October we organised a Harvest Lunch which was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by everybody. The money we raised from this event was added to that already raised by Barbara at her Rectory Coffee morning and sent to the Diocese of False Bay in South Africa where the Christian community is struggling with a lot of deprivation.

In December we organised a social event "Christmas Cheer" which we held in Church following a joint service for all 3 churches in our benefice. This was a chance to enjoy mulled wine, seasonal refreshments, a light hearted quiz and the fellowship of our congregations.

The donations from our Christmas card board and the profit from the raffle at the Christmas Cheer enabled us to twin our Church with a toilet block in a school in Zambia and also twin the toilet in the rectory. Toilet twinning helps to improve water, sanitation and hygiene in poor countries and is vital to healthy living. Throughout the year the congregation has been donating tinned food for the North East Help Link with an extra boost of tins given at Harvest. These donations have really been appreciated and have enabled the charity to provide meals for the vulnerable and homeless. We have also collected appropriate items for Harbour (the Woman's refuge) and the Asylum seekers project in Middlesbrough – all the gifts and donations have been welcomed by the recipients.

Sadly, the Social Committee has been dissolved – many of those on the committee were beginning to feel their years and finding it more difficult. We hope many of the things we organised will still go ahead – perhaps with a different format. We now have the chance to combine with Kirklevington and Worsall and work together to organise social events and charity fundraising. A big thank you to everybody at St. Mary Magdalene for their support over the last year – we do appreciate all the hard work you do! By working together, we show Christ's love to others in our area and we ourselves will grow in fellowship and spirituality.

Elaine Huggins

WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHURCH: FSS – Funday Sunday Sparkle

Funday Sunday Sparkle has enjoyed a vibrant and busy year with usually 10 children in each session. Over our 10 meetings, Beryl and I had the pleasure of welcoming at least 23 different children! Each meeting has been carefully planned to keep children engaged, interested and their minds stimulated. With children's ages ranging from 4 to 14 years, we often divide into groups in order to deliver age appropriate discussions and activities.

The year got off to a good start with Candlemas in January followed by the story of the wise man and the foolish man in February. This session was particularly enjoyable. The children proved to be excellent team workers when building the wise man's house and they delighted in mixing their own 'quick sand' for the foolish man to build on. They marvelled at how it gave the appearance of being firm and sound when tapped but, anything placed on it slowly sank from view! At Easter, number swelled and we reflected on our own relationship with God with the help of the prayerful meditation glitter bottles we made. After our summer break, September was all about Harvest and looking at the Fruits of the Spirit. The children made fruit themed baskets and mobiles to remind them that everything comes from God. After exploring how a pumpkin is rather like being a christian, in our October meeting, our year rounded off with the Christmas Story. November's meeting focused on Mary's surprise visit from an angel. The rest of the Christmas story was heard and concluded in December with children each making an egg box nativity scene.

Overall, the mood in the vestry has been one of happiness and eagerness. Regardless of age, children have been keen to find out and 'get stuck in' to whatever the focus of the session.

Joanne Austin

Our Vision

We at St Mary Magdalene Yarm will develop and exercise generosity of spirit in everything we do.

We will do this by extending God's love locally within the parish, to those who do not currently attend church as well as to those who do. In the same spirit we will support the diocese of York as it expands the mission of the church. Further, we will demonstrate our Gospel fellowship of love to the world community wherever is appropriate.

We will know we have achieved our aim when we can comfortably celebrate giving 10% of our income to local and global causes as well as contributing generously to the mission of the Diocese.

Our local context

As you know, for three years the PCC has been working on a plan for the parish which incorporates this vision. The plan has been regularly published, shared at the Annual meeting, for example, but perhaps it has not yet reached all the parts of our church life that some of us would like it to! You can read its headlines on the back of this leaflet.

The PCC started this after the TRIO campaign three years ago, conscious that everyone in church expected action as a result of the generosity shown at that time; we understood especially that there is an aspiration to support the needs of children and families. The plan has helped us to focus on our prayer life, to consider how we care for one another in church, to consult further about how we should best serve the interests of children and families in the parish. This happens in church through family worship, other events and initiatives, and through the parents' support group we deliver every week, in partnership with the local charity Home-Start, at Layfield Children's Centre.

The plan has also assisted the PCC to focus on how best to redevelop the major resource we have – our building – the better to address the needs of our various communities both for today's needs and for future developments.

Generous Churches, making and nurturing disciples

Whilst we have been working on these matters in Yarm, we have also been part of a bigger picture in the Diocese, led by our Archbishop, who is absolutely committed to all of us working together. He wants us not just to bring the word of God into places where it is not currently heard, but to make disciples out of those who hear it, to change the way in which we think about our faith, and to deepen our understanding of what it means to be Church. The first Christians were left after the Resurrection knowing that something world-shaking had happened but they did not really know what to do next. The coming of the Holy Spirit made the change for them. And that process is still at work for us.

So the PCC has developed the Parish Plan to accord with the Archbishop's teaching. It seeks to grow our activity, so that we may all learn more about our faith, and thus be able to spread the message of God's love through faith in action.

The other thing the PCC has done – as responsible stewards – is to work out the costs of the plan. Needless to say, the implications are that we need collectively to increase our income to the order of 30% if we are to achieve what is set out here and make, for Yarm, the real contribution that we know will make a difference.

Each of us will need to ponder this carefully and to resolve as individuals or as families as to what we can do together in faith towards the goal. Later in the year, we will all have the opportunity to focus on the financial challenge.

And what if we do nothing?

That's a question with some grim answers; first of course, it means that the things listed above – which all of us want to see happen, not only those on the PCC – will wither away. This in turn means that the church as we know it – or want to know it – will wither away within our own generation. We all know that this process is already happening, that there are some parishes with no priest, more churches with dwindling congregations, churches being closed or sold, and more churches where concern for the fabric – just on keeping the building going - has further marginalised the life of faith.

The Parish plan - its headlines

Have confidence

Archbishop Sentamu reminds us that we are called to give back to God what is his. And that this is what makes us recognisable as disciples, acting together across the world to make the difference of love. Our Yarm plan, our part in the greater plan, is part of the work of the Holy Spirit. So we have both the strength and the support to bring it about.

Growth in holiness

We will

- Develop meaningful worship with learning opportunities
- Develop service to people in their homes
- Develop and enhance communal prayer life
- Bring forward candidates for Confirmation

Growth in belonging

We will

- Address spiritual needs of families eg older children
- Explicit care for the existing congregation
- Fund the Mission, including the deanery fund
- Regard occasional offices as Mission opportunities

Growth in service: working and giving in the service of all our communities

We will

- Give 10% of our annual income to charitable work
 - eg Work with families who are not members of church
 - eg Give charitably to our sister Diocese in South Africa
- Influence community provision outside of church
- Let the wider community know who we are and what we do