

St Peter's Church, Great Asby
Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council
Year Ending 31st December 2022

Administrative Information

St Peter's Church is situated in the centre of Great Asby. It is part of the Benefice of the Heart of Eden in the Appleby Deanery of the Diocese of Carlisle within the Church of England. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. The PCC members who have served from 1st January 2022 are as follows with their role on the Committee and dates of appointment in brackets where appropriate: -

Team Rector: Clive Hicks (Chairperson) (until August 2022)
Associate Priest: Rev. Peter Boyles (until June 2022)
Wardens: Vacant
Representative on Deanery Synod: Mr John Bevan (Treasurer)

Elected Members: Mr Peter Miller (Lay Chairperson & Safeguarding Co-ordinator)
Ms Karen Royle (Secretary)
Mrs Pat Bevan
Mrs Helen Cooper
Mrs Pam Cowey
Mrs Susan Walker

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendants are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll & stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives and activities

St Peter's PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the responsible priest, in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the ecclesiastical parish. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church building.

Church attendance

At 31st December 2022 there were 25 Parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 2 of whom live outside the parish. The average weekly attendance at ordinary services was 14 adults and 0.3 children. This is similar to numbers prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. After celebrating communion in various Covid-enforced variants, we have now been able to return to having "proper" communion services, and have recently taken the decision to service this via smaller individual glasses, rather than all sharing from one chalice.

We were unable to hold the Advent in the Barn Service this year as the farm we usually use wasn't available. We therefore had a Festival of Light service in church, led by Kristy and Dan Pattimore. Attendance levels for all Christmas Services were back to levels, similar to those seen before the pandemic. Over 100 people attended the Christmas Eve service, and many more enjoyed outdoor carol singing around the village Christmas Tree, where this year mulled wine was also served.

The Methodist chapel has closed this year but we have continued with our monthly and Fifth Sunday services, being shared with the Baptist Chapel.

As we have been renovating the Lychgate this year, the service for Remembrance Sunday was held by the Commonwealth War Grave in the graveyard and was again very well attended by almost 50 people.

In 2022 we had one wedding, no baptisms and, very sadly, 1 funeral in church and another at the crematorium.

Review of the year

The full PCC met 5 times during the year. With ten parishes in our benefice, and a priest on extended sick leave, we were regularly meeting without all our members present, but attendance was otherwise routinely very high.

In addition to the services already mentioned, we were happy to be able to hold the traditional Harvest Festival in church and this went well. The theme of the Christmas church windows this year was 'Christmas Trees', and as always we saw some beautiful and creative displays from many groups, societies and families in the village.

We held a fundraising event in May, with a theme of 70 Royal Years, to mark the 70th Anniversary of the late Queen and another in December at the Christmas Fair. After a number of years doing separate Christmas Fairs, it was lovely this year to have the additional support of the school with a well stocked stall of homemade goodies. We also had an additional visitor when Father Christmas joined us to give out presents to the children, which created a jovial atmosphere.

For the tenth year running villagers submitted photographs for inclusion in the Asby Calendar. This venture, as always, provided a small income for church funds. We were as always, very grateful to Nick and Barbara for giving their time again to choose the pictures and assist with the final production.

The PCC is extremely grateful for the support given by all those who play a valuable part in the life of the Church: bell ringers; sides-people; cleaners; people who provide flowers, the Christmas tree and refreshments (when it was possible to have them, towards the end of the year) and Mrs. Pam Cowey, who has continued to be the organist. A special thank you as well this year, to all those who have worked hard to repair bells, doors, the Lychgate and other parts of the fabric of our church. In particular, we thank Eddie Close for climbing to the top of the belfry to repair the bell mountings, Andrew Savage and Peter Miller for renovating the doors and of course, Stuart Marston for his amazing work renovating the Lychgate. Comments have been made as to how well the building is cared for and looked after, their efforts do not go unnoticed.

Asby Matters has continued to be produced monthly by the new editor, Emily Wilkinson. It continues as an on-line publication with options for people to receive a paper copy if they so wish. Emily has recently started a new collaboration with Rosie Collin, who works in graphic design, so we are now looking forward to seeing a new image for Asby Matters in the coming months.

In terms of new electronic systems, we also now have a 360 degree 3D image of the inside of church on the village website and Facebook page. And we have been part of a Burial Grounds Mapping Project, in which churchyards throughout the Diocese have been scanned by surveyors as part of

the national program. It is an ambitious scheme that comes at no cost to parishes, and parishes will ultimately have free access to the map through a web-based record system.

Message from St Peter's PCC Lay Chairperson: Peter Miller

The last year has been 'interesting'. Life has gradually returned to more like 'normal' after Covid although it remains a potential threat in the community and we have to be careful.

In July we said good bye and thank you to the Rev Clive Hicks as he left his ministry in the Heart of Eden and returned to an appointment in his native Coventry having applied and been offered a new post within the church. Clive served the Benefice during a difficult time and his job was made more awkward latterly due to Peter Boyles illness which eventually resulted in his retirement from the ministry.

The unfortunate consequence of these changes was that the Heart of Eden was left without a stipendiary priest.

Despite this change we have successfully maintained our witness in Asby with a full calendar of services lead by visiting priests. We are enormously grateful to Pat & John Bevan for the work they have put in to lead regular worship.

St Peter's is open each day during daylight hours for private prayer offering a quiet peaceful space to sit and reflect. The Church is visited by a steady stream of visitors some of whom add their names and notes to the visitor's book remarking about the peace and tranquility they enjoy in our church.

St Peter's is important in the life of the Asby community. Many living in the parish support the work of the Church whilst not being regular worshippers and we are extremely grateful for the help and support they give.

Without a Churchwarden and in an effort to spread the workload the elected Members of the PCC made a careful assessment of all the job roles required for the Parish to operate effectively and continue delivery of our agreed mission plan. In this context, we are especially grateful to Carole Cozens for tackling our rota scheduling.

Throughout the year regular activities directly and indirectly linked to the Church provide opportunities for people to share and support each other, such as Fellowship, Mothers Union, Women's Institute, Knit and Natter, a regular coffee morning, Diners, Messy Church and other village groups. These activities often involve those who do not regularly attend our worship but provide opportunities for social gatherings that add richness to the life of folk in our community..

Different forms of witness have become embedded in our calendar such as a service in a wood, an Annual Lychgate Remembrance Service, Carols around the Christmas Tree and of course a village favorite the Christmas Eve Carol Service made special by the active participation of many from a range of village groups including both young and old.

In 2022 we have started a major piece of work to refurbish the Lychgate, and the main church doors referred to in our financial and fabric section of this annual report.

Whilst not immediately within the time scope of this 2022 report it is appropriate to share the news that we received early in February 2023. We were very encouraged to announce that Rev Fran

Parkinson and Rev Andrew Burrell have been appointed as joint Priests in Charge of the Heart of Eden Benefice following an offer they made to take on the appointment as a 'job share'. They were interviewed by representatives of the all our Parishes and subsequently accepted an offer to take up the appointment. The practical details of how this will work day to day are still to be worked through and communicated to everyone.

This is a first for the Diocese and possibly the wider Church of England. We look forward with confidence to the future and developing new ways to share our joint witness.

Through the commitment and care of the PCC and the active participation on the life of St Peter's we are well placed to meet the challenges that lie ahead for our Church.

Asby Churches Together Fellowship

Following the lifting of Covid restrictions Asby Fellowship has enjoyed a full programme of meetings, held as before, bi-weekly in term time. We are grateful to our enthusiastic speakers who support a variety of Christian traditions and give us the opportunity to learn, listen, explore, question and exchange ideas. This year the topics have been "The people Jesus Met" and "St. Peter" as he is revealed in the Gospels and Acts. We are a small group at present and would welcome others to join our discussions.

St Peter's Outreach

Asby Endowed School (AES): We have continued to work with the school in various ways during 2022. We hosted and helped with Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union's (NISCU) Easter Journey held in St Peter's, and, as in previous years, presented each child with a small Easter egg and Easter Storybook. The school celebrated St Peter's Day in June with a service in church with the Rev Judy Polkinhorn which was linked with NISCU-Andi's inspired artwork about St Peter.

On Remembrance Day, the children brought their hand-made poppies and placed them around the Commonwealth War Grave in the churchyard where Michelle Clarke (Head-Teacher) led a short commemoration with a number of people from the village also present.

In December, Christmas Story Sacks were taken home again to set out the Crib Scenes and share the story with family members. School also decorated the window in the choir with a magnificent paper-chain Christmas tree which was voted 'the best' (by one vote!) by visitors to our Christmas Fair at which the school had a stall and arranged a visit from Father Christmas. Again, with NISCU help this year, Christmas artwork was created and displayed in church. The term finished with the now, traditional, Christingle service with Rev Judy leading.

Messy Church: After a break, because of Covid, Messy Church resumed with sessions in the Easter holiday and the October half-term. Once again these were organised by Emma Greenshaw, and Carol and Charlotte Marston with parishioners assisting. Emma, Carol and Charlotte have been responsible for Messy Church for many years but the October morning saw them saying 'Good bye'. We are extremely grateful for the immense amount of work and ideas they have put into the project and now look forward to a fresh team taking over. Village demographics have changed in recent years and we have very few young children actually resident in the parish. But AES activities and Messy Church enable us to reach out beyond parish boundaries.

Diners: Also during the year we were able to revive the monthly lunch club at the Three Greyhounds. We are very grateful to Amanda, Dave and Joy for being so welcoming and providing tasty 2-course meals on a fairly regular basis. We are sorry that, by the time this report is published, Amanda and Dave will have handed over to new licensees with whom we hope to continue to liaise in this valuable opportunity to meet folk we otherwise would not get to know.

Upper Eden Food Bank: Towards the end of 2022 we introduced a collection point in St Peter's for groceries for the Upper Eden Food Bank. This has been very successful, and we have been able to hand over at least one, heavy (!), bag of groceries to the Food Bank each week since.

St Anne's Hospital, Appleby: John Bevan has regularly led worship once a month for the residents in the Almshouses Chapel and is permanently on the rota to continue doing this.

Great Asby and Little Asby Mothers' Union report 2020

We have 10 member and we meet most months of the year in a member's home, where we appreciate their hospitality. Our key roles on the committee are;

- Chairman, Sheila Braithwaite,
- Treasurer, Susan Walker,
- Programme arrangers, Denise Frisby and Carole Cozens,
- Secretary, Wendy Fairey.

New members are always welcome.

Our 2022 year began with a meeting at Helen Cooper's home, with a talk from Karen Royle on 'mindfulness', the value of calmness and appreciating being in the moment. February's meeting was at Carole Cozen's home, thinking about the theme of 'Finding Joy in the Bible'. We were to learn at this meeting that we had been meeting, as Mothers Union in Little and Great Asby, since March 1958.

March gave us our first meal out together followed by April with a talk about knitting for the homeless by Diane Blenkinsop. By June we were celebrating our Queen and her reign of 70 years, so once again Mothers Union, along with the village, enjoyed celebrations and definitely afternoon teas.

A visit to Lady Anne Clifford's Alms Houses in Appleby plus a donation to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal led us to our annual Commitment Service in September, led by Distinctive Deacon, Sandy Pearl, with a theme of 'Active Faith'.

As the year drew to a close, we met again at Carole Cozen's where her daughter, Poppy Dyer, spoke to us about her work in the C.P.A.S. Christian Outdoor Activities.

Our year 2022 ended with the Christmas tree theme for the Christmas church fair and decorating the church window. We also enjoyed mulled wine at Pam Cowey's house, after the village carol singing.

A fulfilled and happy year and we're looking forward to the next.

Safeguarding: Church Policy and Guidance

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer is Mr Peter Miller. All parishes are required to have agreed a formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church: safeguarding policy statement', and of Church of England safeguarding policy and guidance.

Safeguarding is on the agenda of all PCC meetings. The Safeguarding Officer has always reported to the PCC and would have brought to their attention any matters that were of concern. PCC Members accept that each has an individual and collective responsibility to be mindful and aware of the well-being of both children and vulnerable adults in the Parish.

St Peter's PCC has adopted the 'Promoting a Safer Church: safeguarding policy statement', and the Church of England safeguarding policy and guidance.

However, discussions at the PCC acknowledge that standard, national, policies can never be a 'one size fits all' solution and it has therefore agreed that there are statements within these policies that need to be interpreted appropriately to suit our own circumstances at St Peter's.

Each PCC member has, about 3 years ago, completed the church's recommended on-line safeguard training module. Plans are in place for PCC members to retake modules, as required, every 3 years.

Safer Recruitment, and Training.

Our parish supports the Messy Church activity which in 'normal times' meets at school holiday times and is the only regular church activity that involves working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable.

The PCC have always been mindful of their responsibilities in regard to any groups which involve leaders working with children and vulnerable adults. The PCC has thought carefully about the quarterly Messy Church activity and concluded that because the meetings are infrequent and attended only by children with their parents/carers, they are confident that our policies and approaches do meet the necessary requirements.

We can confirm that the leaders and volunteers working with our groups have been safely recruited according to the Church's national guidance and we will continue to train all relevant people who are involved with these activities, as required by the Church.

Health and Safety

St Peter's has a policy statement, and maintains a Log Book & Accident Register. The PCC Members collectively and individually keep a watching brief and draw to the attention of the designated member (Peter Miller) any matters that require attention in order to avoid potential accidents.

The firefighting apparatus is maintained and placed in strategic locations within the Church. During 2021 there were no recorded accidents.

Financial and Fabric (Ways & Means) review

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with SORP requirements. We paid our increased Parish Offer in full. Proceeds from carol singing at the village tree and the Christmas Eve and other collections were donated to charities, in particular the Great North Air Ambulance, Sarcoma UK, and Hospice at Home. Our other commitments have been met in full.

Full details are set out in the accompanying financial statements and attention is drawn to the notes on the accompanying accounts. As is normal, income tax on gift aid donations is claimed and received following the calendar year in which the relevant donations were made.

The Church furnishings and plate are included in the inventory and vested in the Church Wardens in special trust. Our insurance policy is maintained with Ecclesiastical Insurance. The Church assets and metal are marked (AlphaDot and SmartWater) as advised.

This year a major program of work has been the refurbishment of the Lychgate which is a separate listed structure. The full extent of the required work did not become apparent until the structure was carefully taken apart. We are enormously grateful to Stuart Marston for painstakingly reconstructing the supporting frames back to their original design. He was assisted in dismantling and reconstruction of the roof structure by Eddie Close. The replacement gates are under construction. The result of this work is that the Lychgate will serve as an entrance to St Peter's for many years.

The Church electric systems have been tested and appropriately certified.

Our Quinquennial Inspection was last undertaken in 2018, by James Innerdale of Crosby Grainger Architects. We are shortly to commission a new report during 2023.

The main Church entrance doors have been refurbished the woodwork treated and metal work repainted, and they now look amazing, with the beauty of the wood showing once more.

Having regard to the style and age of the building there are inevitable ongoing repairs required but in general the building is in a good and fair state of repair.

Signed: _____ (chairperson / vice chairperson)

Date: _____