

St Peter's Church, Great Asby

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

Year Ending 31st December 2019

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 correspondence address is Ms. K. Royle, Nethergill, Appleby, Cumbria, CA16 6EX. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. The PCC members who have served from 1st January 2019 are as follows with their role on the Committee and dates of appointment in brackets where appropriate:-

Rector: Clive Hicks (Chairperson) (from November 2019)

Associate Priest: Rev. Peter Boyles

Warden: Mrs Pat Bevan (Vice-Chairperson)

Warden: Mrs Denise Frisby

Representative on Deanery Synod: Mr John Bevan (Treasurer)

Elected Members: Mrs Helen Cooper
 Mrs Pam Cowey
 Mr Peter Miller (Safeguarding Co-ordinator)
 Ms Karen Royle (Secretary)
 Mrs Carol Smith
 Mr John Smith
 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 and 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 2019 there were 24 Parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 1 of whom lives outside the Parish. The average weekly attendance at ordinary services was 14 adults but the number increased significantly at festivals and special occasions: the Christmas Carol Service was attended by over 160 people including children.

Review of the year

The full PCC met 5 times during the year with an average of 92% attendance.

In the absence of a Rector for most of the year, we have benefitted from, and are also grateful for, the support of the Reverend Peter Boyles and a range of clergy from across the Benefice and Deanery. Our own lay ministers, Mr and Mrs Bevan, and members of the congregation, also led worship to maintain regular services at St Peter's. The pattern of parish services with the Chapels has continued. Fifth Sunday services were shared with Ormside. Refreshments continue to be served after most services.

By November, we were able to welcome the Reverend Clive Hicks to the Parish and we wish him well in all the work he will be doing in the Parish and surrounding areas.

A joint Covenant service with the Methodists was held in St Peter's, led by Methodist Minister, the Rev. Andrew Sterling. Parishioners also attended the Baptist 'Candlelight Carol' and Methodist and Baptist anniversary services.

The Remembrance Sunday service at the Lychgate was once again well-attended.

Events through the year have followed the theme of 2020 Vision, as we continued to try to see the world as God wishes it to be. They began with a moonlight walk in February, which was followed by a magic evening with a conjuror in March. At the May Bank holiday we had an exhibition of items related to vision and illusions at an event called 'In Focus?'. The Patronal Festival celebrations in June included cream teas in church, alongside a display of the 2020 calendar entries, and was also well attended. We also held a service in a wood during the summer months, led by the Rev. David Wood, to whom we are most grateful: everyone who came along enjoyed the idea of worshipping in a different setting. The 2020 Vision theme continued through the remainder of the year, with unwanted spectacles being collected for Sightsavers. The theme culminated in a small festival of light, with the church being floodlit through Advent to Twelfth Night in January and church windows decorated by various village groups to the theme of 'Christ the Light of the World'. People in the village were also encouraged to light up their windows for the Christmas season. A service to reflect on these events was held in January at which Bishop Emma (Bishop of Penrith) was the speaker. All these events were very well received and we hope to light up the church again in a similar way in future years.

Before Christmas, we held our third Advent Sunday service in a barn at High Plains, Drybeck. This was also very well attended. We thank the Rev. Kristy Pattimore for leading the service, members of the church for reading the lesson and taking part in a sketch, and our hosts, Louise and Steve Reeve who also provided refreshments. A particular mention this year ought to be given regarding the wonderful Christmas Eve service, which everyone agreed was even better than the lovely service we usually have. The church was nicely full for this service and many people have commented how special this particular service was. There were lovely compliments regarding the musical contribution given by Dave from the pub, who sang a beautiful Lindisfarne guitar solo. There was an exceptionally wide age range represented in the congregation - which must be the biggest age range ever!! The youngest member of the congregation was our newest resident in the village, born only a week earlier, and the oldest person reached the ripe old age of 100 years old a week later. Overall, everyone agreed what an exceptionally warm and welcoming service this was, even more so than usual.

In 2019 there were 3 funerals plus one burial of ashes, 1 wedding and 1 infant baptism.

General expenses and running costs are met by a variety of activities and events, regular coffee mornings, sales of cards and calendars. The annual village barbecue took place again this year, with thanks to Louise and Steve Reeve who offered for this to take place on their farm. Many people attended, on what was one of the hottest days of the year, and all had a very enjoyable time. Money raised was shared between St Peter's and Asby School.

Asby Churches Together Fellowship Group and Asby Mother's Union continue to meet on a regular basis. The well-established coffee mornings and the occasional Saturday 'Coffee, Cake and Chat' sessions continue in Church. 'Diners', the monthly gathering for lunch at the Eden River Cafe, also continues with regular attenders. The PCC is grateful to Dave and Helen Sykes for hosting this each month. The 'Knit and Natter' group established in liaison with the Women's Institute (WI) has continued in the homes of participants. The theme for the Christmas Fair held in church this year was '2020 Vision'. As mentioned above, the windows were imaginatively decorated by several of the village organisations: the Book Club, Asby School, WI, Mothers Union, Cinema Group and the Methodist Church, as well as some families and individuals from the parish, not all of whom regularly attend church.

Asby School have attended special services to celebrate Easter, St Peter's Day and Christingle. These services were also well attended by parents. The children all received a Real Fair-trade Easter egg and took part in the Christmas Story Sack scheme. They produced art work celebrating Easter and Christmas to display in the church. Harvest gifts were gratefully received by the Food Bank in Appleby. New this year was the 'Christmas Journey' event led by NISCU representative, Rachel, with members of our congregation the actors. Preparations were made during the year to take part in the Bible Society's 'Open the Book' scheme for schools. Church members have been enrolled for this project and from the Spring Term 2020 will enact and tell Bible stories periodically in school.

Other work with young people included four further Messy Church mornings held in the Easter and summer school holidays and during the spring and autumn half-terms. The events continue to be supported with enthusiasm even though numbers attending have varied from time to time. The PCC is grateful for the hard work of Carol and Charlotte Marston and Emma Greenshaw, who have led these children's activities over the year.

Throughout the year we have raised funds for the following charities: Great North Air Ambulance, Hospice at Home, Sightsavers, British Heart Foundation and FoP.

The Ways and Means team have the PCC's ongoing gratitude for their work to maintain the fabric of the church and to manage issues of water ingress.

The PCC is extremely grateful for the support of all those who play a valuable part in the life of the Church: bell ringers, sides-people, those who clean the Church throughout the year, provide flowers, the Christmas tree and refreshments, and not forgetting those who produce and distribute the parish magazine, 'Asby Matters', and Mrs Pam Cowey, who has continued to be the organist.

Fellowship

Fellowship has continued to meet every two weeks during the Spring, Summer and Autumn terms, kindly hosted by John and Pat Bevan at 'The Hollies'.

In 2019 we have studied and discussed the Life of Jesus from his early days to his message to his followers to be 'A Light to lighten the Gentiles'. In the Autumn we looked at the passages relating to the sea and 'they who go down to the sea in ships'. We have been guided and frequently enlightened, by our speakers, John and Pat, Rev. Peter Boyles, Rev. Andrew Sterling and Donald Marston. We are pleased to welcome our new Rector, Clive Hicks to lead sometimes. We are very grateful to them all for the time and care they take preparing and leading our meetings.

The small group of regular members are sometimes joined by others and there are welcome signs that numbers are increasing. As always, we welcome Christians of all denominations and beliefs.

Mother's Union Report 2019

Under the continued Chairmanship of Mrs Sheila Braithwaite the Branch thrives with eleven members and welcomes visitors on a regular basis. Members are grateful to those continuing with official duties, especially to those involved in organising and printing our programme which aimed to link to the wider Mother's Union theme this year of "Listen, Observe, Act in step with God" as well as to our hostesses, speakers and Ministers.

The programme included three meetings with speakers: Kay McDonald, a local Vet who gave an insight into her training and work with large farm animals; Rosalind Denby, a qualified and practising Equine Assisted Psychotherapist describing the principles behind this type of therapy with video case studies and; Jon Cook who described the work of "Christians Against Poverty". There were two trips, one to Saltaire Mill and the other to Larch Cottage Nurseries. The annual service at St Peter's was led by Rev. Judy Polkinhorn in September. In October we were entertained to an evening of napkin folding for Christmas with Louise Reeve. Social events included a meal out at the Three Greyhounds and an "at home" Christmas get-together.

Although the Mother's Union no longer has Deanery Meetings in this area, all branches continue to meet together to worship on Lady Day and at Advent. This year we were honoured to host the Lady Day Service on 25th March at St Peter's Church with a special service devised and led by Mrs Pat Bevan. This service was also attended by the new Diocesan President of the Mother's Union, Janice Edington.

For action and outreach the Branch has continued to provide refreshments for school services, Mothering Sunday and some fund-raising events in church. Some members have knitted for seafarers and supported the shoebox appeal. The Branch gave special thanks to members Mrs Helen Cooper and Carol Smith, who also won the popular vote for their window display in church at the Christmas Fair. This year the theme was "Christ, the Light of the World" and our display took the form of a nativity scene with the Christ child lit by lanterns and lights.

Safeguarding : and Health & Safety

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer is Mr Peter Miller.

Church Policy and Guidance

All parishes are required to have agreed a formal statement of the adoption of the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church: safeguarding policy statement', and of Church of England safeguarding policy and guidance. 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 acknowledged that standard, national, policies can never be a satisfactory 'one size fits all' solution and it has therefore been noted that there are statements within these policies that need to be interpreted appropriately to suit our own circumstances at St Peter's.

Safeguarding has been 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. There were none. The PCC noted that we also have an individual and collective responsibility to be mindful and aware of the well-being of both children and vulnerable adults in the Parish.

With one exception, every PCC member has completed the church's recommended on-line safeguarding training module(s).

Safer Recruitment, and Training.

Our parish supports the Messy Church activity which meets four times a year in school holidays, and is the only regular church activity that involves working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable.

The PCC have been always 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 / caregiver, they are confident that its 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 Health & Safety 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 2019 there were no recorded accidents or incidents.

Financial Review

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the appropriate Statement of Recommended Practice [SORP] requirements. We paid our Parish Offer in full. Proceeds from carol singing around the village and the Christmas Eve and other collections were donated to charities, in particular the Air Ambulance, Sightsavers, and Hospice at Home.

Further charitable donations were made to Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressive (FOP) Action and the British Heart Foundation. 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 on special trust. Our insurance policy is maintained with Ecclesiastical Insurance. The Church assets and metal are marked (AlphaDot and SmartWater) as advised.

Ways & Means

No major projects were undertaken in 2019. The remedial works on the 2017 project were completed satisfactorily during 2018, and signed off by the architect. Following the receipt of the full quinquennial inspection report, we are now following up two significant pieces of work:-

1. (as mentioned last year) to the Lychgate, where reasonably substantial replacement of parts of the main oak frame are required;
- and
2. to the stonework in and around the Porch, where it has been damaged by the weather over many years.

With these pieces of work in mind, reserves have deliberately been built up. Advice has been obtained from the architect, potential contractors have been identified, and an initial enquiry made of the Archdeacon as to whether a Faculty may be required in respect of the work on the Lychgate.

More generally, the quinquennial report noted that, overall, the church is in a good condition, whereas the Lychgate is in a poor condition and in need of repair.

A Final Word: a Clergy Perspective

Across the Heart of Eden Benefice, efforts are being made to reach out to children and young families, not underestimating all that is done with other members of the community. Work within each village and network in social activities helps alleviate isolated individuals. Collaboration with members of other churches – under the God For All vision – helps underline the importance of Christian Unity. Every creative effort breathes fresh life into church and community, and at its heart the small group – meeting for bible study and prayer – enriches the spiritual life of our members. In each of these areas the congregation at St Peter’s makes a genuine and concerted effort to bless Great Asby and the local farming community – links with the school, social events, attention to governance in areas like safeguarding, willingness to support both clergy and lay leaders, and a joy in life, make this a special place to be.

The planned reforms and re-organisation of how we “do church” as an Anglican benefice have become a practical reality which are still being worked out in the day to day life of the church. Administration of much of our pastoral work such as funerals and weddings is now supervised by Joyce Keetley. Hopefully, this will encourage the wider community to find and use their local church and give us as congregations additional opportunities to reach out to the wider parish. The Mission Community continues to grow and pool resources to promote the Church’s mission in the Eden Valley - we were particularly pleased to see the appointment of our new Network Youth Church co-ordinator, Rachel last May and the Mission Community will shortly begin a joint course of marriage preparation based in Warcop.

The successful recruitment of Clive Hicks to lead our Benefice as Rector in November means for the first time every part of the Benefice has the opportunity to receive ministry from one of the stipendiary priests on a regular basis. I would say however that the size of the Anglican Benefice presents considerable logistical challenges in the provision of ministry and a lot more work has to be done in joint ecumenical co-operation on the re-imagining the life of the church and bringing that life nearer to all the new opportunities opening up for us on the new estates in Appleby. Work such as the pioneering groups in Kirkby Thore and the way villages like Asby work together in such a visionary manner provide much hope for future!

Signed as correct : _____ by Pat Bevan, in the chair _____ (chairperson / vice chairperson)

Date : 15 March 2020