

2020

APCM REPORTS



Vicar's Report

2020 will certainly be a year to remember! We began the year full of optimism for the future. Worship continued in our church buildings as usual throughout January and February, with plans in place for Lent and Easter. We had just begun our Lent course and had one Lent Lunch when we began to realise the seriousness of a Global pandemic. Who could have predicted that by mid-March we would all be wearing masks in public, social distancing and worrying about elderly relatives, or that public worship in our church buildings would be suspended by Government order to lockdown the country? For much of March through to July we were asked to stay at home, and again in November.

All of a sudden we have had become experts in social media, new technology and health and safety. Numerous risk assessments had to be completed to get our buildings open, firstly for private prayer and then for corporate worship. A lot of worship moved onto the zoom platform as more of us learnt how to use it.

You will see from the following reports that church did not stop happening in 2020 we just had to learn new ways of doing and being church. There have been some extraordinary things happening and I am extremely grateful to everyone for persevering through some very difficult circumstances.

Hope is a strong biblical theme. Jeremiah in chapter 7 writes:

“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, and have made Him their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat, or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and never stop producing fruit.”

Jeremiah reminds us that the Lord is our hope and our confidence. And Him alone. Not our circumstances. Not things. Not people. Not our expectations.

But God, Himself!

We are not necessarily promised an easy tomorrow. Or a year without suffering. Or a life without loss. But what we ARE promised is just like the trees planted along the waters, we will flourish. And God will be our portion. He alone will sustain us. What's more, is that He promises to go with us!

Our hope is secure in the One who promises His presence no matter what comes our way.

My prayer for the coming year is that we put our roots down deep into the soil of HOPE. That we are able in the words of St Paul able to forget what lies behind and look forward to what lies ahead. That we are future focussed and optimistic and just a little bit brave enough to let go of some of the old ways of doing things and try new ways of being church.

Rev Sarah Godfrey-Rector Milborne Port with Goathill, Charlton Horethorne with Stowell

Bell Ringers

Ringers at St John's who are paid up members of the Cary Branch of the Bath and Wells Association of Change Ringers presently stands at fourteen, all of whom live in the village. Bob Lock, a ringer at St John's for over 50 years, sadly died in January 2021, and the whole team mourn his passing.

Due to the Covid19 pandemic, it has not been possible to ring normally since March 15th 2020. The decision was taken that, although four bells could be rung with permitted mitigations, ringing would not recommence until it was safe to do so with a full contingent. However, the sixth bell was tolled for Remembrance Sunday, five members rang for Christmas morning, and the sixth bell was tolled at the time of Bob's funeral on 22nd January.

Despite not being able to meet in the tower, the team has remained in close contact through weekly Zoom meetings and a WhatsApp contact group. As a group of friends, we have also supported each other during this time and, when restrictions allowed in the summer months, met in one another's gardens or at one of the village pubs. At the time of writing, we are also going to venture into the world of virtual bellringing on-line, which is another way of keeping the group going and maintaining contact with one another.

We were also pleased to be able to help the SOMP by putting on and taking off lights on the village Christmas trees.

In the anticipation of some semblance of normality returning later in 2021, I would like to thank the continued support that each and every member of the band gives to the church, and also the valued support given by the church and villagers to the band in return.

Susan Wales, Tower Captain

Charities and Mission

Despite a difficult year for all of us I am pleased to say that our Church was able to maintain most of its programme of giving.

During the year, our PCC sent £300 to each of the following:

January: Freewheelers Emergency Voluntary Service

February: Scripture Union

March: Food for the Hungry

April: Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East

May: Tearfund

June: Mosaic Family Support

July: DEC Coronavirus Appeal

August: Global's Make Some Noise (a charity that offers support to vulnerable groups suffering from COVID-19)

September: Sherborne Food Bank

October: Christians Against Poverty

December: Samara's Aid Appeal

From the Christmas service collections, we were able to send £300 to Christian Aid.

Richard Redman.

Choir

A year ago, no one could possibly have thought that singing in a choir could be classed as dangerous! But with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and some unfortunate and much publicised early outbreaks in choirs before anyone was aware of the scale of the virus, amateur singing was off the cards for many months. However, following scientific research and some detailed risk assessments, the government allowed choirs back in late summer. Hats off to all the choir at St John's for being prepared to take on the restrictions and return to singing. Standing a strict 2 metres apart to sing is a huge challenge for all but the most experienced of singers and I have never been prouder of them.

Massed singing continues to be prohibited and I'm sure everyone misses their hymn singing on a Sunday, but we hope that listening to the choir singing during communion has given people a lift.

With some limited rehearsal time between lockdowns before Christmas, we were able to perform carols at our two carol services and on Christmas Day. Let's hope it's not too long before we're singing again!

Rachel Willetts
Organist and Musical Director

Church House

Sadly, due to COVID restrictions, it has not been possible for most of our regular groups to use Church House facilities over the past year. However, our policy has been that, when conditions allow, we should open to users provided they are able to operate within Government restrictions for their type of activity, observe social distancing and limit group sizes etc. Following a risk assessment we therefore introduced additional COVID specific terms and conditions for users and undertook to make the building as safe as possible by installing additional hand sanitisers and appropriate signage. These measures did allow for limited use by some groups during mid 2020, when restrictions were relaxed, particularly as we could make the garden available during the summer months.

We have been taking advantage of the downtime to undertake general maintenance activities. We now have a new heating boiler installed, replacing the old inefficient and unreliable one. The interior has had a new coat of paint, we have upgraded the fire extinguishers and we have also continued to make improvements to the garden.

There are now plans in place for Church House to be used by the new Foodshare group as a distribution point and thus provide an important service to the community during these uncertain times.

I particularly want to thank all members of the committee for their support during this difficult and challenging period. As a result of their hard work we are in a really good position to make Church House facilities available to users again as we return to normality, hopefully later this year.

Trevor John

Chairman, Church House Management Committee

Church House Finance

During 2020, owing to COVID, the hall was not as well used as usual. However, when not in a period of national lockdown, the Committee were able to open the hall, with restrictions on the types of events and numbers of attendees, and with extra “COVID conditions” for hirers to abide by.

This all meant that our lettings income fell by 65% compared to last year. We were also unable to hold our usual fundraising events such as the Christmas lunch, meaning lost income of around £1,200. However, the 100 Club raised £600 (subs received less prizes paid) and thank you to everyone who is a member of the 100 Club. We also received a generous donation of £2,000 on which we claimed Gift Aid of £500. Altogether, the income from our normal sources totalled £5,996.

As a business subject to closure periods, Church House was also able to claim government support grants of £11,334 during the year.

Our total expenditure increased slightly compared to last year at £7,464 (2019: £7,083). Many of our normal costs of trading (utilities, insurance, etc) did not reduce despite the reduced lettings income, and we also took advantage of the closure periods to repaint the hall and lobby at a cost of £1,650.

The end-of-year balance was £17,156, an increase of £9,908 over the previous year.

Ben Grundy.

Church Warden

The Covid pandemic has challenged congregations across the country and indeed across the world! However, challenge isn't always a bad thing and it has forced us to review our situation and to be grateful for so many things. In 2020 our congregation continued to pull together and to be both cohesive and inclusive. We hope that visitors and new members always receive a warm welcome.

From a practical perspective we are hugely grateful to Ronnie and June, our Vergers, who do so much to keep the church clean, tidy and welcoming. Having the church open, whenever we have been permitted by national restrictions to do so, for private prayer has been a great comfort to many. Just seeing the "Welcome" sign on the church door is a reminder that God is always there at the heart of whatever we are doing. We all also owe a real debt of gratitude to Jacquie who has the responsibility for the fabric of the church; the amount of time she and Robert give to our church is exceptional. This year tremendous progress has been made on the work highlighted in our quinquennial report, with a large amount of work being completed on the stone fabric; our building could not be in better hands.

The diocese asks that we "live and tell the story" in our community and we continue to do this. Sarah is maintaining links with our Primary School even when the restrictions are stopping her visiting in person. Clever outreach events like our outdoor Christmas Crib service on Christmas Eve ensure that the village sees the church at the heart of the community.

There have been many special times of worship and learning, and we are very fortunate to have the creative leadership of Sarah, who is always looking for new ways to make worship accessible in these very difficult circumstances. She does an incredible job of juggling the demands of a busy Benefice with five church buildings! Thank you so much Sarah, for your tireless commitment.

We are keeping the essence of the Christian message alive and well in Milborne Port; we continue to have a real heart for service to our community, we are happy to tell our story and it is my prayer that we will continue to develop our presence and witness to our stories in the year to come.

Nicki Edwards - Churchwarden

Deanery Synod

The Synod met once in March 2020 in North Barrow Village Hall. The Speaker was Gary Watson, the Diocesan giving and Funding Adviser. There were also reports on the Deanery Ministry Fund; the Synod Accounts were approved, and the Deanery Subscription for the year was set to continue at £10 per eligible deanery representative. Due to the Covid restrictions no Ascension Day Deanery Eucharist was held this year, and the remaining Synod meetings were cancelled. This meant that the new Synod elected at the 2020 APCMs did not meet in 2020.

Mary Clothier

Events Committee

Members of the committee are Anne Briggs, Margaret Curtis, John Fanning, Linda Mumford, Sandra Nichols, Jan Sharpless, Anne Salkeld, and Nick Bunt who joined us in February 2020.

Our first event of 2020 was planned to be a guitar recital by Michael Partington at the end of March. This had to be cancelled at fairly short notice due to the first lockdown. Christine, his mother was keen to bill it as 'postponed' which we did, but sadly, at the end of last year, she died. A tribute to her remarkable life can be found in February's Parish Magazine.

Almost all the rest of the year's events had to be cancelled. An exception to this was the raffle which we managed to squeeze into the brief period of relative freedom in the summer. Our generous supporters provided the many exciting prizes and the whole congregation pitched in and raised £966 after expenses.

Many of last year's planned events are 'on hold' waiting for life after Covid when they will reappear in some form. With that in view, the Church fete is planned for 31st July.

Anne Salkeld, Chair of the Events Committee.

Milborne Port Magazine Report

The year started smoothly, with the price of the magazine steady at 45p and circulation maintained. However, the pandemic brought particular challenges. During the first lockdown, it was agreed that it was not safe for our distributors to deliver hard copies of the magazine. The April and May magazines were available online only, hosted on our church website, and linked through the church and village Facebook pages. The full April printing run had already been ordered when lockdown was imposed, but we printed just a small number of the May magazine to save money. We felt it was important to have some hard copies to save in the archive; the magazines of 2020 (and on into 2021) have proved a fascinating piece of social history of the time when even the churches were closed.

By June, we felt able to re-start distribution, under a new Covid-secure system, and this continued throughout the second and third lockdowns. We are very grateful to Liz and Richard Redman, who organise this, and to all the distributors who have been so supportive. Subscribers have been credited for the two issues they missed during 2020. We are continuing to make the magazine available on the church website, though now with a two-week time-lag, as an archive.

The character of the magazine has evolved during the past year. With no events to be advertised after March 2020, we were able to use the magazine to spread the word of community help available, to thank people for what they were doing, to increase the number of illustrations, and to publish some longer articles, including local history and personal reflections. Many thanks to all our contributors, and to Robin Bawtree, who keeps our finances in good order and manages the paid-for advertising. The cover photographs continue to be very popular, and the Milborne Port Calendars produced from them sold out this year before the end of November despite pandemic restrictions. We hope to print an increased number of calendars in 2021. *Linda Mumford Editor, and chair of the Magazine Group.*

Milborne Wick Mission Church

It goes without saying that Covid has certainly changed our forms of worship and use of the church this year. We have had four services in the church in 2020 with two outside services being the Carol Service and the Harvest Service which were both beautiful services in their own Wick way, incorporating a barn and a village walk. The community support for the VE day celebrations was very moving; union jacks fluttered in the breeze along with red, white, and blue bunting, the church bell was rung, musical instruments played by the young, poems were read, and Vera Lynn songs were sung. It was a memorable afternoon. The weekly NHS clap with the Church bell being rung during lockdown 1 again was a real community event (socially distanced of course). Each household has taken care of their own stream bank frontage and cleared it accordingly. There are a number of fundraisers planned for this year 2020/21, so all being well Wick will be a hive of fundraising activity throughout the summer months.

Amanda Mackintosh.

The Zambia Link Group

In my 2019 report I wrote about a proposed review by the Diocese of Bath and Wells of its link with the Zambian Anglican Church. They informed us that an essential restructure of the link was required in order to ensure that it continued to have a fruitful future.

Unfortunately, due to the Global pandemic this restructuring has not been possible. The Zambia committee, therefore, decided to look for an alternative organisation to which we would donate our remaining funds.

In January 2021, the remaining money in the Zambia account (GBP 1,222) was donated to the charity Zambia Orphans Aid UK (charity

number 1145721). This is a charity which helps orphans and vulnerable children who do not have the support of a family structure.

Mike Mortimore, who died in 2017, was the founder and driving force behind the original Zambian Aids Family Fund in 2002. Over the years, with the generosity of our supporters, we have been able to continue his work with the link and I would like to thank everyone who has made this possible.

Lesley Oldham.

Worship and Evangelism Committee

Who, in their wildest dreams, would ever have predicted that this committee would be discussing the merits of online services and the exotic topic of “streaming licences” when 2020 began? Like every other aspect of church life, the effect of Covid on our Worship practice has been profound, but it has also enabled us to focus on what is truly important.

2020 started in the usual fashion with the Plough Service in Charlton Horethorne . As Lent began, there were encouraging numbers taking part in the associated activities. On Ash Wednesday over 30 people took communion over the two services in church. The Lent Course began on March 12th with 12 people in attendance and Lent Compline on a Friday was underway when suddenly we found ourselves in Lockdown! All of the original planning for Lent and Easter went by the wayside and we had to switch to Facebook live-streaming then Zoom services for several months. Sarah has worked tirelessly to make sure that our online services are as engaging and fulfilling as possible – her creativity has kept the congregation together.

Once it was permitted, in June, we decided to open the Church again for Private Prayer and this was followed on July 18th by our first service back in Church, at 6pm – with all of the provisions necessary to

keep the congregation Covid safe. Our last Zoom service for the first lockdown was on August 16th after which we reverted to a more “normal” rota. We had an outdoor service on August 30th which was blessed with beautiful weather and our AGM was held via Zoom on September 20th. Sarah managed to arrange a “Covid secure” wedding on 1st August – to the relief of all involved!

As the Autumn progressed it became clear that Christmas would be affected by the pandemic, so plans were made to enable as many people as possible to celebrate Christmas in church as safely as possible and to accommodate other important events. The Act of Remembrance was held outside by the War Memorial on Sunday 9th November at 10:45. Social distancing was observed, and the bell was tolled to commemorate each fallen man.

“Blue Christmas” was attended by 35 people and was much appreciated as a chance to remember loved ones who had died during the year. Two ticketed Carol Services were held, and each was attended by around 40 people – enabling people from across the village to be part of worship in Church. On Christmas Eve an outdoor Crib activity was very successful, with 48 Christingle bags being distributed to the children who attended.

This year no Midnight Service was held in the in Benefice. Our service on Christmas Day was attended by around 40 people; the clear weather allowed for a carol to be sung outside which was a joy! Directly after Christmas we reverted to Zoom services as the new national lockdown began.

Who can predict what 2021 will hold? One thing we are sure of, with Sarah’s creativity worship will thrive in Milborne Port!

Nicki Edwards