

CHURCH WARDEN

The CoVid pandemic has continued to challenge congregations across the country and indeed across the world during 2021. Added to this during this year, our vicar Sarah Godfrey took up a new post in Lyme Regis so we are now in a period of “vacancy”. In 2021 our congregation continued pull together and to be both cohesive and inclusive. We hope that visitors and new members always receive a warm welcome. Numbers attending our services have stayed at pre-pandemic levels and in some cases have grown which is very much against the national trend.

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 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 Jackie 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 further progress has been made on the work highlighted in our quinquennial report; 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. This year Foodshare has become established in Church House with the support of many members of our congregation – this has proved to be very popular and is making a real difference to many families in the village. Foodshare alongside other outreach events like our outdoor Easter Garden event for children on Easter Saturday, Remembrance Service in November and Christmas Crib service on Christmas Eve ensure that the village sees the church at the heart of the community.

We were very sad to bid farewell to Sarah in August but I am pleased to report that she has settled well into her new role. The parish profile and advert for our new incumbent has been prepared and is now with the Diocese ready for publication. We would hope to have a new incumbent in place by the late summer.

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, our stories in the year to come.

Nicki Edwards

BELLRINGERS

Our team of regular ringers now stands at ten.

Because of the continued restrictions on ringing, due to the close proximity of people whilst ringing and the lack of ventilation in the ringing chamber, regular ringing was all but halted for the beginning part of the year. However, the sixth bell was tolled 99 times on the day that HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh died, and six bells were rung in twos on Easter Sunday. Ringing commenced in July, and it was great to be back with a full contingent. The north window was left open as was the one into the church, and this generated an adequate through-flow of fresh air.

During this time, many of the band met for virtual bell-ringing, using an on-line site called “Ringing Room”. Whilst not the real thing – in fact it demanded a whole new set of skills to be learnt - it did at least mean that we were able to learn new methods, and ring with other ringers across the county and beyond.

Members of the band again helped the Spirit of Milborne Port with putting on and taking off the lights on the village Christmas trees.

With the onset of the Omicron variant, and the cold winter months, ringing was restricted to Sundays only with the request that members took a Covid test beforehand in order to look after one another.

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. However, after Covid, the future of bellringing in the churches of the Deanery looks uncertain, as many towers have not returned to ringing, and a number of ringers have been lost for one reason or another.

Susan Wales

CHARITIES AND MISSION

Despite another difficult year, our Church was again able to undertake its regular programme of giving. During 2021, our PCC sent £300 to each of the following:

- January: The Children's Society
- February: The Sheldon Hub (a safe place for people in ministry to meet, share, and support each other)
- March: Freewheelers Emergency Voluntary Service (volunteer motorbike rider who transport blood, pathology & microbiology specimens, patient notes, X-rays, breast milk, and other medical supplies, to and from NHS hospitals, and who deliver every night to two local Air Ambulance bases)
- April: Scripture Union
- May: Food for the Hungry (seeking to end all forms of human poverty amongst the world's most vulnerable people)
- June: Mosaic Middle East (to bring hope, help and healing to the vulnerable and persecuted minorities in the Middle East)
- July: Christian Aid
- August: Mission Aviation Fellowship (using aviation and technology to see isolated people changed by the love of Christ)
- September: DEC Coronavirus Appeal
- October: Global's Make Some Noise (supporting the lives of disadvantaged people in our communities by working with small charities across the UK)
- November: Sherborne Food Bank
- December: Christians Against Poverty (supporting people who are locked in the miserable grip of poverty)

In February, £1222 was sent to Zambia Orphans' Aid UK, this being the remaining balance in the Zambia Aids Family Fund, which is now closed. In May, we sent £500 to the DEC Coronavirus India Appeal. From our Christmas service collection, we were able to send a further £202 to Christian Aid.

Richard Redman

CHOIR

The restrictions of the pandemic have continued to have a huge effect on singing, both for the choir and also, of course, for the congregation. It was a joyous day in July when we were all allowed to sing hymns again!

Before then, the long lockdown of the winter and spring stopped any singing. In Holy Week we were allowed a solo singer, so on Good Friday we enjoyed hearing the first vocal music in church since Christmas, along with organ music to fit the service. On Easter Sunday church choirs were allowed to sing in small groups, and St John's choir were, as ever, keen to return, despite the challenges of the distance between singers.

In May all choirs were expecting to return to indoor singing, albeit with mitigations; sadly, whilst the rest of life started to return to normal, a late government decision restricted choirs to groups of six, smaller than at Easter. Nevertheless, we soldiered on with a rota, which meant that all choir members got the chance to sing at least every few weeks and that we were able to provide some choral music in the services.

It is wonderful to have singing back in our regular worship finally, and whilst we aren't yet quite back to normal, we have all enjoyed singing Christmas carols again, and the choir has been rehearsing weekly since September. We will be starting Compline in Lent for the first time since 2020 and look forward to a normal and musical Easter.

None of us will ever take singing for granted again; the unfair stigma it has been given during the pandemic has also made us appreciate what an important part it plays in all our lives.

Rachel Willetts

CHRISTIAN AID COMMITTEE (2020)

2020 was a year like no other in recent times and because of the pandemic, very little fund-raising was able to take place. Three Lent Lunches had been held when the first lockdown was announced and other regular activities were then cancelled, including the house-to-house collection during Christian Aid Week. Even so, in 2020 we were able to send a total of £685.00 to Christian Aid, made up chiefly by:

½ Christmas loose collections 2019	326.00
Lent lunches	285.20
Lent supper donation	40.00
Small change collection boxes	8.29
Gift	5.45

The Christmas collections' sum is always for the previous year as we do not receive the gift until early January and there is always some money carried forward from the previous year that is included in the total that was sent. Very many thanks to all of you who helped us in various ways during the year and with the future looking uncertain, let us hope that fund-raising will start again before too long.

David Johnson (Hon. Treasurer)

CHRISTIAN AID COMMITTEE (2021)

With Covid still a major concern in 2021 only a modest amount of fund-raising could be done. In Christian Aid Week envelopes were made available at the back of St John's instead of being delivered and, during the year, we were able to send a total of £986.20 to Christian Aid. The receipts were:

Christmas loose collections 2020	300.00
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Carol singers 2020	5.00
Christian Aid Week	673.20
Small change collection boxes	12.27

The slight mis-match between the amounts sent and received is due to the small balances that are carried/brought forward each year.

At our recent committee meeting we were able to start making plans for 2022 and I am pleased to tell you that Lent Lunches are beginning once more, the Hot Cross Bun event will take place and a Christian Aid Week collection will be made. With the effects of global warming already making life more difficult in many parts of the world, Christian Aid has a growing need for funds and I hope that you will continue to support our fund-raising efforts and give as generously as you can.

David Johnson (Hon. Treasurer)

CHURCH HOUSE

As COVID-19 restrictions ease we have seen a welcome increased use of Church House by our regular users and we are now approaching pre-pandemic booking levels. We also have had a good number of private parties and other events. We still encourage users to take whatever precautions are necessary to minimise the risk and spread of COVID-19 but hopefully the situation will continue to improve over the coming year and this will bring the use of Church House back to full normality. The Foodshare group are now using Church House for food storage and distribution and is providing a useful service to the local community and this has been a real success over the past year,

The 100 Club continues to provide essential financial support and enables us to maintain the building for the future. We are grateful to all our 100 Club members. There are currently a few vacancies for membership of the 100 Club.

Amongst the general maintenance activities we have undertaken has been the painting of the exterior gable ends and the woodwork. We have also had some tree surgery done to remove trees that overhang neighbouring properties and also to allow more natural light into the main hall. The Church House garden and grounds continue to be cared for by Brian and Barbara Tindale. We are extremely grateful to them for the hours of work they put into looking after the garden.

During the past 12 months the Church House Management Committee has met four times over Zoom. John Barker retired from the committee during the past year and our sincere thanks go to John for his hard work in support of Church House over many years. I also want to thank all members of the committee for their support during this difficult and challenging period.

Trevor John - Chairman, Church House Management Committee

CHURCH HOUSE FINANCE

Church House was well used in 2021 after the easing of the lockdown at the start of the year. Lettings income increased by £600 over 2020 (total: £2,774). We also continue to raise money from the 100 Club (subs less prizes: £670) – thank you to all current members! Do please note there are currently 20 available tickets for anyone who would like to join the 100 Club.

As in 2020, Church House was eligible for grants for closure periods. These totalled £8,873. When restrictions eased, we received a “restart grant” of £8,000.

Total expenditure reduced by £1,200 compared to 2020. In addition to usual expenses, the external woodwork on the gable ends was painted in August/September (cost: £560) and we also had some trees felled in the garden in September (cost: £564).

Church House also made a donation to the Primary School of £996 for them to buy four Chromebooks.

The end-of-year balance was £31,796, an increase of £14,640 over the previous year. Such a large surplus is owing to the received grants and is not expected to continue in subsequent years.

Ben Grundy

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT FOR 2021

Three meetings were held by Zoom in 2021 (Full minutes can be found on the Deanery website – brutonandcarydeanery.net)

3rd March 2021

The discussion centred around the following questions:

- 1) What was one good thing about your Parish in the last year? It was rewarding that Zoom meetings has proved fruitful
- 2) What are the future hopes and challenges for your Benefice? There is great hope to build on the unity brought about by Covid restrictions.

2nd June 2021

School Chaplaincy Update - Wendy Hester - Wendy worked in the three schools of the Deanery. With her medical background she assisted with Covid testing teams. Anxiety levels were high. Wendy asked Synod members to pray for God's love to flow through these school communities.

What our Churches may look like post Pandemic (two documents had been sent out with the agenda:

Discerning Ministries – a vision for local ministry

Discerning Ministries – a guide for exploration these documents were pilot and draft – a work in progress which were being refined

Discerning Ministries – a vision for local ministry

Breakout Rooms considered two questions:

Question 1: What resonates with you and what challenges you about the idea that God calls everyone?

Question 2 - : Where is focal ministry already happening? And how is this working? These produced lively comments

4th November 2021

Our main speaker was The Revd Andy Gray, the Diocesan Faith Sharing Enabler, who spoke about "**Talking Jesus in the Rural Context**".

We also commissioned two new lay pioneers and heard from our Schools Chaplain.

Mary Clothier

EVENTS COMMITTEE 2021

Members of the committee are: Anne Briggs, Margaret Curtis, John Fanning, Linda Mumford, Sandra Nichols, Jan Sharpless, Anne Salkeld, and Lyn Harrison who joined us in Summer 2021.

Our first event of 2021 was Open Gardens and Cream Teas on 24th June. As the season was late the roses were in full bloom and it was a great success. Cream teas were provided according to a booking system to prevent overcrowding and £302 was raised from this and some plant sales.

The Church Fete took place on 31st July. The weather was not kind and in other years we would have moved into the church but this was not possible due to Social Distancing. Despite these constraints, a good time was had by all and we raised £2746 after expenses.

In 2022 some events are still on hold but the fete is planned for Saturday 23rd July. Thanks are due to the committee members their families and friends who work so hard to make it all happen.

Anne Salkeld (Chair of the Events Committee)

MILBORNE PORT FOODSHARE

The Foodshare project in Milborne Port was officially started in June 2021 however, preparatory work had taken place over the preceding year by volunteers in the village. It was initiated because of the need for food to be available to families and individuals who were facing food budget problems and also to avoid food being wasted. The Cooperative Movement has for some years had a national Food Share project through which food which is still good to eat is donated free of charge to local food projects. Approval by the Cooperative Movement and by local Food Safety officers was key steps in getting Milborne Port Foodshare operational.

The project is based in Church House with the support of Church House trustees and the project currently has 18 volunteers with some donating time occasionally and with more regular commitments of time from others. In the early stages, funding and goods in kind were generously donated by Milborne Port Parish Council, Milborne Port Women's Institute, Milborne Port Parochial Church Council, Somerset District Council, Milborne Port Magazine Committee and individuals.

The project operates by having two volunteers collect donated food from the local Coop store on Gainsborough on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and take it to the Susan Parsons room in Church House where it is sorted, labelled and stored in the project's freezers and fridge. Distribution of food is every Thursday from 1.30 to 3 pm when a counter is put into the foyer of Church House along with a board advertising the items available. There are always 2 volunteers at this session but often there are 3 or even 4 because the sessions are busy.

The project does not ask for identifying details of customers. The only question asked is the number of people that will be recipients of the food and this information is recorded on weekly sheets. The project was quiet in the early days however, word of it has got around and there are now around 30+ people benefitting from the food. Although no questions are asked, customers sometimes share information about their circumstances and low household budgets, concern about switching on ovens and worries about rising bills of all sorts have been mentioned. There is likely to be more unmet need for food in the village particularly amongst families with children. Despite advertising through various means (emails, Facebook, posters and via school staff and health professionals) this group remains hard to reach and volunteers believe the stigma of asking for food may be an issue.

When the project had been underway for some weeks, volunteers learned that ambient food (tinned and dried) was available from the Beckery Road Resource Centre in Glastonbury as well as frozen ready meals from a range of catering organisations. These two types of food have been made available to food projects in Somerset as a result of government pandemic funding which allowed Somerset County

Council to buy food from Fair Share, a national organisation which buys supermarket surplus stock. This food has been appreciated by Milborne Port Foodshare customers however, unfortunately this funding is due to end in March and no more ambient or frozen meals will be available after that date. This is extremely concerning given that pressure on household food bills is increasing just as this provision comes to an end.

The project has also benefitted from the generosity of St John's Milborne Port parishioners. A basket is permanently sited in the church and parishioners regularly donate ambient food and also toiletries. This is especially important because items such as period products, nappies and soap are not donated from the other sources the project uses.

The project has been operational for less than 9 months however, is much appreciated by people in the village who use it and several cards have been handed in to endorse this. In the coming months the project has two issues in particular to tackle. First, illness and hospital treatment have affected a number of volunteers in recent times and the project has had to call on other volunteers to do more sessions than they would ideally like to undertake. The issue of recruitment of new volunteers (finding, carrying out basic DBS checks and safeguarding training) is a constant.

The second issue is to find more sources of food for the project as demand is expected to increase in the coming months. One solution is to collect from the Coop on three days each week instead of two although this will put more pressure on volunteers. The project volunteers are likely to discuss alternative ways of accessing Fair Share food deliveries. Other local projects in Dorset already do this however, they have to secure funding to pay for the membership and deliveries. There will be a need to continue to ask for donations by parishioners and also probably, extend this to other people in the village and organisations.

Volunteers are also looking at new sources of grant funding. There is one source of funding that is being investigated which seeks to improve food resilience in the county. If successful however, grant funding cannot be used to purchase food and has to be spent on equipment, publicity and running costs.

Elaine Ennis-Bunt

MILBORNE PORT MAGAZINE REPORT 2021-22

The Magazine has continued to flourish during the past year, and the team has remained the same: Linda Mumford as editor, Robin Bawtree as Business and Advertising Manager, and Richard and Liz Redman in charge of the distribution. Thanks to a fantastic team of volunteers, we sell around 600 copies each month, the majority delivered to homes, and some sold through local retailers, to all of whom we are very grateful.

The magazine always contains details of church services and church events, with a message from one of the clergy or the churchwardens at the start of every issue. We regard the magazine, though, not just as a church newsletter, but as a community magazine which we produce as a service to the village. The Parish Council publishes the latest news, and an increasing range of organisations advertise their events. In addition we have regular reports from village groups and features of general interest, like "What to Look for in the Night Sky" and Richard Duckworth's Local History.

The cover photographs are still a popular feature, so please keep them coming! We compile the twelve photos into a calendar for the coming year, and these have also proved popular, with over 200 sold at the end of 2021. The magazine finances are in a healthy state and our sales of advertising as well as the magazines themselves have enabled us to donate during 2021 to the PCC, the Food Bank, the Choir and

Bells funds, the Spirit of Milborne Port, and to provide the cash prize and the tickets for the Grand Draw in the summer.

Linda Mumford

MILBORNE WICK MISSION CHURCH

This year Covid has meant that there have been a few changes to the church events and worship. The services at Wick are now held once a month on the 3rd Sunday of each month and attendances have attracted some visitors from outside Wick which is a real bonus!

In August we held our annual Cream tea which was a great success. Wonderful weather brought visitors to the event which has grown a little more from last year. We now have a plant stall, a craft stall and a Pimms' bar as well as the ever-popular Cream teas. Visitors were entertained by a Folk Band with a wonderful sing along of some well-known numbers! The Harvest Festival was supported by members of Wick with produce coming from farms and gardens. Our Christmas Carol Service was conducted in the byre at Mill Court with a service that had been beautifully put together by members of the congregation. The service was followed by mince pies and Gluwein and the draw of the Christmas raffle for two luxury hampers.

Amanda Mackintosh

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

January 2021 saw a return to worship via Zoom due to the Covid 19 restrictions. During the first lockdown Sarah identified that not all of our worshippers had been able to access Zoom and so she added a Wednesday communion via telephone conference call to widen participation in worship. Sarah also organised a virtual Pancake Party via Zoom for Shrove Tuesday, which was enthusiastically received. During Lent, our Lent course was conducted via Zoom using the Lee Abbey materials. Mothering Sunday worship was also via Zoom but we were very grateful that posies of flowers were delivered, in a socially distanced way, to households in the village.

We were very happy to return to Church for worship on 21st March in time for the major Easter events including Palm Sunday. Our outdoor Easter Garden provided a focus for a very well attended children's activity, and Easter Saturday also saw a very successful outdoor service at Milborne Wick. Easter services were well attended and, after Easter, daily Morning Prayer restarted.

During March we became aware that Sarah had secured a new role in Lyme Regis so we began to prepare for her departure in September. A farewell service was held for Sarah in August followed by lunch in the garden of Church House.

Since Sarah's departure we have been incredibly fortunate to have had the support of our retired clergy, Brian McConnell, Diane Barrett and Frank Wright, as well as Becky Ayers-Harris, Chaplain to Godolphin School in Salisbury, who lives in the village. They have led our services brilliantly and as a result the numbers in our congregation have been maintained.

Our Harvest Service and Open Day in the early autumn were very successful and really captured the spirit of our church. As always our Remembrance Service was well attended and appreciated by the village community.

Over Christmas we were able to provide our special “Blue Saturday” service for those who have been recently bereaved as well as the usual Christmas events. The Crib Service was especially popular this year being attended by over 30 children and 50 adults.

We are so grateful that through real teamwork we have been able to maintain a lively Christian presence in our village through the pandemic and during our vacancy.

Nicki Edwards