

Benefice Report for the year 2019



Team Rector: Revd Dawn Davidson
Team Vicar: Revd Austin Uzoigwe

Churchwardens:

St Mary, Newton Flotman
St Mary, Saxlingham Nethergate
All Saints and St Mary, Shotesham

St Peter, Swainsthorpe

St Mary, Tasburgh
St Mary, Tharston
Tas Valley Cell Church

Kirsten Remer
Cindy Brookes
Jane Blease
John Torbitt
Susan Peters Corbett
Chris Duffield
Julia Orpin
Sue Hubbard (Acting Chw)
Teresa Stevens
William Ball

Rector's Report

Highlights of the year included:

Austin's licencing as Team Vicar in January

A lively service was attended by friends and representatives from Austin's previous parish, our own Diocese, Deanery and Benefice. As is usual with such services, formal invitations went only to those who are traditionally invited to such occasions (clergy and readers, local dignitaries and Austin's personal guests). All others were welcome to come along, space permitting. It was a delight to see so many joining in this celebration of a new ministry among us. Austin and family quickly adapted to rural life and the Norfolk way of 'doing different'. Austin's respect for God's Word, pastoral approach and godly wisdom equip him to make a significant contribution to the Team Ministry. His wife, Annette is finishing her Reader training and due to be licensed in September 2020. Meanwhile, Annette's ability as an organist has been much appreciated at several services.

Cell Church BBQ in July

Several years had passed without occasion for all the Cell groups to get together socially. This was remedied in July with a bbq in the garden of Saxlingham Rectory. We had a relaxed and enjoyable time chatting over good food with a background of live music. Outdoor games were on hand for the younger members. The Trustees plan to organise more of these 'all Cell' gatherings in the future – they will usually be ideal occasions to invite new friends to.

Lesley Cox licenced in September

After two years of rigorous training, Lesley Cox was licenced as a Reader at a service in Norwich Cathedral in September. This was followed by a shared lunch at Saxlingham Rectory, attended by several friends including Sally and Chris Gaze. Lesley was presented with cards and gifts in recognition of her achievement. Based in Newton Flotman, Lesley is licenced to the Benefice and is much appreciated for all she brings to us of herself and her own unique gifting. With a heart for outreach, Lesley had already been instrumental in setting up and running Newton's Café Church (her involvement with this will continue) and she has entered into this new phase of ministry with energy and enthusiasm.

Parish Share

Our main challenge was that of paying the Parish Share. All PCC's, and Cell Church Trustees are keen to pay in full but, this year it has not been possible. However, we paid a total of 90% of our agreed quota for the Benefice as a whole, encouragingly up on what we paid in 2018. The historic apportionment of the Parish Share leaves the Cell Church disadvantaged because Cell does not receive fees for weddings or funerals. This will need to be addressed at some point, although that inevitably means that the parish churches will have to pay more. Thank you to all for your contributions to our finances.

Going forward

Overall, there is much to celebrate. Our Ministry Team is developing well after our time in vacancy, with Austin and Lesley joining us. David Lancaster continues to offer solid and inspiring ministry. Andy Cox remains a key figure as community outreach worker with a focus on Newton. Our four Authorised Worship Assistants (John Torbitt, Kirsten Remer, William Ball and Philip Simmons) continue to offer important supporting ministry. Churchwardens' meetings have resumed. PCCs and Cell Trustees are a delight to work with. As a Benefice we have a significant pool of gifting and experience to draw upon. The mood is happy and service is willingly given. Most importantly, there is evidence of a deepening love for God and the ministry He has called each and every one of us to share. It is my privilege to serve you and the Lord in the Tas Valley.

With heartfelt thanks to you all and my continued prayers

Dawn

Team Vicar Report

My first year serving as a Team vicar in the Tas Valley Team Ministry has been positive. I am very pleased for the opportunity that I have had to work with Dawn, David, Lesley, the church wardens and all the Assistant Worship leaders. I have learned from their wisdom, experiences and example.

I have enjoyed the diversity of the church services and variety of live and work in the benefice - from being desk bound in sermon preparations, to being involved with JAM, Cell groups, Freedom café, Open the Book and School assemblies. As well I have also enjoyed the occasional services, Baptism Weddings and Funerals. They have enabled me to meet people in difficult and joyful times.

I am also grateful that my family and I have settled in this benefice, and truly blessed by God. Please pray that Annette will finish her Course soon.

As I have entered my second year as Team Vicar in this benefice, I feel humbled and honoured, but always mindful that primary I have been called to serve God and His people which sometimes can be very challenging and that God will equip me for His Service.

Thank you for all your support, love and continued prayers. I really appreciated it.

With my love and prayers,
Austin

Safeguarding Report

Since last year's report there have been no safeguarding issues in the benefice as a whole. This does not mean however that we can all relax and regard safeguarding as something that we do not have to bother about or that it only happens in other places. We must always remain vigilant and respectfully alert to the behaviour of others in whatever capacity they work for the church. Our new Bishop Graham believes safeguarding to be at the heart of our Christian faith and takes his responsibilities in this area very seriously. It is good to know we have the support of our bishop and that he entrusts us as a benefice to keep watch and act if it were ever to be necessary.

Dawn, Austin and Corinne Boyce met in February 2019 to discuss the new safeguarding policy documents published by the House of Bishops. As a result, they personalised the policy documents for the benefice and safeguarding officers in each parish were asked to present them to their PCCs and use them when next reviewing their safeguarding policies.

The three year update for C1 Safeguarding training for the benefice was held on Thursday 21st November 2019 in Swainsthorpe Church. It was a cold and dismal night but the training was well attended by 21 people representing every parish. It was also wonderful to have Dawn and Austin joining us and we are grateful that they came to share the evening and show how important safeguarding is to all of us. Sue Brice and Sian Griffiths led the session and there was plenty of time to ask questions.

Corinne remains the Benefice Safeguarding Officer. She can be contacted on 01508 470263 or 07867 331671 or at cpboyce@btinternet.com

Corinne Boyce

St Mary, Newton Flotman

INTRODUCTION

The year ended with the passing of two of our regular congregation. Jean Wilson was a long term former Churchwarden, PCC member and member of a wide variety of committees and councils. Our monthly parish magazine Partnerships contained lovely tributes to Jean from the WI, Revd Dawn Davidson, Chair of NF Parish Council and Editor of Partnership. William Ball delivered a tribute at her funeral service on behalf of the church and village. Linda Kelf, a longstanding sidesperson and former toddler group leader died suddenly in December. Both are sorely missed.

A major development this year having seen it operation elsewhere in the benefice was the installation of de-stratification fans in church to help with heat dispersal.

Berice Hipperson, our much-respected Treasurer for 17 years, stepped down from her role and we advertised to find someone to replace her. We were fortunate that Pavlina Boralieva stepped into her shoes; she and her husband and their two children attend our Café Church service.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Prayer: Friday morning prayer meeting from 9am each week.

Worship: We continue to offer a varied diet of 'church' in the parish with a Common Worship Order 2 monthly 8 o'clock service, Café church at the school and at least one 11am Communion service as well as Word and Worship led by Lesley Cox or one of our AWA's on the remaining Sundays. We held Praise Services on 2nd Sunday evenings for first half of the year. Lesley led our Remembrance Day service and our Christmas Day celebration service.

Christmas 2019 - We used the Follow the Star theme - stars were made by children at Primary School and hung round the village, in the church and church room. All church notices and advertising used the Follow the star theme. Our Carol Service led by Austin Uziogwe featured a



Christmas Choir led by Kirsten Remer and Evelyn Binns, with Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe parishioners. There was a good sized congregation followed by festive refreshments.

Special Services – We held a service of Rededication of the refurbished War Memorial Memorial on 23rd June, we held Compline during Holy Week and the benefice Remembering Loved Ones service in November. Three weddings were held in the church in the summer.

Sunday Worship Leaders – Austin was installed in January with a remit to minister to our parish and Lesley was licenced as lay reader to the benefice in September. Austin and Dawn were welcomed throughout the year to lead services along with Lesley and AWAs Kirsten and William Ball.

Children and Young People on Sundays - We have created a family space at the back of church with resources for youngsters. It is used fairly frequently and feedback is that it works well for those who use it. Kathryn and Kirsten look after this space and resource it.

Finance – We managed to pay most of our Parish share but we lost a regular hirer of the church room part way through the year. The final evaluation report was sent to the Heritage Lottery and they released the final 10% of funding.

MISSION AND SERVICE

Charity Support – We continued support for Norwich Foodbank; collections started up in church again and contents are taken to Norwich foodbank warehouse every month. Harvest service collection given to Foodbank Norwich. A Shoe box packing party was held at November's Café Church – sending Christmas gifts and/or donating £5 to go to deprived children via Samaritan's purse; Norfolk Churches Trust Annual bike ride 14th September; Children's Society/Christian Aid Week 12 – 18 May 2019. We raised £376.99 for Christian Aid through envelope collections and half of the proceeds of the Cake Crawl held on 17th May around 6 homes.

Church Mice – met twice a month under Linzi Rawson's leadership with some sessions spent at Olive House.

Coffee Stop – every Saturday morning with a range of volunteers helping with baking and manning the hours of 10am to 12 noon. The committed team were ably helped by three Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme volunteers who have continued beyond their allocated time!

Community Lunch – this is held once a month usually in the church room where people can have a roast dinner and pudding for £2.80. This year some of the lunches were held at Olive House.

Social and Mardle - meets twice a month in the church room for a pleasant couple of hours playing games and quizzes with refreshments.

Olive House - Communion service led by Vicky Ball and Andy Cox once a month with between 16 and 20 residents attending.

School Links – members of the church regularly run Open the Book assemblies and end of term services were held in the church.

Crafting for a Cause – meets once a month to make things to help others, have a chat and a warm drink. Things made include knitted or crocheted mats for the homeless made from plastic bags and muffs for the emergency services to give to those in distress after an accident.

Partnership Magazine – published monthly for the communities of Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe and put together by our Editor Caroline Wolfe who works hard on all aspects of the content and presentation. Thanks to both her and the team of helpers that distribute it.

Friends Evening – On Friday 5th July an evening to thank all those people who help with church activities, financial support (including Friends of St Mary's) and delivering Partnership magazine, was held.

Carols on the Green, December 23rd is now an established part of village life, carols and refreshment on Kings Green.

Other Community Services and Events

Outreach Post Office every Tuesday afternoon; this was set up in November 2018 and became established in 2019. Norfolk Day was celebrated by a banner and flags on the green instigated by the PCC and paid for by the Parish Council.

Litter pick around the village with people coming from the church family and village community to do their bit to tidy the roads and lanes around the village. Since then the village has been successful in securing a grant from South Norfolk Council to buy litter picking equipment, pickers, hi viz vests and bags, which means that we are more self sufficient in making litter picks a regular part of village life.

Village Fete Saturday 14th September with the church family baking and manning the refreshments counter and helping sell raffle tickets. The Church and NFaST hosted a display alongside each other.

Readers Day at Norwich Cathedral – Lesley Cox was licensed as a Reader on 21 September after 2 years of training. Many members of the Benefice attended a spectacular service in the Cathedral. Celebrations were held afterwards in the form of a bring and share lunch at Saxlingham Rectory and garden. With grateful thanks to everyone around the Benefice for their help with food, drinks and preparation. Revd Dawn Davidson presented Lesley with flowers and a book token.

Church grounds tidying – A session was held in November to tidy the churchyard led by David Wharton.

Tower Repairs - The final building work was completed in the spring on the tower and two 'youngsters' could not wait to try the new ladders!



Tristan Everett, David Wharton and Mike Wilkinson

Rededication of the War Memorial 23rd June 2019

The War Memorial restoration and addition of Edward Trory's name was completed match funded by the Parish Council and private donations. It was rededicated in a service in church on 23rd June (see photo)

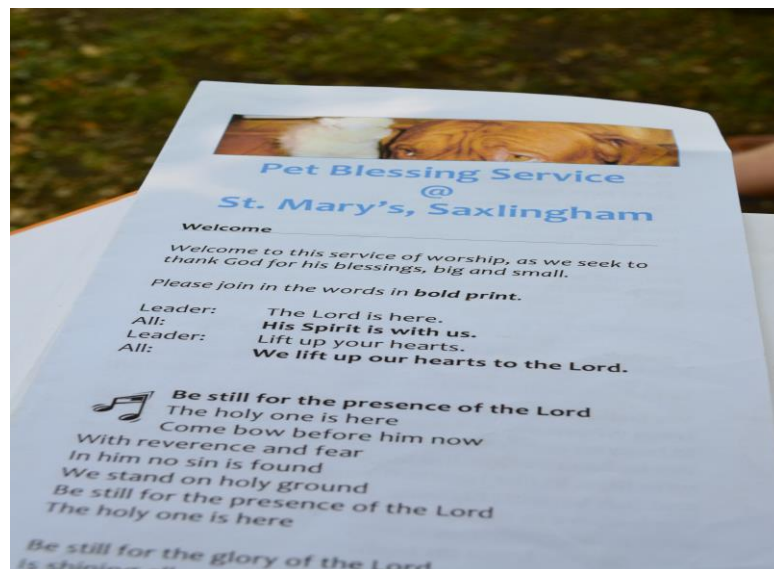


Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Heritage Group (NFaST) set up as part of the Heritage lottery grant funding, met monthly and held a couple of memories events to share memories and photographs of Newton Flotman. Films about aspects of the church were completed and posted on youtube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCifn3XS2bdmFLh0zT8IN98A/videos>. A website has been set up <https://nfasthg.wixsite.com/nfast> and interpretation boards for the churchyard have been designed and produced. They produced a calendar 'Newton Flotman then and now' which sold out, raising money for church funds.

St Mary's, Saxlingham Nethergate

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

We have been able to continue with our usual pattern of services throughout the year. Holy Communion, supported by a small choir, is celebrated at 9.30am on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. There is an 11am Matins on the 2nd Sunday and on each 4th Sunday there is an 8am short Communion and then an 11am service with a band instead of the organ providing the music, mostly following a Contemplative Service pattern. An increasing number of people attend this service and it is much appreciated. Refreshments are served in the church room after each service. Services on the 5th Sunday are often benefice ones although in July there is the annual patronal service, held in the evening with the choir on the site of the ruins of St Mary Magdalene, to the south of the present church. There is also an annual Pet Service, held on the church green, with pets being blessed during the service.



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

The PCC, led by Revd Dawn Davidson, met six times during the year. Cindy Brookes is the Churchwarden, ably supported by the Fabric Officer Geoff Blyth and the Deputy Churchwarden Lynn Roberts. The congregation is in good heart, although slowly reducing in numbers mainly due to advancing ages and we have 30 members on the Electoral Roll. We no longer have any families with young children attending services except for the Harvest Service.

The church is blessed with a constant stream of volunteers - bell ringers, cleaners for the church and church room, flower arrangers, refreshment servers, sidesmen and readers as well as those who make sure the church is open to the public seven days of the week. A Thank You service was held to honour the 40+ volunteers, many of whom are not regular church attendees.

Licensed Ministers: Weekly services have been maintained during the year led mostly by Revd Davidson, with support from the Team Vicar Revd Austin Uzoigwe and Lay-Reader David Lancaster. The village and church has continued to benefit from Revd Davidson and her family living in the parish.

MISSION AND SERVICE

The Monday Mardles are weekly and have continued very successfully. These gatherings in the church room allow a diverse group of people able to get together socially, with a range of activities including occasional lunches, whist drives, outings to local garden centres for coffee or lunch, and transport is arranged for anyone requiring it.

Extra Pastoral Care work continues and includes the primary school with regular assemblies led by Revd Davidson and a team of volunteers who go into the school with 'Open the Book'. The school also holds its own special services as well as a monthly assembly in the church. The Remembrance Sunday Service with the local Scout and Guide Group is very successful, with over 100 children present. A Communion Service has been regularly provided by Revd Davidson at the Saxlingham Nursing Home.

Social events, encompassing fund raising, have been successful including the annual quiz and the rainy summer fete. For the first time the Harvest celebrations included special children's activities taking place during part of the service and then the children explaining to the congregation what they had been doing. This ensured that the families came to the Lunch following the service. A fantastic new venture, a Winter Fair, was held in November and was enjoyed by all. The church is pleased to be involved with collecting items to be taken to the Norwich Food Bank and supporting the Shoe Box appeal.

Instead of carol singing around the village, the past couple of years has involved gathering around the War Memorial to sing and then share refreshments at a nearby home. This year the donations from this and two services were given to the NOOK, a new building for the East Anglian Children's Hospice in Framingham Pigot.



Bells, Church and Churchyard: A lot of hard work ensures that the appearance of the churchyard, the church and the car park are well maintained. There are on-going problems with the deteriorating state of the neighbouring barns on the boundary of the church room and the access to the car park and the Fabric Officer has been very active trying to resolve these issues. The support we receive from the parishioners at the church fete reflects the high regard for the church held by so many living in the village.

Contact (The Parish Magazine) is initially funded by the Church. The Trade Directory on the back of it ultimately covers the cost and, together with individuals' and Parish Council sponsorship, raises funds for the Church. Contact is the only method of reaching every single household in Saxlingham and it is produced and distributed monthly by a small team in the village.

St Mary's and All Saints, Shotesham

Members of the PCC who served are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representative Rules.

In the Chair	Revd. Dawn Davidson, Team Rector
Wardens	John Torbitt, Jane Blease
Treasurer	Robert Harris
Vice Chairman	Jane Blease
Secretary	Patricia Leighton
Other Elected Members	Betty Torbitt, Marcelle Pyne, John and Maureen Blakey, Jasper Copping, Sandra Coles, Joan Oldman, Christine Howes

All business was conducted by the PCC at their regular or extraordinary meetings.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

This year we were pleased to welcome Revd Austin Uzoigwe as Team Vicar. In addition Lesley Cox was licensed as Reader. Across the Benefice this has been of great help in supporting worship patterns.

Shotesham has maintained where possible its usual pattern as follows:

1st Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion, 2nd Sunday 9.30 "My Church" at St Mary's.

3rd Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion, 4th Sunday 9.30 Morning Worship at All Saints.

“My Church” led by John Torbitt, which is a less formal service, has become a well established feature and Food Bank offerings continue to be offered and blessed at this service.

We have been pleased to welcome new friends from Tasburgh and Saxlingham who have joined us from time to time.

Our regular “Thank You” for all helpers at the churches was once again held in September combined with our Harvest Festival service as this had proved to be a successful combination last year. The service was followed by wine and nibbles.

Remembrance Day was commemorated with the help of the Parish Council who organised the laying of wreaths at the war memorial. This was followed by a well attended Service in church during which poems were read by members of the Parish Council and the church congregation.

The festival services were well attended; the carol service at St Mary’s featuring a Shotesham choir saw the church filled to capacity.

The Christmas Eve community carol singing round the tree outside All Saints continued inside with mulled wine and mince pies for all. Once again this was hosted by the Village Association with help from PCC and had All Saints packed to capacity.

Tenebrae at St Mary’s and Easter Day at All Saints were very well attended services.

The hymnal machine has been used in both churches during the year for all regular services. Geoff Blyth has played for us on special occasions. We are grateful to John, Joan and Sandra for sterling work on the Hymnal and to Geoff for stepping in when requested.

A special service to celebrate the rededication of our bells at All Saints and the dedication of the new bell was held on 30th June. A large congregation of project volunteers, were present together with the family of the young boy in whose memory the new bell was cast all joined our regular congregation. This wonderful service was once again followed by refreshments.

We enjoyed a benefice service on Sunday 10th February at Saxlingham with the Archdeacon.

Several of us met the new Bishop Graham of Norwich at Hempnall on 28th November.

Our Church Family

The PCC continued as a harmonious unit through 2019 working well together to reach unanimous resolutions under the very capable and valued chairmanship of Dawn.

Our thanks go to the many members of the community who keep our churches in good order by cleaning, flower arranging and opening both churches daily and delivering Contact. Our thanks go to Pat and Bob Harris for preparing and arrange the delivery of Contact to every house in the village.

Both churches offer coffee after the services making the most of the kitchen and toilet facilities.

The Archdeacon made his occasional Visitations to our churches this year on Monday 4th February and subsequently gave favourable reports. We took the opportunity of discussing with him the proposed additions to the heating at St Mary’s.

The Maisie Benson room at All Saints continues to be an asset used by the village for various functions and for PCC meetings.

An event for children was again run by the Village Association on Easter Monday.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust organized a second conservation event on The Common on 14th July and All Saints volunteers served tea from The Maisie Benson room.

We are grateful to the Conservation group who continue to be involved in helping with the maintenance of St Mary's churchyard.

The All Saints Bell Project was our major event this year, involving church and village in a huge combined effort. Our thanks go to Bob Harris for leading and organizing this major undertaking. Bob organized an Open week-end in All Saints when the bells were displayed along the nave after their removal from the tower. It was a fascinating opportunity to get close to these venerable giants.

Fabric Report

The All Saints church project to add a sixth bell and carry out maintenance work on the frame and inside of the tower was completed. The work included taking all the bells and frame out together with quantities of debris through the louvre window and down the scaffolding the louvre was only just large enough through which to pass the largest 10cwt bell.



Months later the frame parts, and the heavy new beams, the five old bells, and the new one together with large quantities of mortar and concrete (for securing the new beams in the wall) all had to be hoisted through that same small louvre window.

The project also allowed for the introduction of material for sound control around the louvres. This has softened the sound and can also be adapted for quietening the bells during ringing instruction for learners.

There was a significant saving in cost because 19 enthusiastic volunteers from the community and friends of villagers helping with this historic work. We are so grateful to them. The participation of the parishioners in donations, fund raising and volunteer assistance made the work very much a community project.

The bell foundry work was carried out by John Taylor and Co. The new bell was dedicated and the existing bells rededicated on 30th June 2019 by the Reverend Dawn Davidson.

We now have six bells in good order for at least the next 100 years available for villagers to ring or enjoy hearing, on Sunday mornings, at weddings and on our Monday evening practice.

In April a second air-source heat-pump and two de-stratification fans were installed at St Mary's Church. This installation has considerably improved the heating in that church and reduced running costs.

MISSION AND SERVICE

Charities donations totalled £926.19 and were as follows:

Donation of 50% Remembrance collection to Help for Heroes £88

Donation of 50% Remembrance collection to British Legion £88

Donation to Norfolk Churches Preservation Trust £30

Christmas collection (Carol Service £360.08, Christmas Day £123.67) to Education endowment fund £606.69

Throughout the year we continued to collect in both churches for the Norwich Foodbank. People are able to leave contributions at any time whilst the churches are open at one of the boxes stationed in each church. The congregation is encouraged to contribute to the Foodbank as a part of the My Church Service.

All Saints and St Mary's participated in the Norfolk Churches Trust Annual Cycle Ride and walk.

Jill Masters once again exceeded the previous year's total of shoe boxes. Donations for the boxes can be left in All Saints during the year for her team to pack at their regular meetings. Well in excess of 300 boxes were sent with the help of individuals in the parish and Jill's team.

Both churches are open every day of the year thanks to the continued help of approximately 30 local residents prepared to take turns on the two rotas. The Visitors' books have comments left by overseas visitors as well as more local ones, all pleased to find the churches open, clean and in good order.

St Peter's Church, Swainsthorpe

It was a happy start to the year, when the church re opened after seven months of redecoration. The inside of the Church has been transformed, new plastering has replaced areas of the wall damaged by damp and the overall effect of a clean and freshly painted church is wonderful. It is fair to say that there have been drying out issues with the lime wash, it's been a damp year which has not assisted the drying out process, but the redecoration has been a great success. The PCC would like to thank David Chapman for overseeing the project and also Andy Haggith who has supported him in getting the church straightened out again!

MISSION AND SERVICE

Numbers remain constant, but sadly have not grown; however the special services throughout the year were well attended.

It was uplifting to get back to a regular pattern of services in January when the redecoration was finished. The rhythm of services remains the same with every third Sunday being a service of Holy Communion and the other 3 services following the Swainsthorpe special pattern. It has been most welcome to have Austin Uzoigwe leading some services and Lesley Cox now officiates as a Reader. We are lucky in Swainsthorpe to see all of the benefice clergy from time to time including the AWAs, as this means we receive a wide variety of spiritual guidance and very interesting sermons.

This year's Remembrance service saw the beautiful gift of a stained glass "poppy" memorial, created and donated by Roger Pugh, fully installed in the church tower. Andy Haggith has worked very hard to make the installation effective with subtle back lighting that displays the glass memorial to its best advantage.



Swainsthorpe had a wonderful turn out of the Christmas carol service and the Benefice Choir (plus helpers) swelled the happy voices of those attending this seasonal service.

St Peter's Church still has a close sense of fellowship shown by those attending services regularly.

Safeguarding

St Peter's continues to implement safeguarding policies which have been updated and simplified. Corrine Boyce continues to provide the PCC with clear and supportive leadership on safeguarding matters, including ensuring that PCC members are up to date with training requirements and are of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Festivals

We were able to hold the Easter Coffee Morning as normal, and Andy and Jill have hosted several Dew Drop Inn events, which really draw the local community together, successfully. There is always delicious coffee and home baked goods, a book swap and plenty of lively conversation. The money raised at the Dew Drop Inn Events is contributing to the St Peter's Bells appeal. The PCC would like to thank Andy and Jill Haggith for arranging, publicising and running these popular events throughout the year.

The Cake Stroll in June was also well supported and involved lots of cake! It raised £135.40, luckily although it did rain, the sun shone for most of the afternoon.

The Harvest Festival supper in September is the PCC and clergy's opportunity to say thank you to all those in the community who help maintain the churchyard, and contribute regularly to the upkeep of the church. The donations of food were given to the Norwich food bank, who sent a certificate of thanks.

The Advent Coffee morning was well attended, and proved a good start to the Christmas season.

The Churchyard

The churchyard continues to provide a place of peace and reflection, to those visiting graves or the garden of remembrance. The PCC would like to thank those who continue to give their time to make the churchyard look so inviting. Next year the Parish Council will take over the regular

cutting of the grass and hedge (once we have got it down to a reasonable height), and this will allow the team of helpers to focus on other projects in the grounds.

The new church sign/notice board, bought with a grant from the Norwich diocese "Good News Fund" has been delivered and will be installed this spring. The new notice board will give clear information about the Swainsthorpe Clergy and provide room for information about the services and festival/events.

St Mary's, Tasburgh

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

We continue to keep our Church open daily for quiet prayer and meditation. People from near and far have signed the Visitors book confirming how much they enjoy having easy access to the building. Members of the congregation lead intercessions and read lessons at our weekly services.



Our Sunday services followed a regular pattern. On the first Sunday of the month there is Morning Prayer and Freedom Café (which is usually held at the school), Family Communion on the 2nd Sunday, All Age Service on the 3rd Sunday and Holy Communion on the 4th Sunday - this pattern is designed to appeal to as many people as possible. We would also like to give a big thank you to the choir under the direction of Sarah Norman for their continued contribution to our services.

We have had some special services in 2019 - Christmas was a very busy time with the traditional 'Carols and Lessons' Service, followed by a Crib Service and Midnight Communion, which met with a good response and were well attended.

Remembrance Sunday was very well attended. It was great to have the Cubs and Scouts join us on this occasion. Good Friday and Easter Sunday were marked by special services with regular Compline services during Lent led by Philip Simmons. The beginning of Lent was marked by a Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday which was a great success.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our well established informal cafe style church Freedom Cafe has been well attended giving people the opportunity to explore their faith as well as enjoy the bacon rolls and excellent coffee!



PCC & Church Wardens - Our PCC continues to work together well as a team now led by Revd Austin Uzoigwe. The Church Warden very much appreciates the help and support she receives from everybody, without this help we would never achieve our goals.

Church Buildings - Our church building is a peaceful and beautiful place to worship in and is much appreciated by many people. Our Visitors book shows that people come to visit the open church from places as far away as Australia. There is always work to be planned or carried out. Our Fabric Officer, Mr Willie Crawshay, organizes these projects and more. A lot of work needs to be done to maintain the ancient yew trees and keep other species under control.

Finance – We were able to meet our parish share in full, as well as pay for the essential repairs that were necessary. We are very grateful to St Mary's Guild for the very generous donation given to the church, due to their fundraising activities. This continues to be a testing time with our Parish share increasing again for the coming financial year. We would like to thank Graham Pates for his continued hard work as treasurer and for producing the finance reports that keep us up to date with the situation.

MISSION AND SERVICE

'Coffee Pot' continues to meet each Wednesday afternoon in the church room, a popular place to drop in for tea, cake and a chat. Every 3rd Saturday we open our 'Tea Room' to the whole village and this has proved to be a popular venue. The Art Club and the Craft Group meet regularly in the Church Room and are open to all.

Social Events – This year we held our Annual Church Fete in September. It was a late Summer day and many people turned out to support us. Other events included the annual Church Bike Ride, the Harvest Lunch at the village hall in October which was very well attended and a wonderful meal was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Viv and Ian for their hard work in making it a very successful occasion and to the great cooks who made it all possible. Many people from the village came along and made this an event where all are welcome to join us from the wider community.

Links with Preston Primary School continue - the "Open the Book" team visits weekly in term time taking a dramatic version of bible stories into school, in which the children are enthusiastic participants. The foundation governors are Sarah Norman and Claire Crawshay who attend meetings and are regularly in school at assemblies and other events.

Giving - Special Collections from services have been given to the Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army, the Children's Society and the local Food Bank, which was boosted by asking people to bring an extra item to the Harvest Lunch.

We would like to thank the Ladies of St Mary's Guild for their tremendous effort in fundraising through coffee mornings and other events which has enabled the church to undertake essential work to the building.

The arrival of the Revd Austin Uzoigwe and his family in late December and his installation in January by the Bishop of Thetford was very well attended. Many people came along to welcome the family into the community.

Thanks also to all those who do the cleaning, arrange the flowers, make the coffee, open and close the church and act as sides people. This silent majority ensure our church runs efficiently and I wish to extend my thanks to them all.

St Mary's, Tharston

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

In January we were delighted to welcome Reverend Austin as the member of the clerical team with responsibility for Tharston and we are happy to report that we are now enjoying a return to the previous pattern of two Services per month, an 11am Matins and an 11am Holy Communion. Whilst our congregation remains small, it has grown a little and it is hoped that 2020 will see a further increase in attendance.

Festival Services are very well attended. The Church was full for a celebration evening Harvest Service in September this year followed by wine and canapes.





In December, a thoroughly enjoyable candlelit Carol Service included nine lessons and carols with eight village children volunteering to join Mrs Ann Thwaite to read the lessons.

Mulled wine, sausage rolls and mine pies afterwards made for a very festive evening.

On both occasions the church was beautifully decorated and our grateful thanks go to those parishioners whose time and creative effort yielded such impressive results.

The Church Registers record 2 Weddings, three Baptisms and five Funerals during the year.

CHURCH FAMILY

Thank you again to our small but dedicated PCC. Reverend Austin and his family are a joyful presence at our services and we remain very appreciative of David Lancaster's offices when Reverend Austin is unable to be with us. We are also very fortunate to be blessed with the musical talents of Ros Lancaster and Annette Uzoigwe, who play the organ for us at our services.

Although our core helpers remain the 'faithful few' we continue to enjoy the help of many people in the village on such occasions as the fete and other village activities. We continue to be very grateful to The Friends of Tharston Church who make such generous contributions to our finances, enabling us to pay our parish share in full and keep minor repairs up to date.

FABRIC: The Church remains, in general, in good repair, although the poor state of the Nave wooden floor continues to be a cause for concern and will need to be addressed very soon.

The proposed re-ordering of the interior of the Church is still under consideration and it is very much hoped that the Church will be suitable for use as a Community facility at some time in the future.

Michael Duffield continues to keep the churchyard in immaculate order with the help of Neville Waite, Sally Sayer and Tony Jones and we are very grateful to all of them for another year of dedicated attention and hard work.

MISSION AND SERVICE

The annual Church Fete continues to be the main fundraising event and was again held this year at Wheeler Barn, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Massey. The event was a great success with the sum of nearly £1800 being raised.



This year, in November, the church also held an Autumn Book Fayre which was very well attended and raised a further £400.

Paint a plate was very popular!

As ever, we are hugely indebted to the few dedicated souls who help with the organisation of these events and to all those who contribute homemade cakes and preserves.

We continue to keep the Church open on a daily basis thanks to a rota of dedicated volunteers. This enables us to continue to support the Norwich food bank. A bookstall remains at the rear of the Church offering a wide variety of books to borrow, or purchase for a small (voluntary) donation.

We aim to continue working towards the revitalising of our church community in 2020 with our young people taking turns to attend regular Sunday Services to read the lesson and, with their families, to become part of our congregation.

Cell Reports for 2019

Rural Evangelism Project – Andy Cox

Community outreach has continued with the usual regular monthly commitments: community lunch, Church Mice (including visits to Olive House) and Olive House services. As well as this I have continued to take Olive House residents on seasonal outings, driving their minibus, and to take individuals on walks around the village using the funded wheelchair. I have continued pastoral visits within the home, supporting residents and their families.

Within the wider community I have taken referrals from South Norfolk Help Hub, who put me in touch with village residents who needed support with befriending and practical tasks such as gardening, shopping and lifts to hospital, in which I have been able to involve others from the church family. I have provided lifts for a variety of purposes and have coordinated other help when I have been unable to do it myself. I continue to work hard to build relationships through school families and village events .

Tasburgh Wednesday Cell – Julie King

We are a small and committed group who meet weekly to worship, spend time with God and to support one another. In the last year we have followed small-group programmes which have supported our Christian journeys and enabled us to collectively grow in our faith.

Newton Flotman Wednesday Cell - Lesley Cox

The Cell has continued as a small group of six. We began 2019 by using the Bible Society video resources for The Bible Course. This is an excellent programme which gives a great overview of both old and new testaments and is well-presented in ten short programmes, with space for study weeks in between. We have the resources for this if groups wish to borrow them in the future once we start meeting again.

Since last April, we have studied the book of Romans, using NT Wright's study guide as a springboard. We have also looked at the Psalms, and practised the Lectio Divina method of reflecting on scripture, which we have more recently been applying to passages from the gospels. Whilst the Coxes were in New Zealand last autumn, Clair ably led the group through a short Mission Strategy course produced by the Diocese of Norwich: Reimagining Church. This looks at the themes of how we can Celebrate, Listen, Imagine and Empower to grow our discipleship and our churches.

As far as outreach is concerned, most of us support and facilitate monthly Café Church, a seeker friendly service and social gathering held monthly in Newton Flotman School. Planning, craft, publicity, school noticeboard display, music and the all-important task of inviting and bringing people are the ways in which we play our different parts (aided by others outside the cell such as David, Pauline and Caroline who provide refreshments). Through this, we create a space where families, including regular newcomers, come to hear about Christian faith, make friends and get creative with their families.

Freedom Cell – Rev'd Austin Uzoigwe

Freedom Cell has grown out of the St Mary's Freedom Café Church Service. Its purpose is for those attending the Freedom Service to dig deeper into our Christian faith and for fellowship.

We have traditionally followed our church themes for our studies, last year was new testament heroes starting with Mary and ending with our ultimate hero Jesus. The plan for 2020 is all creatures great and small from the bible, and how we can learn from them.

Our numbers have grown again in 2019 and we still meet on a Tuesday evening. We passionately believe that good relationships are a vital part of a healthy cell to that end we now meet half an hour earlier, so we have time to chat and catch up with each other. We still regularly eat together and have had our now annual Karaoke BBQ night that again ended late with the neighbours enjoying (or maybe not!) our renditions.

We have seen answers to our prayers, and this greatly encourages us Christians both new and old, what a testimony for those searching when God shows up and shows off!

JAM Report – Rev'd Austin Uzoigwe

JAM continue to meet at the New Rectory in Tasburgh on Monday evening. Last year, the group had significant changes, with Emma and Claire leaving the leadership team. Whilst the Older group (14-18 years) decided to quit the group because they wanted to focus more on their school studies. Despite these changes the younger group (11-13 years) have progressed well with new children from year 6 (9-10 years) joining the group – around 9 attended weekly session.

The group's overall faith and commitment to Christ continues to grow. We are hoping this trend will continue so that they may be able to share their faith and supporting one another. Further, Asher who has been leading the older group session has now joined Austin in leading the group.

Having followed Lesley Cox's plan until finished, Austin switched to using the Living Stones Bible study material, this involved using lively video presentations and games to illustrate the topic for the group discussions.

In the Summer, the group held several social activities such as, bowling, lots of games at the Rectory garden, eating together and high attitude trampoline at Norwich. Some have been more successful than others in attracting guests.

In October, JAM received a grant of £200 from Norfolk South Norfolk Council and Tasburgh Parish Council. This grant will be used to buy new Table tennis equipment and to run table tennis activities for the group and wider community. As an outreach we are hoping the Ping table would not only provide fitness and smile on people faces, but perhaps, may help to bring new people to join the JAM or Church.

JAM is seeking for volunteers to join our leadership team. If you are interested, please contact Austin 01508 470901 or Asher 07740 947482

Saxlingham Wednesday Cell – Rev'd Dawn Davidson

We hosted an Alpha course again for 2019, launching it in February and fitting around other priorities (such as Easter, Cell AGM etc) when they occurred. The course was attended and appreciated by a small number from Shotesham parish church who hadn't previously done Alpha. Towards the end of the course we gained a new member to the Cell, a friend invited along by one of our regulars, bringing our total number to 14.

We invite questions, encourage discussion and talk about our experiences of living out our faith. How to share the love of God with friends, neighbours and beyond is an ongoing challenge. A short evening prayer liturgy in the Celtic, or similar style, is often used. We have been known to squabble occasionally over the delicious homemade biscuits supplied by one of the group!

We also completed a 6-week study on Ephesians, watched the Louie Giglio dvd 'Indescribable' which took us on 'an image-rich journey through the cosmos, allowing us to peer into God's universe to discover the amazing magnitude of His greatness and grace' and, closer to home, we travelled to Brooke to attend the Deanery 'Delving Deeper' evening of workshops on prayer.

Social events included attending the Cell BBQ during the summer and Saxlingham Players 'Christmas' production at the beginning of December.

Tharston Thursday Cell – William Ball

Our Cell continues to thrive and, we are pleased to report, grow. We began the year with 6 regular members and ended it with 11! All this growth is put down to prayer as we found ourselves in the position that it was not always possible to meet every week when things like holidays, family and work commitments overlapped.

We decided to open our Cell for a Social Evening in March; each of us giving personal invitations to anyone we thought might like to know more about who we are and what we do. We definitely feel it was the right thing to do, having gained 2 new members as a direct result and another 3 later in the year.

The men in our group decided to hold a Curry Night during Lent to raise money for the Bishop's 2019 Lent Appeal. The idea came from the Lent study material we had been following and resulted in 16 chaps enjoying dinner at The Duke of Delhi.

Our social activities also included a trip to the theatre in September to see The Screwtape Letters and a Christmas Meal at The Old Ram in Tivetshall in December.

As a Cell, we are All Involved and have lively and interesting discussions led by different members each time. We are grateful to Wendy, our hostess, for giving us such a warm welcome at her home each week.

Tas Valley Benefice Accounts
Income And Expenditure Account for year ended 31st December 2019

Incoming Resources			Expended Resources		
Budget Ctrb		%			
Tasburgh	£1,224.00	20.6	Rev Davidson expenses	£1,907.75	
Shotesham	£940.00	15.8	David Lancaster expenses	£220.00	
Tharston	£605.00	10.0	Rev Uzoigwe expenses	£1,336.28	
Saxlingham	£1,220.00	20.6			
Newton Flotman	£1,664.84	28.0	Returned Ctrb	£9,328.26	
Swainsthorpe	£282.50	4.8			
Cell Church		0.0			
		100%			
			NCRC	£453.16	
			Child Protection	£168.00	
			Expense Austin's service	£140.45	
Bibles	£250.89		Bibles	£395.58	
Training a/c	£ -		Training a/c	£ -	
From Sally's service			Expenses		
			Tasburgh Printing	£260.00	
			(Error paid back 2020)		
Misc	£ -		Misc	£ -	
Holiday Club	£ -		Holiday Club (Expense)	£ -	
Interest	£2.28				
Sub Total	£6,189.51			£14,209.48	
			Deficit	- £8,019.97	
<u>Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2019</u>					
ASSETS					
Current Account	£3,993.18				
High Interest Account	£2,043.17				
	-----		Playscheme	£316.94	
Total	£6,036.35		Training a/c	£1,187.07	
REPRESENTED BY					
Balance as at 1st Jan 2019	£14,056.32		Balance Split by Parish		
			Tasburgh	£934.51	20.6
Deficit Of Expense Over	-£8,019.97		Shotesham	£717.68	15.8
Income for Year			Tharston	£461.91	10.2
			Saxlingham	£931.45	20.6
			Newton Flotman	£1,271.09	28
			Swainsthorpe	£215.69	4.8
			Cell Church	£0.00	0

Balance at 31 Dec 2019	£6,036.35		Total	£6,036.35	