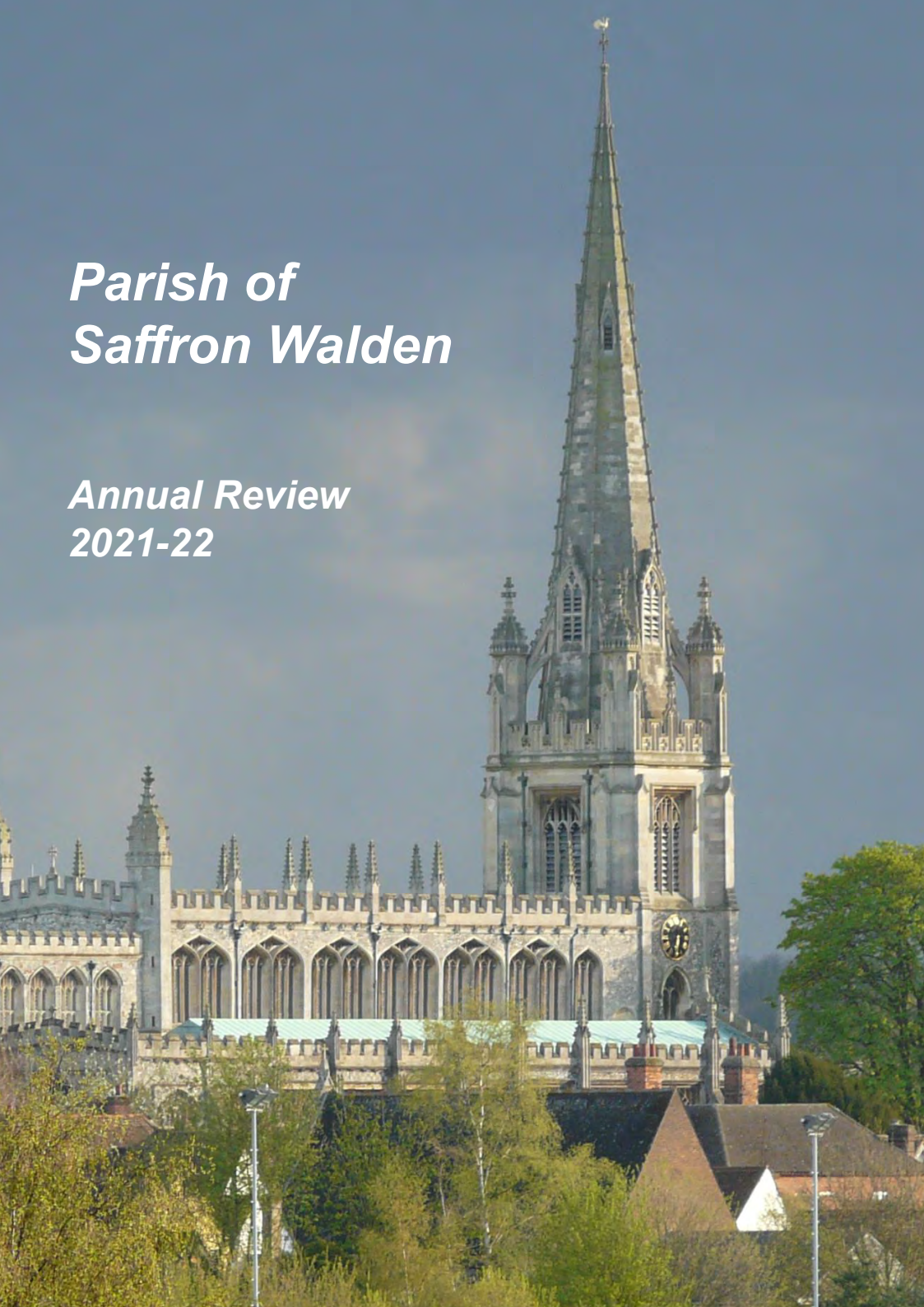


Parish of Saffron Walden

*Annual Review
2021-22*



Parish of Saffron Walden Annual Review 2021-22

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Parish of Saffron Walden Annual Review 2021-22

This review has been compiled for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to reflect the passion, enthusiasm and dedication within the three churches and in the various groups and committees and so provide a flavour of activities throughout the Parish.

The Covid 19 pandemic has continued to have a significant impact across our community with sometimes rapid changes in plans in response to the latest situation. I'd like to thank everyone for humouring my requests for an update and say how much I enjoy reading all the responses.

Lisa Brook PCC Secretary

St James' Church, Swards End

Due to Covid, 2021 was again hardly "business as usual" but notwithstanding this we soldiered on regardless - well, regardless other than social distancing, no post Service coffee for much of the year, compulsory masks and an element of fear all round!!

The congregation levels remain pretty constant – perhaps a little down overall which we hope is mostly due to Covid and St James seems to be in a healthy condition but as with most churches, the congregation is not getting any younger and it would be nice to see some further potential replenishment taking place. Services are slowly returning to normal, and we are now having coffee and biscuits after each service.

During the year there was one wedding and the funeral of church member, Malcolm Rumsey. There were no christenings.

Both the church and the hall have been redecorated and gutter clearance carried out. We are grateful to those who look after the maintenance of the church and garden. The Parish Council have returned to having live meetings in the church hall on the first Tuesday of each month. This link with St James is a good thing as well as the income it generates.

We have been given a small period table by Damian and Victoria Gobey to use for the Registration of weddings which saves us from bringing one in from outside.

From the Deputy Wardens' perspective the Committee has been very supportive of the two of us as indeed has the whole congregation. All of us have been very well served by Chris Bishop to whom we are very grateful. The continuity Chris provides – as well as his excellence – are so important.

Our outreach activities post Covid – if indeed that is the case – include the Youth Club operating again and the Coffee Mornings being reinstated and we are very grateful to those who give their time to such good ventures. The annual carol singing, which was held outside the village hall this year, was a great success with it raising a fair amount of money for charity. This static format is likely to become the norm in future.

We remain in a sound financial position and the church and hall fabric are generally sound. Looking forward we do not anticipate any major fabric issues but at some point the roof – which has a small intermittent leak - will require attention so we do need to maintain a healthy fabric fund.

Gilly Bamber has stepped down as Treasurer and we thank her for the work she has done in this connection for several years. Judith Hasler has been elected as her replacement and Sue Powell has been elected as Secretary. Our thanks to both for standing.

In summary a good year in the circumstances so thanks to all.

Mike Dean and Lynne Ketteridge - Deputy Wardens

St John's Church, Little Walden

During the last year Covid has continued to have a major impact on services, but we were delighted to have been able to get back to regularly meeting in the church and to finally be able to sing our praises once more. Highlights included being able to hold a remembrance service and a carol service at Christmas – where we gathered outside of the church with hot drinks in hand to safely join in some festive carol singing. We did have some difficult times in the village and Covid has left its mark claiming the life of at least one long term resident. The village has a strong community both within and outside of the church and this has been a great comfort for those who have struggled. We look forward to a more normal year ahead of us, God willing, but would like to give our heartfelt thanks to Michael Lovegrove who continues to lead us for

communion services and provide us with all manner of support and encouragement for which we are hugely grateful.

Tracey Nicholls

Service Planning Group

The Service Planning Group (SPG) was established in September 2020 to coordinate the return to in-church worship after the extended closure during the Covid 19 lockdown. By the end of 2020, we had established a hybrid pattern of in-church and online services requiring a significant amount of planning of liturgy, music and practical logistics which the group was managing effectively. In January and February 2021, services reverted to online only as Covid cases peaked again but now we were able to livestream services directly from St Mary's using our new cameras and sound system. The SPG met regularly to ensure that high quality services were streamed whilst ensuring that those leading in church were kept safe.

On 3rd March the Bishop of Colchester, Roger Morris, installed and inducted Jeremy Trew as the new Rector and Area Dean of Saffron Walden in a rich online service combining a small number of clergy, musicians and lay representatives in church with pre-recorded welcomes and choir items. The following Sunday we were finally able to welcome congregation members back in church, albeit with restricted numbers. The Rector quickly confirmed that he would appreciate the continuing support of the SPG to assist in developing the pattern of worship once again whilst navigating the varying implications of Covid restrictions. Congregations were still restricted to between 70 and 100 in church so many people were still reliant on the online services; a larger team of technical support was recruited to cover both the zoom verger and in-church audio-visual roles.

On Easter Day, we held two services, at 8am and 10am, for the first time since lockdown: the Covid risk assessments included sanitizing between services as well as managing the increasing congregations. On 18th April, we held a Service of Commemoration in church to for HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. We were thankful that St Mary's could once again play its part in marking a significant national event with a civic service. In June we resumed

regular 8am and 10am services in church albeit with restricted numbers and just a few singers from the choir.

It was a relief and joy to have the restrictions on congregation size and singing lifted from August. During the autumn months of 2021, we were able to build back to a more normal service pattern including both morning and evening services as well as all the special services around Remembrance, Advent and Christmas.

SPG continued to coordinate the logistics of each service to keep the congregation safe whilst providing a rich diet of worship within the resources of our ministry team, both ordained and lay.

Continuing issues include

- guidance on the use of sanitiser and masks
- administration of communion - currently by intincted wafers from a small altar in the nave
- enabling the choir and other musicians to lead worship effectively
- livestreaming of at least one service each Sunday
- planning the reintroduction of processions and other movement during services
- welcoming back larger congregations whilst providing safe areas for those who need additional covid precautions

At the November PCC meeting it was agreed that the longer-term strategic planning and review work of the twice-yearly Worship committee be absorbed into the work of the Services Planning Group. The Worship committee will be discontinued and the SPG, as a task group, will submit matters for decision making to the Rector, the churchwardens or the PCC as appropriate as the need arises.

Judith Hasler

Baptism Team

When baptisms resumed at the beginning of June last year, Jeremy was kept busy with 4 services in that month alone, as well as a 'Thanksgiving for the gift of a child' service for Rachel and Sam's daughter, Magdalene. Whilst baptisms did not continue at that pace, between June and mid-November there were twelve child

baptisms at St. Mary's. Three of these formed part of 10am services with the remaining nine at midday. By and large the family groups have been smaller than before the pandemic, but the 'Tech Team' provided live-streaming especially in June and July (while we still had restrictions) to those families who found it enabled family and friends unable to attend to participate remotely.

The baptism team has yet to resume visiting families in their homes, but during the course of summer 2019 meetings were sometimes held at St Mary's during the day. This had the advantage that many aspects of our services could be explained in situ which was particularly appreciated by parents not familiar with St Mary's.

We are currently experiencing a winter lull, but there are three baptisms planned for March and several families hoping for summer baptisms.

Lesley Lancaster

The Guild of the Holy Trinity

The Guild of Servers at St Mary's has existed for generations but since the start of the Covid epidemic, in January 2020, the Guild has needed to operate in a completely new manner. I have served as a member of the Guild for over 40 years and there has been no period, until now, when the presiding priest has not been assisted by a Sub-Deacon and servers. However, it is worth recording the purpose of the Guild of Servers, the way it has operated in more normal times, and the effects of 'lock-down' on how we serve at the present time.

The Servers fulfil an important role in the liturgy of St Mary's. Traditionally the members of the Guild serve at the services of Holy Communion every Sunday at 08.00am and at 10.00am to support the presiding priest. We, the Servers, are conscious that, in assisting the priest at the Altar, we are also leading the congregation in worship. The Guild draws its members from all areas of the Church family of St Mary's, and St James and St John's – the PCC, welcomers, sidemen and women, bell-ringers, the Baptism group, and others.

The Guild has a small team of Sub-Deacons who serve in turn at the 08.00am (1662) Holy Communion. A bigger group traditionally

provided a Team Leader, two Sub-Deacons and a Crucifer at the 10.00a.m Eucharist. At this service the Sub-Deacons administer two chalices at the main Altar with a third accompanying a second Priest, Deacon or Ordinand to offer the Chalice at the additional station in the South Chapel. On occasion, if there is no second priest, we need to call upon a fourth Sub-Deacon to administer in the South Chapel.

Since 'lock-down' the administration of the Communion elements has needed to change. We are all aware that Communion is given from the bottom of the Chancel steps by the priest and one sub-deacon only, and with a minimum of ritual – no procession, no offertory, and no ablutions at the end. With one only sub-deacon needed to assist the priest, the number of Sundays a member of the Guild is asked to serve has reduced noticeably. However, during this period a number Guild members have retired and I wish to record our sincere thanks for the many years of faithful service given by Hamish Walker, Stewart Hodgson, Lawrence Gooderham, John Mumford and Mark Robarts.

Although we are fortunate to have a good group of servers, we all also have other responsibilities in St Mary's, or in other Churches. To balance these various commitments, members serve only on Sundays when they are free of other church and/or family commitments. However now, because of retirements, we need two or three people to serve at the 08.00 1662 Holy Communion services. If you are interested in assisting in worship by becoming a Server serving at the Altar, please do contact me. We are happy to welcome new members.

We look forward to serving again at the Altar, assisting Rector Jeremy and the clergy team, when a more normal and traditional pattern of services resumes.

Noel Starr

Welcome Teams

The most important role of a Welcomer/Sidesperson is to welcome the congregation, whether they are regulars or newcomers, young or old, families or on their own. That welcome sets the tone for the service that follows.

This has been a really difficult year having to deal with the consequences of the pandemic especially with government legislation changing from week to week but with guidance from the Wardens the teams have quickly adjusted their roles.

Currently there are over forty volunteers on the Welcoming list, some volunteering just for a few of our many special services during the course of the year but 30 of them are part of the regular teams you see, for instance, at the 8am and 10am services every Sunday.

The 10am team consists of 6 people although we are still recruiting for a few, should you feel you would like to join us please let me know. For the special services, the Remembrance Service for instance, this number can be as many as 14-16 when up to 900 people could be in the congregation. Over the Christmas and Easter periods extra volunteering is required for many more services both on the Sundays and other days of the week.

Currently we are re-vamping the Ministry of Welcome leaflet which lists all the tasks for both Team Leaders and Team Members and believe me there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes. Not arduous tasks but all needing to be completed before, during and after the service.

Having taken on the role of co-ordinator during this last year I am even more appreciative of the planning that goes on, many months in advance, and cannot thank all the volunteers enough for giving their time, sometimes at short notice, to be there to give everyone that special welcome to St Mary's and for the support they give to me. Take a look next time you arrive or leave Church you will always see a Welcomer, handing out service sheets, greeting someone, helping someone up the steps, showing someone to a seat, having a sometimes much needed friendly chat. They will always be there.

Pamela Mugliston

Music

It's been a mixed year for us all, though I can safely say that we have grown and learnt from the new reality of a world which has changed so much in just two years. Music is a uniting force for good, a working mantra should be "I will sing of loyalty and of justice; to Thee, O Lord, I will sing." – Ps 101:1.

Music at St Mary's thankfully continues on a strong footing, this is largely down to the sheer hard work and determination of a number of extremely kind, generous and committed people.

Joyful Noise is re-establishing itself and it has been a joy to see the progress which this choir has made in such a short period of time. Lizzie Bennett, leader of Joyful Noise writes "Joyful Noise restarted in October 2021 and has been meeting weekly in term time with a small but enthusiastic group of children. They have worked on songs specific to the season as well as more general pieces, with action songs being particularly popular!" more recently they have produced a short music video in support of Ukraine. Lizzie has done a fantastic job so far and we can't wait to see how things develop over the coming year.

Numbers in the Junior Choir are healthy, and we have developed a plan for further recruitment later in the year. Covid has unfortunately continued to affect music substantially, though a plan is currently also underway for the full integration of the Junior Choir back to the original routine from pre-Covid days. They are a great group to work and always keep us on our toes! My heartfelt thanks go to Alison Lawrence for her help with this group.

The choral scholars and adult choir have amazingly continued to go from strength to strength. The adult choir is running at close to capacity and I am extremely proud of their sheer tenacity for 'sticking at it' through the pandemic. Two years ago, I honestly feared the worst for choral music and there were 'head in hand' times when we simply didn't know how to cope with the latest wave of Covid. The adult choir 'went with it' and have experimented in ways of singing and being together: from starting on Zoom, cut and splice recordings, to socially distancing throughout the nave (this has some logistical problems, I can tell you!!), to rehearsing with the evening bird chorus on the front lawn in the graveyard, to finally being back in church. There is still some way to go with this, though I am more confident than ever that we will all make it back musically in one piece.

Encouraged by the few outdoor practices on summery evenings we decided to hold a Come and Sing Fauré Requiem at the end of the summer term. This was well attended and felt like a real dose of normality at last. Funds raised from this went in their entirety to the church – church funds took a real hit during Covid. A single concert

took place in September, when Martin Huggett and I entertained a goodly number with more of our piano duets. Again, the proceeds were handed over to the church.

Yechan Yun, our organ scholar, started with us in September and has made strong progress so far. It continues to be a pleasure to work with him and I am thrilled that he will stay on for a second year. It is also a delight to note that our previous organ scholar, Elliot Randall, was recently awarded a place to study at the Royal College of Music. It should be remembered that Elliot was a complete novice when he first started, and his progress has been simply meteoric. He is someone to look out for in the future!

Unfortunately, the Brass Group have only met once in the last year and plans are afoot for a slightly rationalised version of this group moving forward. Alas, due to various event cancellations and alterations two of their major outings did not take place. It is hoped that the Brass Group will play for the Easter Day 10am service.

Encouragingly, Family service music group is developing nicely and we now have a core of between 4-12 musicians in addition to the Junior Choir. I hope to be in a position to say more about this over the coming months.

Just over a week ago, we took part in the concert to support the Ukraine crisis. Although responsible for the planning, I managed to catch Covid and was reduced to watching on the YouTube feed! The concert really happened because many people helped to make sure everything came together and happened. Jeremy Allen and Andrew Malcolm willingly shared the lions share, Jim Butler produced posters and programmes, a team came together to set up and put away - it was a shining example of how many people gave time and effort for the cause. The amount of money raised was stupendous. We intend to pass the proceeds of the Good Friday Devotional Offering to the funds to help Ukraine – as Jim said recently, we can't take funds for ourselves when the need is so great at present.

My thanks go to all those who help and support the music at St Mary's; to the members of the SMMA who support and encourage much of what we do, to Margaret Jacobs and Yvonne Butler who tirelessly deal with the mountains of music and last-minute changes, and to Peter for his help with caring for the ailing church organ. I would also like to thank Jeremy Allen – a role which is absolutely

crucial. To quote the Organist Emeritus: Andrew was asked what he thought makes a successful Director of Music – he answered, “the main ingredient is to choose an excellent assistant organist”. Never have truer words been said. Gill Caswell, Denis Tindley, Steve and Judith Hasler and Patrick Li continue to give their full support and it has been a great pleasure to have now spent a full year working with Jeremy Trew.

And now to Bron Ferland. Bron has encouraged, supported, cajoled and motivated all of us and has successfully driven the SMMA for nine very full and active years. Bron has decided to step down from her role as chair on the SMMA and will be hugely missed on the committee. Her energy, dynamism and sheer drive have been the bedrock for much of the activity which takes place at St Mary’s. Whilst this includes music, her activities should not be limited to this. I am pleased to say that she has agreed to stay on in a smaller role of music administrator and hope that she enjoys a well-earned rest from driving the SMMA. Thank you Bron, for everything that you have done!

Oliver King

Saffron Walden Society of Change Ringers

There was no ringing at St Mary’s in early 2021; it had stopped completely in October 2020 when we went into the second Covid lockdown and the bells then remained silent until mid-May 2021. We then restarted ringing, both for services and practice but, as in 2020, we were restricted to only 6 people being allowed in the tower for no longer than 45 minutes.

Despite the restrictions and lockdowns the Society members stayed in touch. In place of our Tuesday practice night we held social evenings on Zoom. We also met on Zoom to use ‘Ringing Room’, a virtual bell ringing tool which proved to be more difficult to ‘ring’ than actual tower bells.

Come mid-July 2021 Covid restrictions were further relaxed and we returned to near normal ringing arrangements for the rest of the year. In addition to Sunday service ringing there was ringing for weddings, the death of the Duke of Edinburgh, various Christmas services and we rang-in the New Year in traditional fashion. Both when ringing on 6 bells, and more recently, we followed a

programme of methods and ringing exercises designed to refresh our ringing skills. We have not quite managed to return to our pre-Covid form both in striking and method ability mainly due to missing some of our more able ringers who have not returned to the tower. We did, however, take part in the Essex NW District Call Change Striking Competition in October and were placed first of 8 teams.



Photo of the winning Striking Competition band

Also since May 2021 members of the band have supported ringing at other churches, particularly Littlebury and Hadstock, and Great Chishill where nearly £100k has been raised to refurbish the bells.

Looking ahead to 2022, ringing activities have returned to normal and on 6 February rung in celebration of HM The Queen's 70th anniversary of her Accession and will be taking part in the national Platinum Jubilee events in June. We have started to train new ringers although we need more to once again ring, what is the finest ring of 12 bells in Essex. We would particularly encourage any members of the Church who would like to see the bell ringing or 'have a go' to come up the tower and see what goes on.

Stephen Wood, Ringing Master

Church Flowers

During the past year limited flowers have been placed in the Church and for Remembrance and Christmas. As yet I have not issued any rotas but hopefully will be able to do after Easter.

A number of wedding flowers were undertaken during the year, ably organised by Jane Knight. These help to keep the team self-supporting of any financial help from the Church. Members when it is their turn donate the cost of flowers. Easter time is the exception when donations are asked for in memory of loved ones. Flower prices have increased considerably over the past year.

We have a wonderful fellowship when we gather “to do the flowers”. Why not give it a go? Help given. Men do not be shy. Finally, a big thank you to the team for their loyalty and friendship. I am now in my 22nd year as co-ordinator.

Pam Russell

Sewing Group

The sewing group has returned to normal so we meet every Monday morning at 9.39 at The Priory, Common Hill. There are usually about nine or ten of us.

We are very happy to work kneelers in memory of anyone or to commemorate a special occasion. The price for a kneeler is £40.

They were all stored away during covid but are now happily back in their allotted places so that any individual one can be located in the Kneeler Register.

If you have any requests, please contact Tessa Hawkes 523888.

Tessa Hawkes

Prayer Team

In what has been a challenging 2 years the Prayer team has managed to adapt to ever changing situations in which we find ourselves. I think in some ways it has made us think out of the usual ways of doing things and trying different ways of enabling prayer for all ages and beyond the boundaries of the church.

In spite of still being in lockdown, albeit with the rules being eased, working with Matt we managed to take part in THY

KINGDOM COME, now for the 5th year running. As always Matt led us and enabled us into wonderful creative prayer spaces, which we managed to steward when the church was opened to visitors. One of the gifts of this was realizing how stewarding offered a welcome to everyone and most especially to those who were either visiting, about to move or had just moved into Saffron Walden. We also had an evening prayer walk during this week around the town, this time with Louise Scutt – Richter leading us. It is impossible to know what effect this has, but businesses are so often left out of our prayers, so it felt important to pray for the work of BID that Louise co-ordinates. The feedback from these 10 days so was encouraging that we then put on Prayer Spaces for the first week of Advent, in which all year groups from St Mary's Primary School participated. This proved hard work but very enriching for the team. The particular joys for me were listening to the insights the children shared as well as seeing them bring their parents in after school, excitedly talking them through the experience.

These Prayer Spaces followed on from our first QUIET MORNING in the Parish Rooms since lockdown, led by Andy Colebrooke, who led us through the carol 'O come O come Emmanuel'. He opened it up, revealing its relevance to us today, with the themes of the reality of our situation and our need for salvation, along with the ABUNDANT LOVE that God has for the whole world. It was a great way to start Advent and to lead us into the Prayer Spaces. Andy's own openness and willingness to share from his vulnerability was a real gift to us all, encouraging us to enter this Advent with truth and vulnerability. As I write this the Team is preparing for Lent Prayer Spaces on the theme of Pausing, Reflecting and Praying, which is also following on from the Wednesday groups looking at Living in Faith and Love.

Other news from the Prayer Team is that some of us are starting up the Prayer Ministry again during the 1st Communion of the month, as well as after the Family Service – both are in the North Chapel. It is early days and as yet no-one has come for prayer, so we are considering other ways of offering it. Alongside this Kathryn Fiddock is faithfully and diligently managing the prayer requests that come in which she sends round to the prayer chain. We are looking at ways that this can too be improved' making sure we keep everyone asking for prayer feeling safe and secure.

What has remained consistent throughout the year has been the Tuesday Evening Prayer, which has mainly met on Zoom except for a few summer months when lockdown was easing up. There are a regular number of participants who come faithfully to pray every Tuesday with a real sense of fellowship growing. We have gone back to Zoom as it was considered a safer way of meeting as well as enabling those who cannot come to church to participate, have fellowship and get a sense of belonging to the church community. The main purpose being that we pray on behalf of those who cannot come as well as lifting up to God concerns of the local town and the world!

Finally, none of this would happen at all without the creativity, commitment and sheer hard work of the Team. We have sadly said goodbye to Alan Curren who has given so freely and generously of himself, and we were very glad to welcome Hilary Walker to the team who joins Joe Hordern, Hazel Colebooke, Mike and Judith Felgate, and myself. You are the best and I give thanks for you!

Sue Walker

Julian Group

This group meets on every second Tuesday of the month for a short reading from Julian of Norwich's 'Enfolded in Love' and half an hour's silent meditation/contemplation followed by discussion. We have re-established ourselves post covid with the only change being that we now meet at 7 pm. Instead of 7.30.

For any information please contact Tessa Hawkes. 523888.

Tessa Hawkes

Coffee, Cake and Company

Coffee, Cake & Company began as a form of support for people affected by issues around mental health. Over the last few years it developed to include a range of people who enjoy the opportunities they find within the sessions.

In normal times we meet monthly, welcoming individuals who are there for diverse reasons, in an atmosphere of Christian love and trust. We haven't resumed Coffee, Cake & Company. There is some thought and discussion going on around what current needs are,

and we are also exploring a Diocesan mental health initiative to see whether it would be appropriate here.

Marisa Baltrock

Prospects

We are fortunate in Saffron Walden to have the Well-being Hub on Audley Road, which provides a day centre supporting adults with learning disabilities. A small but dedicated team from St Mary's have been running a special service for the centre since December 2016. As you can imagine though, these are vulnerable adults, and their safety has meant that face to face services have been impossible to sustain throughout the pandemic. Our Zoom services too were no longer possible when the attendees started going back into the centre but were unable to gather together to watch online. We look forward to being able to resume services soon but in the meantime we hold the staff and attendees at the centre in our prayers.

Tracey Nicholls

Home Groups

I reported last year that the pandemic had impacted adversely on the functioning of home groups, such that of the seven in existence, four made the transition to 'meeting' on Zoom and three suspended their activity. Since then, one group has wound up completely and three are not meeting but looking forward to recommencing when circumstances are more favourable. Of the remaining three, one has continued weekly on Zoom, another is meeting face to face fortnightly, and one has recently re-started meeting in the parish rooms.

Home groups have formed an important part of community of faith within St Mary's, strengthening bonds across diverse perspectives and supporting individual members on their faith journey. It would be great loss in the life of the church if the long tail of Covid were to continue to inhibit some existing groups and stultify initiatives to start new groups. Given that Covid is not going away anytime soon, we need to consider how to develop new home groups within this changed context and ways to assist existing groups on hold.

Meeting in person will be possible where members are not vulnerable and where the numbers in relation to the room in use allows for social distancing. Quite a number of people have reservations about meeting on Zoom, but others have become accustomed to it and feel the gains of meeting this way outweigh the losses of personal contact. We perhaps could do more to help those who have reservations to make this transition. Zoom does have the advantage of not having to leave the house to meet! This mode is particularly useful for those with mobility or vulnerability issues, and for those parents with young children, all of whom may not be able to leave the house for a face-to-face meet.

An invitation on Grapevine to church members to contact me if they would like to join or start a group resulted in a nil response. The development of house groups will require a more concerted and rounded initiative, bearing in mind the points above, and will need someone to lead on this. Unfortunately, this cannot be me as I will be leaving after Easter.

I can also report that Caroline Currer and Andy Colebrooke separately led afternoon evening Advent groups on Zoom with around 16 members attending.

Thank you to those who lead and host these groups.

Alan Currer

Book Group

The coronavirus restrictions affected St Mary's book group in common with many other activities in 2021, and for much of the year we were unable to meet. But by the end of the year we were able to meet again, with social distancing and a log fire, and enjoyed Michelle Obama's memoir *Becoming* (most of us found her account of her earlier life more interesting than life in the White House), *The Woman who saved the Children: a life of Eglantyne Jebb* by local author, Clare Mulley, and Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*.

We hope now to meet again regularly once a month to discuss a variety of books, usually on the last Friday of the month at 8 pm, at 4 Castle Street. So long as caution remains over Covid 19 we feel unable for reasons of space to take on new members, but we hope that this can be relaxed in the coming months.

Helen and Robin O'Neill

Communications Committee

The year under review was, once again, somewhat abnormal. Covid disrupted the pattern of life and the arrangements for communicating with parishioners. However, the committee kept on top of most things.

Dawn Saxon, in the Parish Office, continued to send out details of services and The Grapevine each week. The weekly update and Grapevine sent out by snail mail to older members of the parish were particularly welcomed by recipients who reported how much the mailings helped them feel that they were not being overlooked.

We were pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Church Services Survey organised by Judith Hasler. The results helped the Committee get a better feel of the use being made of the different elements of the information package we produce on behalf of the Church.

Martin Hugall, assisted by Patrick Li, continued to do a magnificent job keeping the various parts of the Church Web Site up-to-date. It is very well used particularly by people wanting advance information about services and to listen to services/sermons retrospectively.

Parish News, under its editor Andy Colebrooke, continues to go from strength to strength. If you are not already a regular reader, we would urge you to become one, and even to contribute articles to it. We are now using it as part of the Church's outreach in the town with copies made available in the Tourist Information Office. We hope that the extra copies placed there from the beginning of this year will be as eagerly picked up as were the smaller numbers placed there last year.

Clifford Want has been a faithful Press Officer and his press releases have ensured that St Mary's is regularly featured in the local press. The Rector's decision that we should place a couple of decent size adverts in a local newspaper, showing details of Christmas-tide services, rather than try to deliver cards by hand to the ever-increasing number of homes in the town, appears to have worked well. Jim Butler's bright adverts drew very positive comments, not least from the newspaper staff who said they were some of the best adverts they had published!!

The Committee has continued to keep paper publicity under review. The Who's Who leaflet, re-issued twice a year, now includes email addresses as well as telephone numbers.

The Contactless Giving machine, procured by Finance Committee, showed how out of date the notice at the back of the church by the blue safe had become. We are now well into the 21st century and a smart new notice is in place (including a QR code) giving parishioners and visitors alike details of the options for supporting the church financially.

Work will resume shortly on a proposal to replace the exterior church notice boards. This is not a simple nor a cheap job, requiring approval from both the Archdeacon and the local authorities!

I am grateful to all members of the Committee for their contributions to our work over the past year.

Rufus Barnes Chair, Communications Committee

Parish Office

Life certainly has looked different in the parish office this year. From January to August I worked from home in my capacity as Parish Administrator, very challenging at times. I returned to work in the office in September time and we have gradually got some of our volunteers back on board. There is a lot less work for our volunteers but this has gradually expanded.

One major task that we have undertaken this autumn is the mammoth task of sorting out the downstairs office room into a fully functioning office for paid admin staff. Claire Dunn joined me at the beginning of December as Admin Associate a slightly different role to that of Rector's secretary. Claire is a great asset to our team.

A big thank you goes to Barbara Flaxman and John Mumford who came in each week for a morning to enable our postal mailing and other office tasks were covered. John is the vergier for the Parish Rooms and we thank you John for all your diligent work which you undertake each week of the year – so that the Parish rooms can be used by church groups and outside hirers alike.

Dawn Saxon, Parish Administrator

Weddings Coordinator

It was a joy to witness a return to weddings with no restrictions in numbers though some social distancing measures were still observed e.g. wearing masks and guests sitting at a distance from each other.

There were 17 weddings in total - 12 of which were postponed from 2020; 6 at Saffron Walden, 3 at Littlebury and Gt Chesterford, 2 at Ashdon and one each at Wenden, Swards End and Debden

In May 2021 we welcomed Jeremy Trew to the team and he plunged into the deep end taking his first three weddings at St Mary's, Saffron Walden in less than a week in August! In June we said farewell to Paula Griffiths and in August to Rachel Prior. They were always extremely attentive to their wedding couples and they will both be missed.

In 2022, we are expecting 19 weddings, some still postponed from 2020 or 2021 because of continuing restrictions when couples were making plans. We were pleased to run the Marriage Preparation course in February 2022 with the couples attending in person instead of on Zoom as last year.

I am as ever grateful to Dawn for her efficient help in the parish office especially in the preparation of materials for the Marriage Preparation course and in dealing with messages which come through the office.

Caroline Goulder, Wedding Coordinator

Children and Youth

Tinies

Thanks to an amazing team we restarted Tinies in October, meeting in the back of church. After nearly two years of not seeing many of the children they had, unsurprisingly, grown - some so big that they have started school! It has been great to welcome back returning children and parents after Covid but also some new parents and grandparents with their children and grandchildren, some of whom have joined following the Bedtime Church we ran online during the Covid restrictions. It definitely feels like we have never been away.

This term we have been looking at the life of Jesus and the miracles He performed. We have also had the reception class from St Mary's School join us twice this term and have enjoyed the Godly Play story by Gillian.

Team JC

Team JC has returned this academic year which has been great. We have had some new children join and old ones return. Last term we focussed on the encounters that Jesus had, as well as His miracles and the story of Moses. This term we have been looking at the Fruit of the Spirit; this has included some science experiments to show how extravagant God's love is as well as spreading joy and sending a letter to a friend or family member and being patient as we waited for them to reply.

Team JC is one of the groups which we need more volunteers to help with, so if you have a passion for getting messy and creative, love to tell stories, or just want to see what we do, then please chat to me about helping out.

Aftershock

Over the past year we have been studying the 10 Commandments and Tracey taught us a great way to remember them by using our fingers. This term the young people have chosen to look at some of the parables Jesus told; asking the question, "What even is a parable?" and "What is Jesus telling us here?". As well as the bible studies, we have enjoyed some time to socialise together by doing a scavenger hunt around town plus the young people's favourite, playing hide and seek in the church!

Due to the restrictions, it would have been unsafe for us to hold a Jimmy's Meal this year, however watch this space and keep an eye out for the date for the return of the Jimmy's Meal in January 2023!

Youth Bible Study

We have a great group of sixth formers which make up Youth Bible Study. They may be small in number but the conversations we have are massive. From January 2021 until about October 2021 we had been doing an in-depth study of the Gospel of John, diving deeper into what John was trying to portray of Jesus. From our study of John we found ourselves asking more questions which we

wrote down as we went along. The young people then took a question each week and put together a study which they lead themselves.

Since then, with the help of Hilary Walker and Tom Hunt, we have been looking at C.S Lewis 'Screwtape Letters, which has been an interesting read.

H2H

We are so thankful for those who come out on a Sunday evening to support our amazing young people as they use their gifts to lead us in worship and teaching at H2H. Throughout the year we have focussed on the Ten Commandments, with the young people taking a lead on the teaching. This term we have been following on from the Aftershock sessions on parables, with a special 'Pray for Ukraine H2H 'in March.

County High | Mentoring | B16

A new venture for the me is volunteering with Stort Valley School Trust, helping with their work in County High which has included mentoring and helping in the pastoral hub, B16. With the mentoring, I see 9 young people who have been referred due to an issue they are facing, whether that be in school, for example with their behaviour, or struggles with their confidence. Others have situations at home which they would like to talk to someone about. All the young people I mentor are great and it is brilliant to be able to invest in their lives in some way and help them deal with the issues they are facing.

B16 is also open at break times as a place for the students to go and eat their lunch and spend time with each other in a safe space. This is a great chance to get to know the students and see how they are doing, offering guidance and support when needed. Outside of break time, B16 is used as a wellbeing centre for students to have separate support in lessons, or as a place to go to if they need someone to chat to about struggles or issues they are facing. It is an amazing space and Ahoora and Lauren who lead it are a real blessing to the school.

Primary Schools | On Track | SWAT

We are back in St Mary's School too which is brilliant. It is so good to be able to lead assemblies face to face and interact with the children. As well as taking assemblies, I run an after school club there called On Track. At On Track we play games, look at a story from the bible, which they enjoy acting out, and finish with a craft. They also take over one of my assemblies at the end of term, where they perform in a drama and lead a game and a small talk on the theme.

I have also taken over leading SWAT (Saffron Walden Assemblies Team) from Val Bowtle. SWAT goes into most of the primary schools in Saffron Walden and the surrounding area, putting on a fun filled Bible based assembly. It is so good to be back in the schools and to see and hear how much this means to both the children and the staff. Our team has shrunk since Covid, so if you would like to join us as we take Jesus into the primary schools in the area, then please talk to me.

Thank You!

As you have just read, it has been a fun filled year in the life of the children and youthwork at St Mary's Church. This could have only happened thanks to some amazing volunteers and therefore my heartfelt thanks go to; Tracey Nicholls, Hilary Walker, Tom Hunt, Ellie Chambers, Chris Cowling, Hazel Colebrooke, Pam Russell, Sue Birchall, Sheilah Girgis, Gill Caswell, Katy Jones, Gillian Brace, Jamie and Ro Biddlecombe, Cathy Noble, Steph Hall, Darren and Lorna Jones.

As you can see there is so much happening with our children and young people, and as the well known passage goes, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. This is true for many ministries in the church but particularly the children's and youthwork. Without volunteers it isn't safe for us to run the groups we run. If you would like to help with any of our children and young people's activities, I would be really happy to chat to you more about what we do and how you can get involved.

Matt Williamson

St. Mary's Pre School

Many exciting changes have happened in the last year, after 16 years at St Marys Church preschool I was happy to become the new Manager and Lisa Wightman became the new Deputy Manager having been part of the team herself for 14 years.

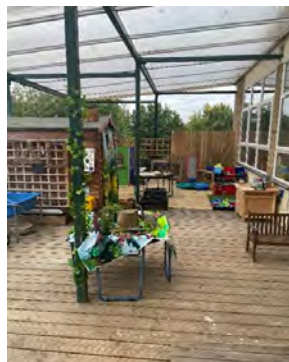
During the Summer break the Butterfly room and children's toilets were given a fresh coat of paint in preparation for the Autumn term and both preschool rooms had a revamp with new and exciting natural resources that have been reclaimed and recycled, opening a world of imagination and exploration for the children. The garden and decking areas also have inviting new areas to explore, including some giant tractor tyres!

In September we extended our staff team and welcomed many new families. Father Christmas visited the children during their Christmas party in December, bringing gifts for all. Covid 19 meant that sadly some of our annual events such as the Nativity could not take place but instead, we filmed the children in costume singing their Christmas songs and acting out scenes they had rehearsed. We are happy to say that now the restrictions have lifted, our doors can be opened to parents and extended family members once again.

Forest school sessions continue twice weekly and the children have watched tadpoles turn into frogs in the pond. New rowan and hazel trees have been donated to the primary school by the Green Canopy project, in celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee and have been beautifully situated alongside our path to preschool. We are looking forward to the upcoming summer term, spending lots of time outside in the sunshine and visiting the beautiful Bridge End gardens. In July we shall say a sad but very proud farewell to our children going off to school as they leave us with many happy memories.

Maxine Fenwick, Manager, St Marys Church Preschool

Over the summer holidays there were some exciting building works carried out at the school. New decking and roofing were installed outside the Early Years classroom for the children to enjoy outdoor play and learning.



Changes were also made to the layout of the library area to create rooms for 1 to 1 tuition or small meetings, a music practice room and a larger meeting room. These changes have proved really popular and helpful.

Four new basketball posts have been installed in the playground and new adventure playground equipment has been installed in the school field.

Highlights of the autumn term were sessions run by the 2 Johns, who are ex policemen and who explain to the children the importance of on-line/e-safety in an engaging, humorous and memorable way.

The children were encouraged to wear brightly coloured clothing to celebrate Light Day where they spent the day learning about light festivals from different religions around the world. They had a special Collective Worship in the afternoon where the different year groups shared what they had learned during the day.

The Key Stage 1 pupils performed their Nativity Play in church to the whole school on one day and then two performances to parents and carers on the following day.



The children sang, danced and acted with great maturity for ones so young.

Finally, the school has coped very well with the outbreak of the Omicron Covid variant including teachers taking additional lessons for colleagues who have been off work and office staff rolling their sleeves up and helping in the kitchen.

The Board of Governors are extremely proud of the wonderful team at St. Mary's.

John Westnedge, Chair of Governors

St. Mary's Guiding (7thsaffronwaldenguides@gmail.com)

7th Saffron Walden (St. Mary's) Rainbows

We have had a good year; we were able to restart our unit at the beginning of the summer term last year. Initially we were on Zoom, then with the improving weather, we were able to move to distanced outdoor meetings, it was really good to meet my new Rainbows face to face for the first time!

Since September we have been meeting within the Parish Rooms, with Covid regulations as relevant. We have been busy doing lots of badges and different activities. We are keeping numbers quite low as we are still in need of more helpers, our waiting list is still very full. However, since we restarted, we have had just under 20 girls that have been able to participate, some of whom have now moved onto Brownies. We have girls from almost every local school as well as from St. Mary's, we also have a Guide helper.

Saffy Lester, Rainbow leader

7th Saffron Walden (St. Mary's) Brownies

Thankfully as the year progressed, we were slowly, bit by bit, able to return to 'normal' Guiding. We started with some distanced outdoor meetings, before being able to use the Parish Rooms again, also with distancing etc as required. We all really appreciated being back within the Rooms.

Our numbers have been steady throughout the year, though as of the start of the summer term 2022, we do have space for a couple of seven-year-olds.

The Brownies that have been with us have absolutely excelled themselves with working hard on their badges, some badges within meetings, some at home. We have this term been able to award our first two Brownie Gold awards, which is very exciting, that meant each girl doing 12 badges and over 1,080 minutes of activities since

they joined us. We have several girls that are now bronze and silver award winners and are heading to the next level.

We are looking forward to another year where things continue to get back to normal, whilst also including some celebrations like the Queens jubilee. If anyone would like to come and help us, please do make contact.

Julie Lester – Brownie Leader

7th Saffron Walden (St. Mary's) Guides

Having started the summer term by continuing to meet on Zoom, it was a joy for all of us as we restarted distanced face-to-face meetings outside in May. We met on the grass outside the West doors of the church and completed at least one activity from our Guide programme each week. In July, several members took part in an Aqua Splash session in Sawbridgeworth. One of our Guides was successfully nominated for a Jack Petchey award for her positive attitude and contribution to the life of the unit, which resulted us being able to take the girls on an exciting trip to Go Ape in Thetford Forest in July. She will be attending an awards ceremony in June.

Since September we have been meeting indoors with covid-related precautions. We have welcomed several new members and worked on a wide range of programme activities. The girls are great fun to work with and we would love to be able to provide a greater range of activities, but we really need more help. Please volunteer if you can.

Margaret Jacobs

Mothers' Union

At the beginning of 2021 most of us were receiving our first and second vaccinations and all Mothers' Union meetings were cancelled. Meetings recommenced in May 2021 by kind permission of the churchwardens, according to the strict government regulations practiced on Sundays in Church.

The first meeting was our Mothers' Union Ascension Day Service, when we welcomed Rev Alex Jeewan as preacher. He inspired us by his sermon 'Looking Forward to the Future and Leaving the Past Behind' which encouraged us all.

Meetings continued in Church until October when we returned to the Parish rooms. The following meetings took place from May 2020 to February 2021

Worship

Ascension Day
Wave of Prayer
Corporate Communion
Vigil – Gender Based Violence & Abuse
Advent Service

Religious Topics

Samaritans Purse
Visit to China
Visiting & Living in Israel

Bible Study

'Rebuilding Hope and
Confidence'
Story of Nehemiah

Social

Garden Party
Christmas Party

AGM

At our corporate communion in September two new members were admitted by our Chaplain Rev Canon Chris Bishop and another welcomed back.

Rev Jeremy Trew admitted one new member at our November meeting. We are delighted to welcome them all.

For the first time this year we held a Vigil of prayer and reflection in the North Chapel to observe the MU 'Global Day of Action' against violence and abuse towards women, part of a United Nations International Campaign.

Reports on all our meetings listed have appeared in the Parish magazine each month.

Brenda Sheath, Branch Leader

Men's Activities

Breakfast meetings and Evening Meals

Sadly, we have not been able to run the Men's breakfast meetings or the Men's Group evening meal since Covid appeared. We hope to recommence Men's evening meals in July, probably at The Crown in Little Walden. More news nearer the time.

The Men's breakfast will probably start again in September. This includes a full English Breakfast and a speaker. It would be lovely to move back to holding this in The Parish rooms.

All we need is for someone with a small team to prepare the breakfast for us, and should you be willing to help, then do contact me.

The Breakfast meetings were popular when we last ran them, with the last few being held in the King's Arms.

Any volunteers to get us back into the Parish Rooms?

Robin Betser (01 223 891 385 robin@waylands.org.uk)

Men's Lunchtime Get-togethers

Our M5 monthly lunchtime get-togethers at the Kings Arms lapsed with the coming of Covid, the last one taking place on Wednesday 4th March 2020 when 12 attended.

Interest in restarting these regular events stemmed from the autumn of last year but with a plea for a new venue offering easier accessibility for those with mobility problems and accordingly a review was undertaken to identify suitable premises that would satisfy this need.

Resurrecting the event with a new name, Oasis, a trial visit to the Old English Gentleman was arranged for Wednesday 6th October, attracting an attendance of 8. Initially, opinion was divided but in the perceived absence of alternative venues, we have since settled there with attendances ranging from 6 to 8, a significant drop from pre-Covid numbers.

The event continues to be held on the first Wednesday of each month, from 12 noon, but unlike former times when our then host was happy to accommodate any number of people who turned up, we must now make a reservation to ensure a suitable table is available for us. A reminder is posted in Grapevine notices the weekend beforehand. All are welcome.

Bill Rose

Men's Saturday Morning Walks

Men's Walks have been curtailed since January 2020 although a few private walks have taken place in their stead. In May 2020 we celebrated the 6th Anniversary of the Bishop's walk by following its course and in May 2021 we walked over to Thunderly which had an active Parson until about 1830 when his living was subsumed into

the Parish of All Saints, Wimbish. Needless to say, the Parsonage, which still stands today, was a dwelling of considerable substance! A walk in September took us from Swards End to Wimbish and back by a circular route.

The weather cancelled our usual January walk from Wenden up to Littlebury Green so we revived the walk in March ending up for lunch at the Bell. Further walks are planned for the second Saturdays of May, July, September and November details of which will be published in the Grapevine on the preceding two Sundays

Anthony Armon-Jones

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee monitors the income, expenditure and financial assets of St Mary's and met on four occasions in 2021. Membership of the Committee for the larger part of the year comprised Rev. Michael Lovegrove (Chairman), Denis Tindley (Churchwarden), David Birchall (Treasurer), Tim Game, Steve Hasler, Robin O'Neill and Simon Potter. As planned, Rev Michael Lovegrove resigned from the Committee in the summer and Richard Garvey was appointed as Chairman in December.

The routine business of the Committee is unchanged:

- To receive reports from the Treasurer on the current financial position
- Consider any changes to our investments
- Consider requests for expenditure which need recommendation to the PCC
- Review the salaries of our employees
- Review the Treasurer's proposed Budget for the following year
- Review the draft Annual Accounts

Additionally the Committee reviews the interim management accounts, variances from Budget, cash reserves and the reserves policy.

2021 continued the financial challenges seen in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The church remained closed to in-person worship for significant parts of the year and, even when opened up, congregations remained much smaller than those pre-pandemic. As a result, the weekly giving by attendees was again

much below previous levels. The installation of the 'CollecTin' sitting on the blue safe has enabled contactless giving now there is no Offertory collection. Despite very generous donations/legacies and increases by some to their committed Stewardship giving, the loss of over 30 regular members of the congregation in the last 2 to 3 years has meant a reduction in the congregation's contribution of some £20,000pa. over that period. The cancellation of the Christmas Fair also meant a further £5-6,000 reduction in income.

Current expenditure in 2021 was also much below Budget, with savings across the board in the areas of Church running expenses, training and hospitality as well as the decision to defer the refurbishment of the Parish Rooms. As a result the overall deficit for 2021 came out at a much reduced shortfall of £5,000 although still a second year in the red after a long run of surpluses. We are fortunate that we currently have the reserves to cope, although expectations for 2022 are for a very significant further shortfall and the paring back of those reserves to uncomfortable levels. Every effort will need to be made to bring our income back to a level where we can sustain the work of the church and our outreach to the communities we serve.

Capital expenditure of £163,000 on the repairs to the Chancel roof was largely met from funds specifically reserved for fixed asset repair and maintenance. In addition two donations, a generous grant from the Friends of Essex Churches and the reclamation of VAT from the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme made up the rest.

It costs approximately £250,000 to run St Mary's each year. Income from congregational giving covers approximately 70% of that figure. A further 13% comes from fundraising, fees from weddings and funerals, miscellaneous income and contributions from our sister churches in Swards End and Little Walden, as well as from the diocese. From the point of view of good husbandry of our resources we need to cover as much of the remaining 17% deficit as possible. This must be done by working to increase our income from all sources whilst ensuring our outgoings are managed as prudently as we can. Without this effort the church's reserves will be exhausted within a few years.

Richard Garvey, Finance Committee

Property Committee

The committee is responsible for the church, Parish rooms, Verger's cottage and the Curate's house, and has held four meetings since the 2021 APCM.

Work on the replacement of the failed copper on the chancel roof with lead was commenced in September 2021 (after the bats had flown) and finished in February 2022. When the copper was removed, fortunately the timbers were found to be mainly in good order. We are very grateful to Steve Hasler for supervising this project and ensuring that costs were controlled. The new lead roof should be good for at least a century.

Considerable work has been done to improve the performance of the amplifiers and microphones in the church, and the new digital sound desk has proved its worth.

Following a comprehensive review of options, it was decided and agreed with Jeremy that it would not be possible to extend the Garden of Remembrance or to find another suitable space in the churchyard.

Jeremy joined us for our August meeting when we reviewed potential major projects. Currently we are lacking a volunteer with project management skills to progress the relocation and refurbishment of the Audley tomb (funding is in place). The refurbishment of the Parish rooms must await both a leader and funding. We will, however, be commencing preparatory work on new lighting for the church, bearing in mind a long lead time and that the existing system has probably only five years before it may fail.

The next Quinquennial inspection will be in September when our major concern is likely to be the life expectancy of the North chapel and aisle copper roof.

Following Rachel's departure, the Curate's house was let on a six-month tenancy. Some refurbishment of the house and improvement of the garden will be completed before Ella arrives in June.

In arriving at its decisions, the committee keeps in mind at all times the aim of meeting the C of E's objectives of carbon zero by 2030.

Much of the committee's routine work is overseeing servicing and maintenance of all its properties; we are particularly grateful to John

Mumford for looking after the Parish rooms and carrying out regular inspections in church.

Chris Bishop has been tidying up and organising the archives temporarily in the Muniments room and we are very grateful for all that he has been doing.

My thanks go to Steve Hasler for his wealth of knowledge and expertise and for his support as committee secretary, and to Mike Felgate, Richard Freeman, Edward Gildea, Lawrence Gooderham and Robin O'Neill for their support and advice.

Denis Tindley Chair, Property Committee

Friends of Saffron Walden Parish Church

2021/22 has been another year of restrictions due to the pandemic but we have managed to undertake a few projects.

The Sewing Ladies have continued their wonderful work with the Kneelers which this year included some mending once all the kneelers were taken out of store and returned to their respective places in Church. Despite regular spraying the moths had attempted to take up residence as did a mouse in one kneeler but all is well. The Ladies have also made two much appreciated cushions for the Server Chairs

We had two new flower pedestals made and one re-vamped for the Flower Arranging Team. We have also purchased a pair of smart oak funeral biers/trestles which should last for many years to come. Also a new notice board is in hand to match the existing ones, this is for the use of the Baptism Team for their displays and will replace the cumbersome easel which they have been using for some time now.

Undaunted by having to cancel our trips to Lincoln we are now visiting two local Cathedrals Ely and Bury St Edmunds in April and June and hope to re-arrange Lincoln for later this year, pandemic permitting.

We look forward to a busy year ahead.

Pamela Mugliston

Transition Project

The Transition Project continued to provide help, support and advice to those seeking employment throughout 2021 in spite of the constraints of Covid.

As we would normally spend around an hour face-face with clients and most of our advisers are regarded as being at risk if exposed to Covid, most of the work was carried out online using both phone and Zoom.

Using Zoom proved relatively straightforward but time consuming and inefficient. It was also extremely challenging where the client did not have internet access and could only use a phone.

We returned to face-face working in the upper floor of the Parish Rooms in November but this proved short-lived with the onset of Omicron.

During the year we had over 140 client-adviser sessions. Clients ranged from school leavers and experienced workers to PhD students seeking to move from academia to industry. It was particularly satisfying to watch clients move from thinking they were unemployable to full time employment. Most underestimated their own skills and capabilities.

We have maintained a working relationship with the DWP as well as the CAB and Uttlesford Frontline. St Elizabeth's shop has also proved to be a valuable staging post by offering supportive voluntary work experience for those seeking to return to work.

Our very limited advertising has been centred on the weekly entry in Walden Local, together with a web site, poster displays and leaflet distribution via the Food Bank.

We were able to provide good Wi-Fi coverage for the main Parish Room using donated equipment. We received a grant from Education Services 2010 and further individual donations which meant that the project did not require any cash support from St Mary's in 2021. The grant will not be repeated in 2022 but we will be seeking other funding where appropriate.

We are planning to return to face-face working in 2022 but will keep the value of the project under review as client numbers are very low at present and the number of local vacancies is extraordinarily high.

Gerald Gardner on behalf of the Transition Project Team

Jimmy's Group

Jimmy's has continued to provide support for the homeless in Cambridge throughout the pandemic. They work with the local community, volunteers and partner agencies to deliver 24/7 emergency accommodation and supported housing for those who would otherwise be homeless or vulnerably housed. They support them through positive changes to help them resettle into more suitable and stable accommodation, leading them towards an independent lifestyle.

We have not been able to host our usual Aftershock meal or Harvest Festival donations this year. However, our Church family has collected £647.50 in regular donations in support of Jimmy's. This has been used to continue our monthly vegetable donations from the market together with donations given directly to Jimmy's.

We would like to thank you all for your continued generous support of Jimmy's.

Tim Game

Archive Group

Since my last annual report, with permission, I have moved all accessible archive materials up to the Muniments Room.

These documents include copies of the Parish News (from the 1800s to the present day), copious past PCC papers, records relating to the church building, and, amongst other things, an assortment of individual group records and documents that need careful storage.

My thanks go to the small group of volunteers who initially helped manhandle the majority of these documents up the 'windy stairs' to the Muniments room. My thanks also to the PCC for allowing me to purchase the boxes needed for storage.

The work continues, and I am grateful that the room is not only lit but warm!

Canon Chris Bishop on behalf of the Archive Group

ECO Church

2021 was always going to be a significant year, since the UK was hosting the COP 26 conference in Glasgow in November. This was the motivating force around many of our actions.

- We held our first Climate Sunday service in September, Edward also gave his address at Climate Sunday services in the URC, Great Chesterford, Wendens Ambo and Wicken Bonhunt.
- An illustrated talk by Edward on 'Adventure, Activism and COP 26' was held in the Church Rooms during the Great Big Green Week, but was poorly attended.
- Support was given to Thaxted church to help them embark on their Eco church journey, and it is hoped that a supportive group of local Eco churches will develop this year.
- One Aftershock session was devoted to adventure, climate and the environment.
- The same topic formed the theme of an environmental day at Dame Bradbury's school and an assembly at St Mary's Primary School.

Our current standing with regard to the Eco Church scoring system is as follows:

Worship and Teaching: Gold 100/110

Concern for the environment has continued to be reflected regularly in our worship, prayers and sermons, even during lockdown.

Buildings: Bronze 217/510

The main focus of the Premises committee has been repairing the chancel roof, which gave us the opportunity of including a layer of insulation, which will make a small but significant saving in our carbon footprint. The refurbishment of the Church Rooms has had to be postponed for a year, but the switch to LED lighting is now top of the agenda, since the current lighting system is progressively failing.

An ethical and sustainable procurement policy is being developed for discussion at the PCC.

Churchyard

Silver 90/155

We have continued to increase bio-diversity and pollinators in our churchyard. A further 50 'medallions' of turf were dug in the autumn and planted with more wildflower seeds, which are already germinating. Another c30 primroses were planted in January. These had struggled during the previous two years, but by planting them earlier, they have had the benefit of the wet winter to get established. The wildflower areas were scythed in September and half the mowings were taken to a donkey sanctuary and the rest left to provide hibernation opportunities. There has been no sign that our hedgehog boxes were inhabited

Community and Global Engagement

Silver 144/216

A topical article about the environment has appeared in every edition of the Parish News for the last 3 years and has been added to the Eco pages on the website. Our thanks to the Andy Colebrooke and Martin Huggall for publishing these so efficiently.

Edward represented the environment and Eleanor Game represented young people on the Local Plan Stakeholder Forum during the UDC local plan consultation last year.

In October our church bells rang with thousands in the UK and many others across the world as part of the 'Ring out for Climate!' initiative to send their message of warning on the eve of COP 26.

Alison Trew ran a Fairtrade stall with Hazel Colebrooke on 6th March as part the national 'Fairtrade Fortnight' and we hope that this will become a regular feature of church life.

Lifestyles:

Silver 86/160

Our main initiative in this category for the coming year is to conduct a survey of our congregations' lifestyles, to ascertain the extent to which our concern for the environment and the climate crisis is translating into carbon footprint reduction, increased walking and cycling, changing eating and consumption habits and involvement in local environmental causes.

An ethical and sustainable procurement policy is being developed for discussion at the PCC.

Our team is now 8 strong, with the very welcome addition of John Forster, Shawn Martin and Alison Trew to the existing team of Jacky Damary Holman, Chris Knight, James Razzell, Chris Hall and me.

Edward Gildea

Links with the Worldwide Church:

Lynn Treneary, our CMS Mission Partner in Maridi, South Sudan

Having just settled back into Maridi Diocese in the autumn of 2020 Lynn had to return back home early in 2021 as she was in constant pain with back problems which needed treatment. This took till July/August 2021 for her to feel better and was given the all clear to return. As usual she received a wonderfully warm welcome back and was quickly involved in outreaching to primary schools, trying to find support for treatment of Nodding Syndrome and her teaching involvement in Chaima Christian Institute.

She was very upset with what she discovered in her visit to Primary schools especially along the Rubeck Rd. Five out of the six schools she visited had incomplete buildings and a lack of essential equipment e.g. blackboards, desks textbooks etc with many having to have lessons outside. All boreholes that provide water are broken, needing servicing and pumping out dirty water which is the major cause of Nodding syndrome. Medicines are being provided but will run out by May.

On a brighter note she has been ordained and Lynn took her First communion service while visiting the Rubeck area; Chaima Christian Institute had its fourth Graduation, The Episcopal Church of South Sudan put on a two week retreat for Lay ministers, Deacons and Priest which Lynn went on. There were great celebrations of the centenary of the gospel being brought to Maridi by CMS missionary William Haddow in 1922. She asks for prayer as she sees new possibilities opening for Chaima Christian Institute by becoming a campus of the Episcopal University but the process has stalled as other chancellors do not want the change this will bring to their colleges...

She writes how grateful she is for churches supporting her (of which we are one) for giving so generously and often getting them out of difficult situations and opening doors for new possibilities. The CMS group that meets to pray and support Lynn is meeting again on Friday 29th April and if you would like to join us please contact me.

Sue Walker, CMS Link

David and Sári, serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Romania

As experienced translators David and Sari Gardner's roles have changed somewhat and their new primary roles are training and supporting Bible translators for the Standard Romani Bible Translation Committee. This funded project works exclusively on a Standardised Romani language version with the intention of avoiding dialects. David & Sari's support ranges from helping them with exegesis to assisting in preparing an accurate, clear, natural and acceptable translation, giving advice on mother tongue literacy and computer support work. In addition, they trained the new translators in the use of Paratext, the Bible translation software that they'll be using throughout the project. The first sections should be completed for distribution in time for Easter.

The photo of Sari and David was taken at a regional conference in Oradea, western Romania

David continues working on PTXprint, so that producing appealing trial editions of Scripture is within the grasp of translation teams worldwide. This work is already receiving

international acclaim. A user reported: *"The dream of immediate diglot Scripture publishing is now a reality. Praise the Lord with us! Over the weekend we completed typesetting 1-3 John and Jude in four languages (more coming soon)."* *"Even the (picture) captions are in diglot."*

The Family

Covid continues to run amok in Romania which has a much lower vaccination rate than the UK and also very different isolation rules such that almost all of Mark's university lectures were on-line. Emma also spent a lot of time away from school but seems much less affected by this than Mark. Erik also worked at home for many weeks but the village junior school was less affected than secondary schools.





David. Sari with Erik, Aniko, Emma, Mark

In spite of Covid, Aniko did very well in her Baccalaureate examinations and is now spending a year in France as a volunteer working at a retirement home – her French has improved dramatically as has her confidence in travelling around Europe.

It is now over 2 years since we have been able to visit them but we expect to see them while they are based with us as they visit supporting churches in England during the summer.

All their living costs are still completely dependent on personalised donations via Wycliffe and given increasing expenses everywhere, they are anticipating a shortfall of at least 10% in 2022.



Sari and David talking about Wycliffe at a Hungarian Christian youth festival

Gerald Gardner

Vision Statement

Our Mission

Sharing God's love

Our Vision

Our aim as a church is to:

worship God with joy and reverence

tell of God's love in Jesus Christ

learn about and live our Christian faith

pray and learn about prayer

serve God's world through prayer and action

offer Christ's ministry of wholeness and healing

encourage all to discover and use their gifts for God

engage with and nurture children and young people

welcome everyone warmly and offer generous hospitality

value and care for each other

In all this, we will use the resources we have - our time,

buildings and money - wisely in God's service.