

APCM REPORT for 2019/20

VICAR'S REPORT

I have now been with you for almost 2 years, and they have certainly been eventful for all of us! Looking back over my report this time last year, I can see that a number of the things we hoped to do and develop have been put 'on hold' by the Covid19 pandemic, but what is encouraging is that a number have not and we have seen change and growth this year despite extraordinarily difficult circumstances. If I may take a leaf out of St. Paul's book, I often boast about you and your love for each other and commitment to moving forward. This report skims a stone over the surface of a year's ministry here but doesn't capture everything. As I did last year, I am structuring my report around our **Mission Action Plan** (references in bold) as these were things you all identified as being important.

You wanted to **explore different styles of worship and services** and this year has seen a move to the first Sunday of the month 10:00 service becoming fully All-Age and lay led, enabling our young people to play a more active part. Thanks to Catherine Graham, Judith Gibbons and Sue Wills and the wider youth team for your time, faith and skill. As part of our commitment to **make children welcome as a central part of our worship** more drama has been included in services and a Dark Den with sensory toys for neurodiverse children added to the children's area. John Dines and the Brigade team are an important part of our welcome of young people at All Age services, Civic events and weekly in-church activities. Ruby's work with toddlers in 'Bears', giving small children their first experience of Church is also a real blessing and moving to attend.

Choral services have been a blessing and delight thanks to the hard work of St. James' Singers and Carole Warren in particular, and we are blessed with wonderful musicians whose talents really add to our worship. A fresh development has been the start of evening services, with Jenty Fairbank's beautiful crib service of reflection leading the way for other reflective evening services that people have called "beautiful", "moving", "refreshing", "prayerful" and "a chance for deeper thinking".

Our other new venture before the pandemic was Forest Church: we have a team of enthusiastic adults to lead this and our early sessions have been wonderful. We meet at All Saints' Church, where we gather around a fire before moving to different activities in nature (including things to find, think about, explore, make, do and share) run by different volunteers, then return to the fire for refreshments, prayer and story-telling. This is another way of helping to **make children welcome as a central part of our worship**. All those who have taken

part so far, adults and children, have enjoyed the experience. Comments have included: that it is easier to feel close to God at this service; that it is better for many young people who would find a traditional service difficult or impossible; that it has been a great new experience that we should do more of; and that it has opened up “profound” experiences, and been “wonderful”, “peaceful”, “positive”, “energising” and “creative”. Moving forward, the team hopes to offer this style of service more frequently and we are purchasing a PA system to facilitate the leading of it (using money I won for our church for that purpose from Faith Online). My thanks to all who have made this fresh form of worship happen: it is particularly good at the moment when indoor activities pose a risk. Particular thanks to the Holy Mowers for keeping the churchyard so well that it is a joy to be in it.

Online worship was discussed, but I don't think any of us could have predicted that we would be exploring it so soon or so much. Had Covid19 not happened, we had plans to develop more lay leadership of services, but as it is this has taken place wonderfully in our Zoom services, with the leading shared between participants in ways that I hope will be reflected in services in the building also.

Currently our worship runs in a number of new ways:

- 1) On Zoom as a live service with up to 35 participants, recorded
- 2) On Facebook, as the Zoom is edited and posted for others to watch and comment
- 3) On our dedicated phone line, free to call, where callers can listen to the weekly service
- 4) Via email with orders of service sent round to be read aloud at home
- 5) By post with orders of service delivered to the door to be read aloud at home
- 6) In person in the building, socially distanced
- 7) Via our Home Communion team
- 8) Signposting to online resources from other churches, the diocese and wider afield.
- 9) Outdoor Forest Church

This way of working has given us **opportunities to draw the wider community into different forms of worship.**

Thinking back, another hugely successful and moving Nativity (thanks to Ruby Summers and Melanie and Nigel) filled the Church at Christmastime – how long ago that seems! Carol singing in and outside the Swan pub, the Light Up A Life service at Late Night Shopping, our range of Christmas events and services and the Christmas Tree Festival and carol singing definitely reached hundreds. With

the acting talents of David Foss-Smith telling the Christmas story, the musical talents of our own Chris Bloor, the tremendous hard work of a huge team headed by Elizabeth and Jackie and the creativity of the whole town, the Festival was both a joy to attend and an opportunity to share our faith in image, word and song. It was lovely to welcome Bishop Roger among us on the final afternoon.

In the early Spring, we enjoyed, with Churches Together, a powerful and very different Women's World Day Of Prayer service written by the Christian women of Zimbabwe. Thanks to Janet Russell, Vivien Chapman, Alison Gabbedy and all involved in running it. Our community engagement includes the contacts made at Saturday café, a much-loved aspect of our ministry, and range of social events. This would not be possible without the hosting and culinary skills of our kitchen crew and social committee, who follow well Christ's model of good conversation over shared food: something we long to be able to return to someday.

Alongside these in-person events, we have been **visible in the community** through more distanced and virtual activities around: Easter (online videos and chalking the Easter story and messages on the church and pavements); VE Day (creating a town-wide video and virtual commemoration); and Blessing of the Waters (with a second video containing messages from dignitaries, some dressing up, creativity, and blessings by water pistol). We have managed to connect with the community despite the difficulties presented by lockdown. **Social media** has become more important in recent months and our Church Facebook page has a following of 782 and rising. We have been using **the Parish Magazine as a way of improving communication between church and community** as Carole Maytum, Bob Goodenough and Sheila Crow, with help from Carole's son, have created an attractive, interesting magazine that is both self-supporting and available by subscription! It has been described as a "lockdown lifeline".

Work continues on **strengthening our links with the schools of the town**. As a Governor, I have been involved with a variety of aspects of school life. I also ran a drum club after school. I have begun School Council with deputy Head Fiona May, which is made up of child representatives from each class and meets monthly. We welcomed the school into Church for both the Christmas assembly and a talent showcase. Involvement via assemblies is another facet, although the form this takes may change.

Regarding **welcoming teenagers and young adults**, a number of us helped run a Sanctum prayer-space at the Colne and, although plans of this sort are on hold at present, we will be approaching the Colne as part of our All Saints' consultation and looking to involve young people from there and 4Youth in the

process of designing faith, heritage, nature and local-themed activities as part of the All Saints' Angels Project. Sadly, one of our local teens died last summer and our church opened its doors to house a memorial space for him, frequently visited by his family, friends, colleagues and peers. We also hosted two memorial events, one in church and one at the Lido where he worked, and offered support in co-operation with Beks Korniej, chaplain to Colchester 6th Form College and Colchester Institute, and our own MMP youthworker Charley.

One key priority was to **develop pastoral ministry**. Our Home Communion team has been a blessing to many, alongside those in the Bereavement group and welcome teams on Sundays and at events who care for others and help remove barriers. Particular thanks to Vivien for her welcome and immediate inclusion of new visitors. A number of us joined forces with others in our MMP for a Pastoral Training course and, though this is unfinished due to Covid19, members have been active in caring for others during these difficult times and we are adjusting to what we can offer in terms of support, based on what needs are. Particular thanks to Kathy Tidman for her care for MU members, Colin Singleton and Chris Bloor for supplying prayer and worship resources via email and links, and all those who have phoned, shopped, helped and supported others through lockdown.

Earlier in this year, we held a well-attended Memorial service for those who had lost loved ones, and we reopened the church for prayer and candle lighting with volunteers supervising to enable expressions of grief and prayers to be offered. This is accompanied by a series of 'stations' on the outer walls to prompt reflection and prayer, even for those who do not feel able to enter the building. Baptisms, weddings, funerals and ash interments continue to offer opportunities to demonstrate the love and welcome of God to all, though baptism and wedding numbers are reduced for this year due to Covid19. Special thanks to Linda Salmon, Catherine Graham, Jennifer Gallant and Sheila Crow for their work supporting families and keeping lines of communication open.

We remain committed to working to **improve the facilities of the church to draw people in** and nowhere is this more evident than the All Saints' Angels Project, capably steered by Elizabeth Foss-Smith with Ray Stollery, Sue Wills, Janet Russell, Carole Warren, Sheila Crow and Bob Goodenough. Last September we were celebrating 50 years of the Friends of All Saints'. Now, having secured grant funding for the first stage, we have planning permission to add a toilet and kitchenette to All Saints' and can progress with plans to restore the tower. We have taken on Whitworths as architects, Castons as Quantity Surveyors, the energetic and experienced James Mellish as Project Manager and the endlessly creative Rachel Steward as Activities Designer. Exciting days lie ahead for that

iconic space and for us, the people of God who inhabit it. This has also been the year that saw our lychgate restored by skilled local craftsmen and blessed by Bishop Stephen, in time to be enjoyed by children and bears at our busy and successful Teddy Bears' Picnic organised by Ruby and by some very relieved brides and grooms at summer weddings. Our Churchyard extension was also completed (praise God!) and consecrated by Bishop Roger – the end of a lot of work by Church members and Town Councillors in partnership.

Other changes to facilities include the purchase of a portable PA system which should enable not only outdoor worship but also film evenings, with better quality sound and a range of other activities in church and community. Particular thanks to the Finance and Giving team and David Wiggins our treasurer for managing and enabling giving: we now have the capacity to use two forms of contactless giving in addition to the envelope scheme. Also to Ann Wiggins, Janet Russell, Angela Herbert and Sue Wills for so much work in the background ensuring the smooth running of finance, administration and our interactions with the community here in Brightlingsea.

Wider afield, I have been engaged in lots of conversation across the Deanery and within our Mission and Ministry Partnership, beginning to discern ways forward for ministry in a time when resources are dwindling but our faith and determination remain bright, and committing ourselves to exploring ways of sharing and making fruitful connections between our various Churches.

Bible study groups have been a source of good spiritual nourishment and prayer groups have met regularly in church – and virtually from homes via emailed materials (thank you Colin!). As we move forward into Autumn with Covid19 still affecting much of what we do, we need to find new ways to deepen our study of the Bible, our prayer life, our exploration of our calling and what it means to walk with Jesus at this time, in this place. At the Gift Day ably organised by Angela Herbert last year, many of you looked at the photographic display of a year in the life of our church and marvelled at how much life there is here. We have much to celebrate, and much to reclaim or reimagine.

So many of you have done and given so much over the past year and brought creativity, imagination, hard work, perseverance, courage and skill to our shared ministry in this place. Our PCC, Treasurer, Pro-Wardens and Churchwardens have had much to discuss, debate and decide; I am grateful to them all for giving of themselves in the ministry of taking responsibility and being fellow leaders, discerners of God's will, and good stewards of all that we have been given. As Bob Goodenough steps down from many faithful years as Churchwarden, and David Dixon, Sue Lewis-Evans, Carole Maytum and Peter Marchant finish their terms on PCC, I pray that God will grant them rest and new inspiration. To those

who replace them, and we who continue to serve, courage and wisdom to meet the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead. Thank you and bless you all.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

This report, and the APCM itself, are long delayed because of the extraordinary situation caused by the worldwide Coronavirus pandemic. The closure of the two churches, the lack of services on Sundays in our church buildings and the adoption of on-line worship activities have to be among the most unusual things to be reported by churchwardens in this parish in its long history.

Even now, there is no certainty about how this event will end and what the long-term consequences of it will be.

All Saints' Church

During 2019, the reconstruction of the lychgate was completed and the Holy Mowers filled the cracks in the new oak and gave it a couple of coats of barn paint. This will have to be repeated every couple of years to preserve the structure in good order.

Elizabeth Foss-Smith has worked tirelessly with her project committee and progress has been made towards the repair of the tower and building new toilet/kitchen facilities. The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a grant for the Design Phase of the project; competitive tendering has resulted in the appointment of a project manager, architects and quantity surveyors. The committee is very hopeful of securing funding for the Development Phase. Of course, the pandemic lockdown is likely to play havoc with the projected timetable so it is impossible to predict accurately what will be achieved in the next twelve months or, rather, the time to the next APCM.

Early in the year, the heating boiler was plagued by problems with the gas supply. The gas pipe between the mains supply and the boiler room filled with water (as did the supply pipe to the house on Church Hill). Only one service was affected, and we all squeezed into the choir stalls and snuggled up close to keep warm. Eventually this problem was sorted; we look forward to warm services next winter.

Finally, the complex process of preparing for the consecration of the newest extension to the churchyard was completed and the consecration by the Bishop took place. The extension is now ready for use (just in time, the usage of the last extension is approaching its capacity).

Interestingly, the deeds of the land revealed that it was acquired by Trinity College from Henry VIII during the Dissolution.

The Churchyard and the Holy Mowers

The churchyard continues to be looked after by a dedicated team of volunteers, 'The Holy Mowers', occasionally helped by Community Workers. The effort put in has reaped huge rewards with large swathes of Snowdrops, Daffodils, Bluebells, Primroses, Lupins, Poppies and Autumn Cyclamen. We have planted two winter flowering cherry trees, providing welcome colour during winter months. We also purchased a ride-on mower [mainly funded by donations] which has made a huge difference to our workload. The churchyard was the setting for Wild Advent and Wild Lent events, enjoyed by all who attended. The pandemic forced weeks of inaction, by which time the grass was 4ft high in places with a profusion of wild flowers. Extra hours by The Mowers have finally tamed the churchyard, with lots of visitors expressing their gratitude. All other plans have been deferred until 2021.

St James' Church

No significant progress has been made in the Phase 3 development. All planning was halted by the pandemic.

There had been problems with penetrating damp in the sacristy and vestry. Investigation revealed that rainwater from the chancel was emptying onto the chancel/vestry roof but the guttering was too small to cope with large volumes of water so it overflowed in heavy rain. New, larger guttering has now been fitted and that should be the end of the problem.

Unfortunately, the damage caused by dampness at the back of the church near to the main entrance is more substantial and will have to be dealt with. The plasterwork is damaged by salts: it will have to be removed, the wall allowed to dry and then new plaster applied. This leak was also caused by a downpipe from the guttering. The pipe was completely blocked by a tree which was growing inside the pipe; its roots were 9 to 10 feet long and had choked it. The tree has now been removed.

When the building insurance premium was due, the Churchwardens had a lengthy telephone conversation with the insurance company during which it became clear that the increased use of the church made it essential that a proper fire alarm system be installed. We had sought help from the Fire Brigade's Senior Station Officer in undertaking a Fire Risk assessment. We are pleased to report that we have a new fire alarm system installed, one which can be extended to incorporate new developments for Phase 3.

The Quinquennial Inspection has now taken place and the architect's report is to follow. It will be presented to the PCC so that a schedule for maintenance / repairs can be devised. Although nothing major is likely to be identified, there

are, unfortunately, one or two expensive issues to be tackled. The electrical inspection has also been carried out, although the report has not yet been made available to us. When we receive it, a copy will be sent to the inspecting architect to be included in the Quinquennial Inspection Report.

Churchwardens Sheila Crow and Bob Goodenough

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

Following the APCM 2019, we welcomed John Dines to the PCC and maintained the full complement of elected members. During the year, Angela Herbert (pro-warden) and Jane Girdlestone (Safety Officer) were co-opted. All members brought particular skills and insight to our discussions and exploration of new initiatives.

Between April 2019 and August 2020, the PCC met 19 times. We have adapted to Zoom gatherings, found ways round the technological difficulties that keep some members from those meetings, and ensured that all voices and opinions are heard in one way or another.

Church finances continue to be a challenge, particularly during the last few months when income from hire of the building, and Occasional Offices giving, have fallen to nothing. However, ways and means continue to be found. We are blessed to have not only the particular gifts and experience of our Treasurer, but also the analytical skills of the Finance Group and particular PCC members who support David in his role.

The Wild Advent and Wild Lent afternoons were an exciting new initiative, ably led by our Licensed Lay Minister and team of volunteers. They all offered not only their time and enthusiasm but also a range of skills that ensured a fascinating time was had by all (adult and child) who attended. We look forward to this Fresh Expression becoming a regular feature of our mission and outreach.

Indeed, along with finances, mission and outreach has been the other main focus of the period. Several plans and initiatives were discussed during the last sixteen months but, sadly, are on hold until the COVID-19 related problems are resolved. It is all the more encouraging, therefore, that the indefatigable Friends of All Saints', with PCC support, have made such progress with the Heritage Project.

The APCM report reflects many aspects of our church life as we reach out and welcome people into our community. It is encouraging to see that our electoral roll is higher than it was at the 2019 APCM. We are blessed that so many quietly get on with the small but essential tasks that ensure the life of the

church continues, as well as those who step forward for higher profile, one-off events. We thank everyone for their time, their talents and their prayers.

Judith Gibbons, PCC Secretary

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL 2019

The revised Church Electoral roll as at 5 April 2020.

Since 18 March 2019 when the New Electoral Roll was printed, there have been 5 additions. (No information was received during the 'Lockdown'.)

The current total now on the revised Roll is **123**.

Annette Whittle, Electoral Roll Officer

STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR 2019

In 2019 a total of 29 people in the Stewardship Scheme gave between them £20,629.95 which provided an additional income to us of approximately £5,000 back in Gift Aid refunds (currently awaiting two refund claims just submitted).

A further four non-tax paying members donated between them £812.00 over the year. I am able to claim tax refunds annually on this amount along with all the open-plate (casual) collections for both All Saints' and St James' services which amounted to £13,325.31 with a tax refund of £1640.70. I will be able to claim again for 2019-20 after tax year ends in April.

Please remember tax can only be claimed on non-gift-aid stewardship envelopes as long as individual amounts do not exceed £20. Cheques are also not permitted to be included, either in non-gift-aid envelopes or in open-plate collections.

In addition to these sources of income in 2019, there were 16 members who donated through the Parish Giving Scheme. This is a direct debit system which makes monthly gift aid payments to our church bank account automatically. In 2019 the total amount donated was £14,869.99 which with monthly gift aid payments totalling £3,717.54 made an annual total of £18,587.53

I encourage everyone with a bank account to join the Diocesan scheme as it gives us that all important monthly gift aid payment on top of donations and greatly reduces my workload each quarter. Please ask me for information about the scheme or indeed anything else that needs further clarification.

My thanks to the tireless work of David Wiggins, who patiently copes with my demands for quarterly bank donations figures and the brilliant banking team

Linda Salmon, Jennifer Gallant and Margaret Singleton who count, bank and complete all our weekly record sheets.

Faithfully, Sue Wills

LICENSED LAY MINISTRY

I am the Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) at All Saints' and St James' Churches in Brightlingsea, serving God through leading services of the Word, and teaching and encouraging others.

The "5th Sunday" All-Age family non-Eucharist services became a popular, regular feature of our worship life at St James', actively encouraging young families to come to worship in an informal way. The PCC decided it should become a once a month service and we began to embark on a monthly non-Eucharist service, but "lockdown" quickly put a stop to this.

My thanks to David Girdlestone, who gamely helped with "Dilemma Dave", the puppet; to Chis Bloor, Peter Marchant and Fred Dart, who helped with the music; and a whole team of people who supported these services and helped to make them happen. My thanks, too, to the children who sometimes act out the story, read, or take part in the services. We pray that we will be able to start up the monthly non-Eucharist services once again in the future.

Alongside the All-Age worship, we also began an initiative for outside worship with children, exploring God's world in Creation. It was called "Wild Advent" and, over two sessions during Advent, I led worship and activities in All Saints' Churchyard for children to explore their faith in practical ways. We gathered around an open fire, ate marshmallows, and created, sang, and prayed together.

It was so well received, we began another event, "Wild Lent", during Lent. We only managed one session before lockdown, but it was a joyful time and I hope to repeat the experience again when we are permitted.

On the back of this, we began exploring "Forest Church", an informal outdoor service designed for all the family. It sits quite well with lockdown restrictions, being outside and socially distanced. At the time of writing, I am planning a "Forest Church" service for the end of August.

I have continued to be involved in baptism preparation, visiting and supporting families up to the baptism of their baby or child, until lockdown forced us to stop baptising. Those who wanted their child baptised this year have deferred to later dates in the hope we can have "normal" baptisms next year.

I enjoy leading acts of worship in lay services as my work commitments have allowed; and working alongside Rev Caroline as I continue to learn and grow as your Lay Minister.

Catherine Graham

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

In August 2019 Jane Girdlestone took over from Catherine Graham as the Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) for children, in addition to her current role as Adults (who may be Vulnerable) Safeguarding Representative. Catherine, Jane and Rev. Caroline have met to discuss the handover and put in place any necessary actions. The PSR also ensures that Risk Assessments and Health & Safety measures are implemented for all those hiring or using the church premises both at St James' and All Saints'.

The PSR identifies those needing to undertake safeguarding training. As such, the PCC as Church Officers, in addition to others, agreed that they will all undergo Level 1 (basic) safeguarding training. Where appropriate, a more in-depth Level 2 safeguarding training (which is face-to-face) will also take place. The C2 Face-to-Face training will be undertaken once the Corona Virus restrictions are lifted.

As instructed by the Church of England, our safeguarding details have been registered with thirtyone:eight, which is an independent Christian charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse.

Jane Girdlestone has also taken on the role as the Lead Recruiter for the parish and is assisted by Ann Wiggins. The Lead Recruiter organises and manages online Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) applications and is the main point of contact between the Parish and "thirtyone:eight".

At the time of writing, both the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the thirtyone:eight safeguarding helpline will remain open throughout the lockdown, along with the Disclosure and Barring service which will continue to operate and process checks as normal. They will remain open to take telephone calls from our own Parish Safeguarding Team.

Jane Girdlestone

LAY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION and Care Homes Communion visits.

There has been no change in the number of people (18) with a licence from the Bishop to assist at communion, take communion to care homes and to those who are ill at home and ask to be visited.

From March this year and onwards, there have been no care home visits since the homes have been closed to all to protect their residents and staff from the Covid 19 virus. We have kept in phone contact with one of the two care homes that were visited; the staff continue to say that all is well there.

The Oakland visitors hope to start visiting again when the circumstances are right. The Stronvar visitors no doubt will plan to do the same when they can.

It is thought that the Rev Caroline and PCC have a 'team' to take communion to those at home who request it because they have various reasons for not wanting to be in church at the moment. Presumably, this 'team' will be separate from the Care Home visiting people.

I hope there will be more to say next year!

Colin Singleton.

DEANERY SYNOD

I have continued as the Secretary of the Deanery Synod and am very grateful to Jennifer Gallant and Linda Salmon for their support since 2017. As usual, in 2019, the Deanery Synod met round the Deanery and 2020 is the year when a completely new Synod is elected at APCMs. The two MMPs in the Deanery have been commissioned. The Deanery's CAP Debt Centre has recently entered its third year of operation and the Deanery is looking into ways to raise the money needed to continue this valuable work into the fourth and fifth years. Your continued prayers for the Deanery will be much appreciated.

Janet Russell

REPORT ON MUSIC (except for St James' Singers) and the OHP
(Compiled 27th January 2020)

It is a great privilege to play for God.

St James' organ soldiers on, as does All Saints'. Both are tuned and serviced once a year. The keyboard at St James' is 20 years old and is past its 'sell-by'

date but it serves its purpose. The piano in St James' is relatively modern. It was tuned in October 2018.

I try to keep a balance between modern and old hymns. My thanks to Colin Singleton and Peter Marchant for helping out when I'm not here.

My thanks to them, Jackie Edmunds, John Gillard and Brenda Drost for operating the Overhead Projector. Is the text large enough (Ariel size 36)?

My thanks also to Fred Dart (guitar) and Peter Marchant (piano). Several times Lucky Woro-Grey has sung new hymns to us during communion. I hope she will sing with the group even more. I would love to find someone who can come and play the drums each week. Thanks to Greta (Totenhofer) on clarinet and Karen (Talmey) on flute on Parade Sundays.

Thanks to Rudi Drost for occasionally playing his zither before the service and during communion. Thanks to Melanie Bridle for playing as always at the Nativity Play

The music in the last year has been lifted by the St James' Singers at the Pentecost Praise, Good Friday Meditation, Easter, Harvest, the Laying-up Service and Carol Service. We also sang at the concert given by the Clacton Concert Orchestra in December. My thanks to Adrian Ure who accompanies us. I will leave Carole, our energetic conductor, to write more about them.

Let's never forget we do everything first and foremost for God's glory!

Chris Bloor

READER AND SIDESPERSON ROTAS

We have prepared the usual four quarterly rotas to cover these duties and, whilst they do work, more help would be welcomed, especially with sidespersons' duties. Please let us know if you are able to join either list.

Alison Gabbedy and Janet Russell

CHURCH LADS & GIRLS BRIGADE

After my first full year in charge of the company, I feel that we are stable and starting to grow slowly.

Throughout the year we have been concentrating on the structure of the company without a marching band to support the outings and activities for the members. This includes new badge work and community interaction Projects.

With a focus on structure there is still the continuous need for vital fundraising. As an independently funded company, our sources of income are:

subs, which the members pay; fundraising by the dedicated volunteer leaders; and any donations that we are lucky to receive. This year, we explored some new fundraising ideas such as different shows and fetes along with our first afternoon tea, which was a great success.

Looking forward to the year to come, we will be looking to create more community interaction opportunities for the members with the new award scheme in place, along with day trips and invited guests. This will help to create a diverse and exciting company to engage the members we have and encourage more members to join.

OIC St James' Brightlingsea 2078 company
Cpt John Dines

SPARKLERS (Junior Church)

I am very pleased to report that all is well with the Sparklers. Our numbers vary from month to month, but we do have some children who never miss. It is so good to have Melanie's support, playing for our hymns and choruses; the children still enjoy singing "Building up the Temple" with gusto.

In May, we were all thrilled to have the pleasure of a visit from the Bishop of Chelmsford. The children gave him a really Big Welcome and asked him many questions about being a Bishop. He explained about some of the jobs he has and I think that morning will stay in their memories for many years to come. To me it was a truly special occasion, and I will remember it for ever.

On 8th June, the "Teddy Bears Picnic" took place at All Saints'. We had planned to hold it outside, but the weather was not good. We were able to have one game outside, while the sun shone, but a great time was had by all nonetheless. All being well, we plan to have another this year.

We continue to have craft at the end of our service, so they all have something to take home. We decorated flowerpots and planted hyacinth bulbs in November; sadly, some did not grow but those that did survive were taken to our care homes, Stronvar and Oaklands. I was also able to take some out to some of the housebound elderly.

Our December Nativity "A Midwife Crisis" was a little different this year, but it all came back to the Birth of Jesus in the stable. As the story progressed, the Midwife (Rosy) received a call to deliver a Baby King so she naturally thought she would be going to a Palace as and she set out on her journey along with her faithful Donkey (Josh). They all played their parts very well. Frederick Coe was the Narrator, and all the parts were played by the children: Joseph and Mary; Angels; Star Angel; Shepherds; Sheep; and the three Kings. The singing

was beautiful, and I was so proud of them all. My grateful thanks to the adults who agreed to take part. A well-deserved applause was received at the end from a full congregation.

We now begin another year and pray that our numbers will grow. We can all do great things together, learning to know the Bible Stories, and getting to know our Heavenly Father.

God Bless, Ruby Summers

ST JAMES' BEARS (3rd Wednesday every month)

Our numbers had sadly declined but two new childminders started attending with their children, resulting in five new Bears which was very rewarding.

We have fun time, singing, story time, and then we all enjoy a special time together. Sally and I prepare everything for the afternoon and wait to see how many children come along.

At half-term holidays some of our former Bears came to join us, and that was really special.

God Bless, Ruby Summers

MOTHERS' UNION

The year started with our A.G.M. on 9th January. It all went well, and officers and committee were elected. Rev. Caroline was our speaker for the rest of the afternoon. We enjoyed the items she brought along with her and had a pleasant meeting.

February saw us having a social time, looking at photos of the members over the last 20 years, remembering those still with us and those gone by.

In March, our speaker came from Porridge & Pens, a charity supported by the Church. We learnt of the support they need and how hard they work to help as many children as they can.

April saw Peter Ball bring all his robes and the Mayoral Chain to show us and to tell us about his duties for the year. It was very interesting, and we learnt a great deal.

On 1st May we met at the Museum, enjoyed looking around and found that the albums were of great interest to all. Margaret served tea and cakes, which was very nice.

June was our annual wave of prayer, where 4 million of our members around the world join together to pray.

In July we held our Strawberry tea afternoon, and we were joined by some guests.

September saw us listening to Vivien Chapman talk about Dementia, and how to listen effectively. We all did a quiz to see how much we knew about this awful illness.

In October we welcomed Roy Birnie, who spoke to us about his own and his family's Maritime history, aided by his wife Cath.

November we welcomed our Deanery Chairman, Jo Jellis, whose theme was: "Men and Women you may not have heard of in the Bible". It was very interesting and demonstrated how much women were a strength even then.

December of course was our Christmas Social. We enjoyed mince-pies, cake, chocolate biscuits and tea. We exchanged cards and had a great time.

Kathryn Tidman

CRADLE ROLL

67 for 2019.

Kathryn Tidman

SEA OF FAITH GROUP

We are a group of 10 meeting on alternate Wednesday evenings in two of the members' houses in school term time.

We read and discuss 'sailing directions' for the voyage called faith. Is there another safe way across this huge ocean reaching out beyond the universe? If so, will it be different from the one many of us have known since childhood and will it be better?

We are looking into Rev. Steve Chalke's 'The Lost Message of Paul', published last year by 'SPCK'. It's subtitle, 'Has the Church misunderstood the Apostle Paul'? Chalke's emphatic answer is 'Yes'. He says the two Greek words 'pistis Christou' often used in Paul's epistles have been wrongly understood to mean that people are saved by their faith in Christ, often defined as an intellectual consent to a set of beliefs or creeds. In fact, he makes a very strong argument that the words mean Christ's faithfulness to God saves us all.

Rev. Lucy Winkett, Rector of St, James, Piccadilly, London says if you read the book - '...prepare to have your mind expanded and your spirit stretched as Paul redefines what it means to be a Christian, then and now'.

The 'sailing directions' begin to look very different and much more challenging than those to which we might be accustomed. If all are redeemed by the faithfulness of Christ and not our faith in him, then, says Steve Chalke, we should start to live like it. This is what 'the grace of God' really means.

Anyone who would like to join the group will be very welcome.

Colin Singleton

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2019

The Christmas Tree Festival for 2019 took place over the weekend of 14th and 15th December, with musical concerts on the nights of Friday 13th and Saturday 14th, as well as the traditional carol singing on Sunday night, led so enthusiastically by Chris Bloor, with just the right amount of Christian explanation of the Christmas theme. Both evening concerts were popular in very different ways. The first featured a local singing duo with international experience, 'Oo La La', who produced a lively, light-hearted seasonal programme with audience participation; whilst the second "Hexachordia" introduced us all to the delights and sounds of medieval instruments, taking us on a journey of music and words through the winter season.

Over the event, All Saints' was visited by over 2,050 people to look at the spectacular display of 88 trees and also to enjoy the opportunities for sampling delicious refreshments or browse the delights of the Christmas Shop, so ably organised by Olivia Goddard and Peter Reilly, or be tempted by the home-made goodies on sale in the Pantry. Over 200 children took part in the special quizzes arranged by Catherine Graham. This year the charity tree was represented by EACH (East Anglian Children's Hospice). Overall, the profits were sufficient to allow £8000 be given to the Friends of All Saints' (for the Heritage project) and £2000 donated to Brightlingsea PCC (to support a better fire alarm system and other major repairs).

However, none of this happens without the huge efforts from all the volunteers – about 475 people are involved, without counting all those who decorate and display trees. Injections of energy, enthusiasm and expertise are always welcomed and in 2019 a new pantry team managed to raise their contribution to the profits by 66%. For 2020, we need more volunteers and are looking for two people to take over the joint chair role, as Jackie and Elizabeth hope to step aside.

Elizabeth Foss-Smith & Jackie Edmunds, Joint Chairmen

FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Yet again, the Committee has met regularly throughout the year - as has the joint committee of members of the PCC and members of the Friends committee. A very big thank you is due to both Elizabeth Foss-Smith and Sue Wills for sorting out the successful submission to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Joint Committee has also worked hard on applying for the necessary permissions for the works to be started. The Friends are also grateful to all those who have been Custodians through the Summer months and we hope to open every afternoon this year.

Janet Russell

ALL SAINTS' HERITAGE PROJECT

Over the last twelve months our work on ensuring an enduring heritage and future for All Saints' Church has stepped up. We now have won some impressive financial backing from the National Heritage Lottery Fund who have granted us £61,000 for an initial development phase, as well as £9,000 from the Allchurches Trust, £4,500 from the Headley Trust, £500 from the Jill Franklin Trust, £200 from the Co-operative community funds and other generous local donations. The recent Christmas Tree Festival also was able to donate £8,000 to the cause.

We named the overarching project (to repair the Tudor Tower and install an equal-access WC with small kitchen) the "**Tower of Strength**", whilst concurrently we have a band of "**All Saints' Angels**" who have been recruited to support, lend advice and volunteer their skills. Local councillors have been good enough to lend their support as we apply for the necessary permissions. We were further encouraged by Historic England agreeing to list All Saints' on the Heritage at Risk Database (published October 2019) which strengthened our application for funding. There will be a special focus on sharing the heritage of the site, both in the interior through the iconic Memorial Tiles and other artefacts, as well as outside by making the most of the well conserved churchyard. Not only that, but we hope with proper facilities indoors, the church can be used for a variety of cultural and other events drawing in wider audiences.

Going forward, we need to implement the development phase: getting planning permission; organising the building work; designing a heritage programme and other activities; finding more funding; as well as preparing the application to the NLHF for another big tranche of money for the delivery phase. Needless to say, this all takes time and our timetable now stretches into

2023. But what matters is that, with energy, prayers and skills from within our community, we are transforming our well-loved landmark into a vibrant place (both inside and outside of the church) with a flourishing future.

On behalf of the FOAS/PCC Project Group

Elizabeth Foss-Smith

SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT

Once again, the Social committee has had a busy year holding a variety of events both social and fundraising.

Our popular Quizzes, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn, raised £423.00 for General Funds.

The Pancake Party proved very popular and raised over £70.00.

This was followed by our Spring Supper. where a three-course meal of Prawn and Melon starter followed by Chicken in wine sauce with potatoes and Vegetables and dessert of Fruit Salad and Ice Cream was served. The money raised was for General Funds.

The Table-Top Sale in June raised £255.00 for General Funds.

The Harvest Supper menu of Sausage and Mash went down very well with all who attended and £360.00 was raised for the Beacon of Hope.

The last event of the year was our Christmas Bazaar. It was a very happy and successful event that raised £1,160.00, a great result. Funds again went in our General Fund.

Altogether, the Social and Fundraising committee has contributed £1,908.00 to General Funds, plus £360.00 to Beacon of Hope.

Members of the committee also provided a lunch for couples attending the Wedding Preparation day.

We have many events planned for this year:

- Spring Quiz on Saturday 2nd May, which will include Jacket potato supper;
- St James' Patronal Lunch on Sunday 26th July, with cold buffet;
- Harvest Supper on Saturday 3rd October, with Vegetable Soup, Sausage & Mash, Apple Crumble & Custard;
- Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 28th November.

Further details of all events will appear as the year progresses.

Proceeds from all these events, with the exception of Harvest Supper and Breakfast Club funds, will be going to General Church Expenses. So please make a note of these dates and try to support as many of them as you can.

BREAKFAST CLUB grows in popularity month by month with between 40 and 50 breakfasts served. It is a great social event and also a wonderful fund raiser for local charities, making up most of our church's charitable giving. Those which have benefitted this year are:

- Brightlingsea in Bloom £200
- Brightlingsea Museum £100
- Church Lads and Girls Brigade £150
- Brightlingsea Lido £150
- Brightlingsea Winterfest £100
- Brightlingsea Food Bank £100
- The Autumn Centre £100
- First Responders £100
- Holy Mowers £100

making a total amount donated £1,100.00.

Many thanks go to all who assist the committee on our very busy Breakfast mornings and to all who attend.

Linda Salmon, Sue Merrell, Carole Warren, Hazel Dines and Pam Bloss, Rachel Hawkrige, Claudia Campbell.

SATURDAY COFFEE

Our Saturday morning coffee continues to be very popular, providing a place for people to meet and catch up with friends as well as experiencing church in a casual and welcoming atmosphere.

Pam's Cards and Pies and Jennifer's Book stall are also well supported and appreciated by all.

Thank you to all our volunteers who serve coffee every Saturday morning: without you, this important outreach could not continue.

Although never intended as a fundraising activity, the coffee mornings contribute in excess of £1000 a year to church funds.

The list for volunteers is kept at the back of church. If **you** could help one Saturday morning then please sign up.

Linda Salmon

CHURCH SUPPER PARTIES

These suppers have been offered as an opportunity for members of the St James' "family" and their partners to meet others in an informal and, hopefully, convivial setting to enjoy a good chat and a bite to eat. Uniquely, there are no costs to our guests, no fundraising or hidden agenda!

It has been a particular pleasure to welcome new members of the congregation and to see returning friends. This year we have held 3 suppers with 69 guests – a total of 16 events since 2015.

If there are members of the congregation who have either not received an invitation or have been unable to attend in the past, please speak to Sally Goodenough. We try to cater for those with specific dietary needs and provide wine and non-alcoholic drinks; we would love to see you.

David & Elizabeth Foss-Smith

WEDDING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

In 2019, 10 couples were married at All Saints'.

I find the position of Wedding Administrator a privilege to be of help to the couples and offers opportunities to get to know them and to help with their arrangements and any other questions that may come up through talking to them.

With the many other venues offering Wedding services, it is heartening that there are still many couples who choose to make their Wedding Vows to one another in the presence of God.

For the coming year we have 6 weddings booked at All Saints' and 1 booked for St James'.

Linda Salmon, Wedding Administrator

CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid Week in May 2019 raised £1390. Thanks to all who helped to collect.

Door to door envelopes	£879
Friday at Fiveways	£173
Saturday High Street	£76
Donations	£120
Mini Market	£142

Unfortunately, I will not be able to organise this year's collection. Hopefully, someone reading this will be willing to take it on and raise money this year.

Jennifer Gallant

BEREAVEMENT COFFEE AFTERNOONS

Bereavement Coffee is unable to meet at the present time. We hope we will be able to start again in the not too distant future.

Jennifer Gallant

SATURDAY MORNING BOOKSTALL

During the past year, the Book Stall has raised £500.

Colchester Night Shelter	£220
All Saints'	£100
4Youth	£50
Church lads & Girls Brigade	£50
Beacon of Hope	£50
Church funds	£30

Before lockdown, the Book Stall also raised £200 for the Colchester Night Shelter.

Keep reading, keep buying, thank you for your support.

Jennifer Gallant

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRIGHTLINGSEA & Simple Lunches

It has been another eventful year for us, including our annual services on Good Friday; Pentecost meetings and Christmas events. We changed venue to The Parish Hall for our Mini-Market; and gave a substantial donation from it to 4Youth and Family Support (The Autumn Centre). Late Night Shopping was a very blustery, cold, but enjoyable evening, and I only had to go home once to warm up!

In January, we found that more people than usual were attending the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which was encouraging. Lent Courses also started and were well received – although interrupted.

There have been some changes: Pastor Sandie Hicks retired in October 2019; we have held fruitful discussions with the new group 'Christians in

Brightlingsea'; some of our members have moved away or died and will be missed.

The year ended with our annual World Day of Prayer service, provided this year by the Women of Zimbabwe. One of our committee members, Vivien Chapman, was responsible this year for providing and leading Dedham Church's service; I was responsible for Brightlingsea's service. With Jan Whittaker we had a very busy day: attending the Dedham Church Service, then back to Brightlingsea for the Simple Lunch (another monthly event organised by Churches Together), followed by the Brightlingsea service. Few people attended the Brightlingsea service with more people involved in taking part than in the congregation, which was disappointing. However, both services were thought-provoking and lovely. At the time, we did not realise that these would be our last big events before 'lockdown' due to the COVID19 Pandemic.

I would like to thank all the people involved with Churches Together, the Committee members and others who volunteer their time to help.

Alison Gabbedy

BIBLE STUDY

A group of 7 interested ladies have been meeting regularly at 1 Tudor Close fortnightly on Monday afternoons. We completed reading St Mark's Gospel and are now studying St Luke's Gospel.

Annette Whittle

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Each Friday at 10.30am, a small group meets in St James' to pray for all those who are unwell, and also to thank God for those who have made a recovery. Names can be put on the prayer board, which is checked each week.

We pray for those who have passed away, and for those who mourn them.

We finish with prayers for our town; and thank God for our Doctors and Nurses.

The service takes about 20 minutes; and all are welcome.

Hazel Rusbridge

PRAYER STAND/CANDLE STAND

This is an important Outreach Ministry for the Church, used both during services and during the week. It was in constant use throughout the year.

Many people visited the church to light candles and leave written prayers. At various times during the 'lockdown' it has been available for people to use.

Alison Gabbedy

BOOKCASE

Throughout the year until 'lockdown', the bookcase had been permanently open. It is obvious to me that books have been taken out and returned. It is currently closed due to the pandemic, but we hope it will be open again soon.

Alison Gabbedy

OPEN HOUSE

The stalwart regular members of this fellowship group have met each second Tuesday of the month at 38 High Street. We have been able to welcome one or two new people who have joined us in 2019.

Janet Russell

The Native – OUR PARISH MAGAZINE

It is now two years since the phoenix-like return of The Native, and this January marked the first anniversary our taking on the task of producing it locally through R J Osborn Printers.

Since we regard the magazine as part of our outreach into the wider community in Brightlingsea, we don't make a cover charge. However, currently each magazine costs £1 to produce, so we are grateful that much of the cost of production is kindly supported by advertising from local businesses, whose contributions have been vital. We are also grateful to our readers who continue to make donations in the boxes at our various outlets. We are just about breaking even at present.

The intention is that The Native is not only a parish church magazine, but one with community news too, reflecting the wealth of activities and life in Brightlingsea. We have recently started to feature artwork and news from the Primary School, with which our church has built good links over the past 18 months.

Thanks go to various people who have kindly provided a number of excellent photos in the past year, especially Revd Caroline with her ubiquitous candid camera. Thanks also to the regular contributors for submitting their columns in good time.

I am really grateful to Bob Goodenough for his practical support, especially organising the recruitment of advertisers and outlets; also to John Paul Maytum who sub-edits and formats the proof for the printers.

All in all, it is a good team effort and seems to be well received.

Carole Maytum

PAM'S CARDS & CRAFTS STALL

From April 2019, the stalls have been well supported, raising £1800 for General Church Funds. An additional £300 was raised, for other charities in the town, from card sales. Another very busy year.

Visits to Springfields are appreciated by the residents who enjoy choosing cards over a cup of tea and a chat. These visits have been a valuable part of Christian outreach to those who are unable to get out and about.

Please keep saving greetings cards to be recycled. We need to raise much-needed funds more than ever through these difficult times.

Pam & Graham Bloss