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# **ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BRANDESTON**

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## **ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

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**Priest-in-charge:**

The Revd Canon Graham Hedger

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**Bank:**

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**Independent Examiner:**

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## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH – ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

All Saints' PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Priest-in-Charge, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. [PCC (powers) Measure 1956 Section 2]. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Cemetery Chapel and graveyard.

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL:

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year the following people served as members of the PCC. Their term of office, excluding the priest-in-charge, ends at the APCM in 2021.

Priest-in-Charge: The Revd Canon Graham Hedger Ex officio

Churchwardens: Mrs Alison Molyneux Ex officio

Mrs Mary Baker (Elder) Ex officio

Deanery Synod Rep: Mrs Alison Molyneux

Mr Paul Baker Ex officio

### 1. Election of PCC with reduced number to 6 elected members following reduction of the electoral roll.

Mr Chris McArthur (Vice-Chair/Tower Captain) Co-opted

Lady Clemency Cunliffe (up to October 2020)

Mrs Lydia Freeman (from 2014)

Mrs Ruth Garratt (from 2013)

Mrs Kelly Jeffery

Mrs Marion Kirton from the 2016

Mrs Janet Weston (from 2014)

Mrs Maida Campbell (from April 2019)

6 elected members

### COMMITTEES

The PCC operates one official committee which meets between full meetings of the PCC. This is the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact business of the PCC between meetings, subject only to directions given by the Council.

The standing committee in our parish comprises:

Clergy, P Baker, M Baker, A Molyneux C McArthur and K Jeffery.

**2020 has been an exceptional year for everyone. The corona virus pandemic has had a huge effect on the daily lives of people locally and throughout the world. Since March, the church has been hit by lockdowns, closures and partial re-openings of church buildings, cancellation of events, constantly changing advice from the church and regulations from the government as the situation evolved. Throughout all this time church members have continued to pray and support their communities, using whatever methods of communication they could. Services have taken place in churches when possible and via a Zoom internet connection every week. This has been one of the most positive outcomes of the pandemic, with numbers continuing to rise throughout the year.**



The year was also marked by the death of Eileen Leach in July on the evening before her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was a longstanding Churchwarden and elder. Her faith was an inspiration and example to us all and we give thanks for all that she taught us and for the time that she devoted to the church, the village and her neighbours. A limited number of friends and family was able to attend her funeral but the church bell was tolled 96 times so that everyone in the village could remember her.

#### CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many of our church buildings were closed for a large part of 2020. We recognise the huge upheaval that churches have been through, and the amazing creativity and resilience that churches have displayed in continuing to offer worship and pastoral support to their congregations and parishioners during this difficult time.

There were 2 baptisms, 1 wedding and 3 funeral services in the church during the year.

Average attendance at Sunday services in church was 12 adults and 0 children.

An average Zoom number is 35 participants. It has not changed much depending on the season but there was a "bulge" just after the start of the second lockdown when we sometimes had more than 40 participants.

Some significant Zoom numbers are:

Christingle: 30 screens and 38 adults plus 4 children

Carol Service: 25 screens with 33 Adults and 2 children

As agreed the Zoom numbers were included in the Kettleburgh Diocesan Statistics

The Christmas Eve service at Brandeston was cancelled as the Covid situation escalated at that time.

The number on the revised electoral roll in December was 35.

## WORSHIP

Services in January and February followed the usual format with the churches of the benefice worshipping together twice a month. In March we were put into our first lockdown and the restrictions began. Churches were completely closed and we all had to learn to access Zoom service or other online or TV and radio options. Friday afternoon prayer services transferred to Zoom as well, giving the elders and clergy an opportunity to meet and plan as well as to pray. Special events such as Mothering Sunday and the Benefice Pilgrimage had to be adapted for Zoom. We were fortunate in having Bill and Jackie Clark from Kettleburgh who have hosted the Zoom services, allowing the clergy to concentrate on their job.

Zoom services will never replace the pleasure of meeting our friends at church but they have had significant advantages; the numbers attending have continued to grow and include people who are new to our worshipping community. We have had a regular member attending from Australia where she was confined by travel restrictions. We welcomed friends and relations from other parts of the UK, and people who could not normally join us because of illness were able to join us from home. It was good to see them all.

Taizé services, led by Revd Wendy Gourlay, were recorded by local church members and were sent out on YouTube. She organized more services than originally planned to keep us going- another example of the innovation that has sustained our worship and reached a new audience.

Wednesday morning services continued at Hacheston church wherever possible but, sadly, the Revd Richard Ginn died during the year so these services were led by Revds Hedger and Parmenter.

Everyone was delighted that, with the onset of the second lockdown, we were still able to hold our Remembrance Sunday service which took place in the churchyard and was well attended, with members of the congregation spacing themselves round the churchyard in accordance with prevailing regulations.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Framlingham College Prep School continued to use the church for services every week. For much of the year they were able to meet in school under the school's different Covid rules and it was good to see the church being used for worship. They held some of their services outside.





Elders from the benefice held 2 reflective storytelling sessions at Easton school before lockdown restrictions started and they have continued to keep in touch with the school.

The holiday club at Charsfield School was planned but did not take place, but children from the club all received an online version of the club. Take-up was limited as the children were by this time beginning to weary of computer-based learning. It's not the same as being with your friends and having fun together!

#### REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The PCC met once in February, but the work of the PCC continued by telephone and email. The annual meeting finally took place in the church in November. PCC and other church members worked on aspects of worship and a limited amount of fundraising, but the focus of work was in supporting the community during the Pandemic. An outline of the year's work, which was agreed at the Zoom PCC meeting in February 2021, is included here.

#### Report on actions discussed and approved by PCC/Standing Committee during 2020

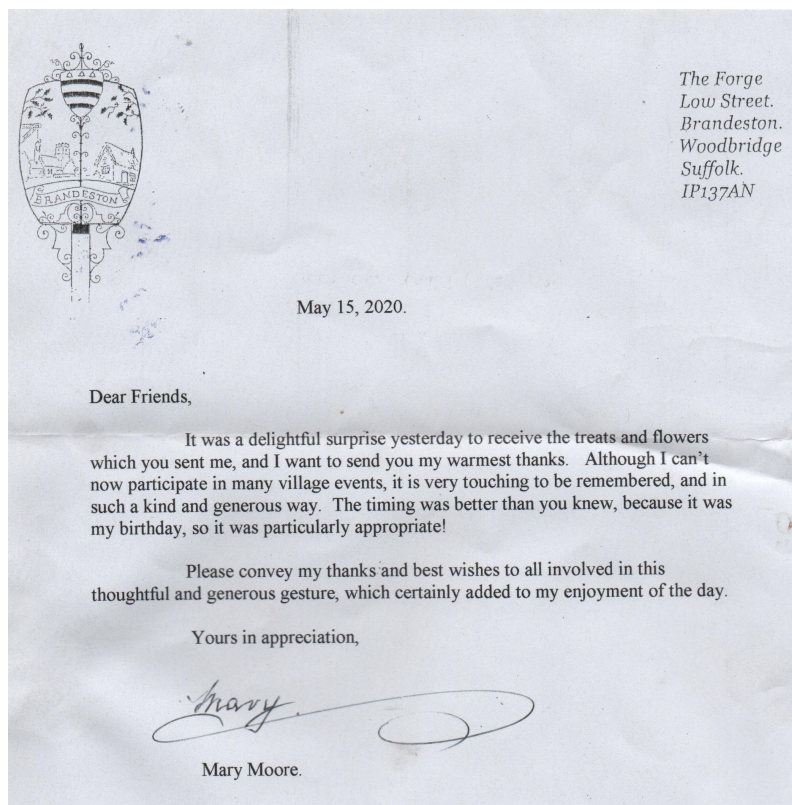
February	The Big Brandeston Breakfast raised £234
March	As a result of the lockdown we worked on setting up a Support network for Brandeston residents. People were very quick to volunteer and a number also needed help with shopping and medications as well as phone chats.
March	A donation was made to the church for the Support Network. The Standing Committee and our generous donor agreed that it should go into the Caring Fund.
March	Plans were made for weekly Zoom services for the benefice and online prayers for the benefice on the Hacheston Church website.
March	The parish magazine was changed to an online version with neighbours passing it on to people who could not access emails.
April	A sign was placed in Mill Lane churchyard to inform people about the wildlife area and there was communication with the school ground-staff about mowing of grass in the churchyard to allow wild plants to flower. The flowers this year were wonderful!



## Brandeston PCC Annual Report for 2020

It was arranged that the church would still be open for villagers to visit on Tuesdays from 10am to 4pm and the school would also be able to use the church on Friday afternoons for their services.

May Some of the donation to the support network was used to distribute gifts, with generous support from “The Queen”, to people shielding in Brandeston. This was agreed by discussion by the PCC and the donor. We received a lovely selection of letters and cards expressing thanks.



May Work was done on a damaged tree at the chapel.

June Re-opening of churches for private prayer – a risk assessment was completed along with advice for cleaners who volunteered to check the church on a rota basis.

June The plant stall organised by Mary M-W, Alison Molyneux, Marion Kirton and Claire Burgess raised a magnificent £1360 for the church. The village hall committee was offered a share in the proceeds but kindly agreed that all the takings should go to the church.

July Risk assessments for reopening for worship were approved.

August The church reopened for services while maintaining weekly Zoom services for those who could not attend in person.

September It was agreed that the church would be open for villagers on Tuesdays from 10am to 4pm and the school would also be able to use the church on Friday afternoons for their services.



## Brandeston PCC Annual Report for 2020

September	The bike ride took place without the usual church sitters. Some generous donations boosted Brandeston's taking to £300.
October	The APCM was held in church.
November	M Baker completed a Leadership Safeguarding course
November	Quinquennial inspection of church and chapel.
November	We were able to hold our Remembrance service and a large group spread themselves round the churchyard to take part. A group from the school also attended.
November	Churchwardens finally made their annual promises in their own churches rather than at the usual archdeacon's visitation.
November	Standing Committee gave its approval for Eileen Leach's memorial stone.
December	PCC members worked with the pub, Aaron Nobbs and Darryl and Pat Morgan to organise alternative carol singing, Carols on the Verge, using the Radio Suffolk broadcast with Father Christmas riding on a tractor through the village. This raised £371 for the hospice.



December	Carol Cooke from Marlesford attended a zoom meeting with the bishop on behalf of the benefice to discuss responses to the pandemic.
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## Brandeston PCC Annual Report for 2020

- December A Christmas raffle replaced the Christmas fair. PCC members and other villagers were very generous with prizes and the response from the village was beyond our expectations. It raised £1495.
- December Alison Molyneux sold bulbs for Christmas and raised £126.
- December Kelly Jeffery raffled another cake at school in addition to the one in the raffle, and raised £100.
- December Following tightening of restrictions, it was decided that we should, sadly, cancel the Christmas Eve Midnight service at Brandeston and direct people to Zoom Services and the Christmas Day communion service in Easton. We made this decision with the agreement of the Archdeacon, who was due to lead the service.
- December Bells were rung for Christmas morning.
- Fram Broadband connected the apparatus on the tower roof and agreed payment for use of the tower.

### ALL SAINTS CHURCH – FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

The church remains in good order and has had no repairs carried out during the past year apart from an oil-fired boiler breakdown. However, our new church architect, Ruth A Blackman from Beeston-next-Mileham undertook her first quinquennial inspection of the church and the chapel on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and her report is currently awaited. The chapel was included in this inspection for the first time as it is a consecrated building still and therefore should be included in the survey by church law. We anticipate some challenging decisions and fund raising for the matters that will be detailed in her report, that we must act upon.



### FUNDRAISING

The need for fundraising for the maintenance of the Grade 1 listed church and for the payment of the parish share is an ongoing challenge for the PCC. We are fortunate to receive such good support from our friends and neighbours in the village. This year's restrictions made fundraising difficult. Members of the PCC worked with friends and neighbours to boost the income of the church and to compensate for lost income elsewhere. Thank you to them all.

- THE BIG BRANDESTON BREAKFAST raised £234. This was the last event before lockdown.
- THE VILLAGE FETE did not take place, but A PLANT STALL organised by Mary Mitson-Woods, Alison Molyneux, Marion Kirton, Claire Burgess raised £1360 for the church. The village hall committee was offered a share in the proceeds but kindly agreed that all the takings should go to the church.
- THE BIKE RIDE organised by Ruth and John Garratt raised £600 to be shared equally with the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust.
- THE CHRISTMAS FAIR did not take place, but A CHRISTMAS RAFFLE replaced it. PCC members and other villagers were very generous with prizes and the response from the village was beyond our expectations. It raised £1495.
- Alison Molyneux sold plants for Christmas and raised £126.
- Kelly Jeffery raffled a cake at school in addition to the one in the raffle, raising £100.

#### SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding was on the agenda at PCC meetings. There have been no disclosures or referrals this year.

Mrs Pam Bennett-King continues as safeguarding officer for the churches in the benefice. Her name and other contact details are displayed on posters in the church.

#### BRANDESTON BELLRINGERS

We rang for Sunday services during the early months of the year but since then we have not rung apart from the solo chiming on Christmas morning due to CV.

However, during this year Anne Hayward died and she was a loyal member of our band for many years, she is greatly missed by us all.

Also, during the year John Garratt told us that due to his increasing years he wished to retire from regular service ringing, although he would still be available for the occasional special occasion. John's contribution to the ringing and the upkeep of the bells over the years has been very significant, and he is thanked greatly by us all.

Kettleburgh ringers continue to thankfully assist us, including P Booth, J O'Leary and R Darton.

At Brandeston the remaining ringers are C McArthur, H Saxton, Chris Oswald, Caroline Oswald, T Oswald, and L Oswald. Our friends within the Cretingham bellringers also support us when required and we are most grateful for their support.

#### MORTUARY CHAPEL

The chapel remains in good order and we are most thankful for all the work that is undertaken, particularly keeping the chapel churchyard in such splendid order. It should however be noted the lower chapel meadow is only mown once a year to enable the fine orchids to flourish. Our great friend Eileen Leach was laid to rest alongside her brother in a grave this year, and arrangements have now been agreed for burial of ashes to be undertaken to the North of the public footpath in a linear strip.

The chapel remains church property but is in a long-term sharing arrangement, managed by the Friends of the Chapel, who work closely with us. We are thankful to them all for this.

One large Ash tree in the SW corner continues to decay and a tree surgeon did undertake work during the year.

#### CHARITABLE GIVING.

St Elizabeth's Hospice: £371 from Carols in the Verge.

Suffolk Historic Churches Trust: £300 from the bike ride.

Online donations by individuals to FIND in place of gifts of harvest food.

Christmas cake to Mills Meadow care home.

#### Priest in Charge APCM report 2021 for the year 2020

Who would have thought in January 2020 that a year later we would be reporting on a year in which as a group of churches we had only met in person on a few occasions. Yet over 2020 we have been forced to make some tough decisions, and we have been challenged to work out what is essential if we are to be the church in 2020 and onwards. As we try and make sense of all that has happened, the words of Psalm 137:4 'How can we sing the songs of the Lord in a strange land?' seem hauntingly relevant. That is what we have had to do. So, perhaps the accounts of the Jews in exile have become more relevant to us.

By virtue of what has taken place in 2020 my report is different from previous years.

- **Pandemic**

The pandemic has forced us to rethink what is essential as a church in 2021.

- **Changes**

- **Zoom**

This has become an essential tool for meetings, keeping in touch and for worship. It has united people from across the benefice in a service, and we have had people join us from around the country, (indeed from overseas as well). The service has had the distinct advantage of enabling people who normally can't join in Sunday worship in churches to be part of a worshipping congregation. Sadly, it is not for everyone and the service sheets published on the church websites and then printed and distributed to those without internet connections has helped maintain our links. It has also had an impact on our environmental footprint. Something that we will need to consider more and more in the coming years.

- **Valuing what we have lost**

As with so many things we only realise its true value when it is no longer there. Many have commented that the loss of Sunday services in church, the regular benefice services drawing us together from across the benefice have been greatly missed. Not being able to sing, or see faces or greet one another with handshakes and hugs has had a significant impact on many. Later this year we will be back in church, but it will be different.

- **Challenging what we need to retain**

This pause in our regular activities has been an opportunity to be a rethink on what is essential for Christianity in our villages, where we invest our time, effort and money and perhaps what we need to let go. It does mean that in the coming months as we reflect on the refreshing of our Growing in God strategy we will need to seek to keep in the front of our minds those lessons we have learned.

- **Constantly adapting to the 'new normal'**

We have been constantly adapting to a new normal. Perhaps it is because we are small churches, or maybe it is the openness of mind that has enabled us to move swiftly to adapt as each change in circumstances was thrust upon us, frequently (it seemed) on a Friday evening.



- **Growing in God**

- **Still pressing on, we have not stopped, but it is different**  
Our rolling two year mission action plan is on hold. Indeed, many clergy reflected that even trying to plan a few weeks ahead seemed impossible. But we have continued growing in God.
- **Stewardship**  
Lent started so well. We launched our Giving in Grace / Generous God, Generous People courses with special services, personal bible study and small groups meeting in Hacheston Village Hall. All was going well until lock down. But treasurers reported that some people had revised their regular giving, other people offered their services in new ways. The impact was there to see. In November, we welcomed Bishop Mike to what was our last service together in a church, before yet another lock down. He drew together the various strands of teaching on the topic and led us in our celebrations.

- **Parish Share**

- **Thank you**  
Amazingly, in a year of great challenges, as a benefice we contributed 95% of our offer. This was a magnificent effort. THANK YOU. In a year where there was a drop in income at services and very limited fundraising this is exceptional. Thank you for all those who continued to make sacrificial offerings towards the work of God, and to those who found innovative ways to raise funds
- **2021**  
This coming year will be a bigger challenge but if we are to maintain mission and ministry in our parishes we have to strive towards paying a full share
- **Electronic giving and the Parish Giving Scheme**  
Those churches where a significant number of people contribute by Standing Order or through the Parish Giving Scheme had less problems with cash flow. It is essential that as many people as possible move over to electronic giving to enable our contribution towards the work of God in our benefice and beyond. Electronic giving is the modern day way of fulfilling the scriptural injunction that on the first day of the week we set aside our offering to God's work.

- **Thanks**

- **Thank you**  
Every annual report quite rightly records thanks to many people. At various times throughout the year, for family reasons I was absent from the parishes. The church did not grind to a halt, instead we flourished. I am grateful to all those who through their hard work ensured that services continued, that pastoral care was offered. In particular to the Elders, Canon Deirdre Parmenter and the Archdeacon of Suffolk. Also, to the Church Wardens, PCC members and others who have done so many things to enable our church buildings to remain open for prayer, to offer support to others in the villages and ensure that the message of God's love is experienced in our communities.

- **Those who have died**

- As Christians we live our lives in the light of Christ's death and our own. Death is not to be feared but to be welcomed for we step into the greater presence of God. During 2020 we lost many family and friends. Within the benefice we lost four people, who in different ways contributed much to the churches and the villages over many years.
- **Canon Richard Ginn**; I and many others greatly appreciated his teaching ministry, prayer and wise counsel.
- **Eileen Leach**; who over many years made a significant contribution to Brandeston village as well as being a church warden and elder, exercising her ministry across the benefice and contributing to the life of the deanery.
- **Liz Wilson**; who in her time as church warden of Hacheston led the Bell restoration appeal and encouraged many in their life and witness
- **Malcolm MacNichol**; his ministry of music was immense, he had 'retired many times' but I also remember his sense of humour and delight at working village fetes manning various stalls.

- **What does the future hold?**

Who knows what the future holds? 2021 and beyond will be different. As a church we cannot return to our old ways without reflecting on lessons learned and adapting to a new way of being church. What we do know is that Jesus, who is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end will lead us and guide us, therefore we will not be afraid.

Rev'd Canon Graham Hedger

Priest in Charge