

Vicar's Report APCM April 2020

As I write this report for the APCM that was due in April I cannot fail to stop a moment to reflect on a very different world we find ourselves in at the moment. Our thoughts and prayers are with our Community and Congregation at this time as we remain in lockdown until at least 2nd December 2020

As always, I will start with a very big thank you to all who have served God at St Mary's this past year and a big thank you to all who have supported me in my ministry throughout the year.

The PCC have worked tirelessly again this year to ensure that the best possible care has been taken of the fabric of the building and that all relevant local and national policies and procedures have been adhered too. Please see the reports provided by the Church Wardens and the Secretary of the PCC for greater details.

Financially the PCC have worked hard to keep to budget over the past year, and our Treasurer, Barbara has worked hard to balance the books by giving the PCC monthly and three monthly updates and comparisons against budget. Our Parish Share was increased to £37,921 and we managed to pay just over 66% as opposed to last year when we paid 62%. My thanks go to Barbara for all her hard work. Thank you Barbara.

The biggest financial investment we made last year was the decorating and refurbishment of our Parish Hall (please read Church Wardens report). We very kindly had a grant of £2,500 from the free masons. The total cost of this was £8,192.00 and so the balance was paid from existing funds. There were many people who volunteered in the Parish Hall – thank you so much for making it possible but a big thank you has to go to our Church Warden, Brian who had the responsibility of co-ordinating all the works. We continue to successfully rent out the Parish Hall and are now making a profit rather than a loss. It is hoped that refurbishment will encourage new hall users in due course.

There have been a few significant events this year which have been aimed at drawing in the Community and especially those with families. Our Family Fun Day was geared towards families and children and we owed a big thank you to Morley Fire Station for sending a Fire Engine which proved a great hit money raised was £1,286. We had an Open Day last March which raised money for the gardening fund (£413).

For the second year in a row our biggest event would be the Christmas Tree Festival and the Christmas Fair which happen on the same weekend. Both these events are very community orientated and they feed off each other on the Saturday. Money raised was £1,552 and the weekend ended with a family carol service. This is a lot of work and thank you to so many people but with regards to the Christmas Festival – thank you to Neal, our Churchwarden who does all the organising.

It was nice to see that all the schools in the area took part in the Christmas tree festival, and myself and Dawn regularly take services at Hilltop Primary, Blackgates and Westerton. All three schools come into church throughout the year for various services or class teaching and this is a really enjoyable experience for all concerned. I continue to be a Governor at Hilltop Primary.

We have held a couple of children's workshops throughout the year, Halloween, Christmas, and Easter. We continue to try and attract families and we have a nice area for parents and children to sit in a more relaxed fashion. If we have any children on the fourth Sunday then we run a Sunday school in the vestry. The ABC Group (Adults, Babies and Children) is going well on a Wednesday morning .

Dawn has now been a reader for over three years and I continue to see her grow and take on new challenges. Gail continues to take most of the responsibility for ongoing pastoral care to those who cannot come to church or who are poorly and she continues to grow and take on new responsibilities. Both are invaluable colleagues and we very much work as a Team. Thank you to both of you.

Baptisms, Funerals and Weddings have taken place and we continue to try to build meaningful relationships with those families.

We continue to have good relationships with all those who hire the hall and appreciate the support of our uniformed organisations at Parade Sunday and particularly at Remembrance Sunday.

We have had several evenings of fellowship which involved food, films, food, quizzes, food and more food. These are usually very well attended and attract a regular following of people who don't attend church on a regular basis.

I am indebted to the Gardening Team and the Community Payback Team for their continued work on the churchyard. Thank you to Dave Townsend and Brian Mazurke for all their unseen hard work.

Our regular Sunday Worship is holding at about 40, we have 3 children who come fairly regularly on Sunday mornings two of which are babies.

Our Lent course was well attended this year and people are becoming more confident in sharing their experiences and their faith.

The quality of worship is evident in our Christmas and Easter figures with services that were both well attended and of good quality. In fact we had over 1,600 come through our doors on the seven days before Christmas.

One event that I have failed to mention is the Men's Sunday lunch in March 2019. This was an event that came from our LYCIG meetings where the men of the parish cooked Sunday lunch. This was open to church members and non-church members alike.

Finally, I would just like to acknowledge how much commitment there is within our PCC and I would like to thank them for their hard work. Thank you to those who have served their time of office on the PCC and are stepping down today and thank you to those who are new members of the PCC and are stepping up to the task of serving at St Mary's Church.

My work here is ably supported by the current Church Wardens , Neal and Brian, who behind the scenes do a tremendous amount of work. They of course are not the only ones and as always it is impossible for me to single out every person I would like to thank in this report but I would like to thank all of you who volunteer and give of your time. I know you are all busy people.

Brian will be stepping down as Church Warden, this year after six years of faithful service. My thanks to him for all his hard work and kindness.

I stand by the fact that I lead in an open style, that my door is always open for discussion or a cup of coffee and a chat, and that with the passing of time I value each one of you more and continually keep you in my prayers.

I look forward to another year with you all. You will be in my prayers and may God's blessing be upon us.