



**ST ANDREWS  
ST MICHAELS**

**2022**

The Parochial Church Council of the  
Parish of St Michael's, Cofton Hackett  
and St Andrew's, Barnt Green  
(Reg Charity Number 1127031)

# Annual Parochial Church Meeting

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**10am**

**St. Andrews Church  
and on Zoom**

**Zoom Login details:**

Meeting ID: **295 293 9790**

Passcode: **standrews**

**Agenda,  
Minutes, and  
Annual Reports**

St Andrews Office

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## FORWARD

This Annual Report is briefer than normal as many of the usual activities could not take place in 2021. Besides managing covid restrictions, our Vicar, Rev Canon Rob Fieldson retired in April, and we were in interregnum for the rest of the year. A lot of creative work still went on, and we hope that this will give you a good overview of it.

The meeting will take place both on-line and “live” in St. Andrews Church, straight after our Sunday morning service. It is important to read the reports in advance as there will not be time to go through them in detail during the meeting.

Nominations for Church Wardens, Deanery Synod Representatives, and PCC Members can be made on the appropriate forms in either church (when open), in the Parish Office, or verbally at the meeting.

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## AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Church Wardens Report (in lieu of Vicars Report)
6. Presentation of the Electoral Roll
7. Presentation of the 2021 Annual Report and Accounts
8. Presentation of the APCM Agenda, Minutes, and Annual Reports for 2021
9. Election of Churchwardens, including a motion to allow a Churchwarden to be elected after completion of more than 6 years in office.
10. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives
11. Election of PCC members
12. Motion to elect an Independent Examiner of Accounts
13. Other matters of Parochial interest
14. Closing Prayers

**Please note that the first meeting of the new PCC will be Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May**

## Minutes of the APCM 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### **Attendees**

Rob Fieldson (RF)	Julia Powell (JP)	Carol Smith (CS)	David Smith (DS)
Geoff Hall (GH)	Sue Hall (SH)	Caroline Mara (CM)	Betty Tilt (BT)
Gwen Onyon (GO)	Irene Barclay (IB)	Mike Powell (MP)	Katie Leaver (KL)
Keith Godwin (KG)	Lesley Godwin (LG)	Brian Partridge (BP)	Hugh Edwards (HE)
David Milford (Da M)	Peter Talbot (PT)	Diane Milford (Di M)	Irma Hilton
Douglas Allenby (DA)	Lesley Brown (LB)	Jill Newton	Rosemary Aveyard (RA)
Philippa Allenby (PA)	Bob White	Di White	Philippa Fieldson (PF)
Dorothy Young	Tom Young	Wendy Tricklebank	Amanda Dauncey
Jenny Watson (JW)	Alan Watson	Pip Simkiss (PS)	Christine Davies
Bill Davies (BD)	Lyn Dewing	Chris Dewing (CD)	Jane Armand
Marian Reavenall (MR)	Nicola Denning (ND) took minutes		

### **1 Prayer**

RF opened with a prayer.

### **2 Apologies**

Apologies given by Gabrielle Sedgewick and Andrea Potter.

### **3 Presentation of the Electoral Role**

Electoral Roll number is 229 1 has been removed, 10 have been added.

Electoral Role records kept by ND, CD is electoral officer.

### **4 Motion to allow a Church Warden to be re-elected after completion of 6 years in office.**

PT has served a full term as a Warden (6 years). He is prepared to continue his role which will be valuable during the vacancy. The APCM to pass a motion to exceed 6 years. Motion passed.

### **5 Elections**

#### **A Church Wardens**

Current Church Wardens are Peter Talbot, Betty Tilt and Geoff Hall and 1 vacancy.

Jill Newton has been nominated and seconded, and will also be on the PCC.

All unanimously elected.

#### **B Deanery Synod**

All were elected last October for 3 years, HE was re-elected then.

Members are David Milford, Hugh Edwards, Mike Powell, Jane Best and Irene Barclay.

#### **C PCC Members**

Three members have come to the end of their term, David Kelly no longer wishes to stand and RF thanked him for his contribution. Sue Hall and Brian Partridge were re-elected. There is 1 vacancy, someone can be co-opted. JP suggested a younger PCC member. AD asked for an explanation of what it means to be a PCC

member. RF gave a short explanation. ND will send minutes of previous meetings to AD and AD could come and observe at meetings.

#### **D Examiner of Accounts**

JP proposes that David Seeley who has done them for many years. He knows our accounts. Unanimously accepted.

### **6. Presentation of the Annual Reports for 2020**

#### **Finance**

RF advised that the reports are split into 2. A detailed finance report in one and everything else in the other. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted by this meeting.

JP summarised the finance report

PS asked if when we don't have a Vicar, do we have a reduced parish share. JP said we don't, however we have a say in how much we pay the diocese each year. RF advised we can deduct costs of paying for visiting Clergy from what we pay to the Diocese, and JP advised we have a separate account to collate these expenses. DS pointed out that we pay a significant voluntary contribution over the minimum payment set by the Diocese for our Common Fund payment. RF pointed out that there is a new formula to calculate our giving. As a result the amount we were required to pay significantly fell, but we agreed to carry on paying at the previous level, and subsequently raise that in line with inflation.

GH asked where a surplus would go, JP advised it would go into the reserves.

RF Thanked JP for her work, being a Treasurer is an enormous and demanding job, which she does professionally and effectively.

PCC will formally accept the accounts.

#### **Review of the Year**

RF gave a short review of the year which was a reflection on the Challenges and the blessings that have come from 2020. There has been lots of creativity and lots to be thankful for.

#### **Children's and Families Missioner report**

CM highlighted her report which is very detailed. It has been a very interesting year, and restrictions have meant there has been a lot of creativity. eg Quest group have been meeting online and we have managed to pick up a couple of people in Stockport. Wild Church was created as a way of meeting together as we couldn't meet indoors and was hugely popular. Further restrictions meant we expanded it over a week, and we have had hundreds of people pass through for the Easter one. There are challenges ahead regathering dispersed families and recreating a relationship with the school. The junior Church team have been supportive collating and distributing 87 bags, which meant we have kept a connection with families. RF said we have had to connect in different ways with families. We couldn't have maintained these connections without CM. CM commented it's important to have resources for people to explore their faith at home. RA thanked CM for everything she has done. RF said there are some suggestions for prayer on the CFM report.

#### **Churchwardens report**

RF thanked the Wardens for their report, no comments were made.

#### **Worship Report**

RF said it's been a totally different year in terms of worship, and he has grown to value zoom church services. We want to resume Church services, but zoom has compensations too, such as everyone sees everyone's faces and we are going into people's homes, also people who would not normally step forward in Church have the confidence to do that at home. RF wanted to thank the technical team David, Mike, Brian, Alan and Keiran primarily, although others have helped.

RF asked to highlight Foundry in your prayers, and the ministry to the new estate, lockdown has hit it really hard as our relationships were new. Pray for a new Vicar who will come with experience and enthusiasm. RA gave thanks to KL for enabling us to sing.

### **Health and Safety**

GH advised all our procedures are in place and will be looked at as restrictions change.

### **Deanery Synod**

There were no Deanery Synod meetings in 2020. More to report next year.

### **ECO Group**

JP not much to add but would like to highlight our ECO Church Bronze award. More had been done in the Churchyard, involvement in Wild Church. RF mentioned the bird boxes. JP said DA has been instrumental in the bird boxes, PT in the creation of the orchard and LB with services. PT wanted to thank the volunteers who have come to St Michaels. Georgia Edwards cleaned the Churchyard for her Duke of Edinburgh award. DS pointed out that the birdboxes came from Severn Waste, not Severn Trent. RA asked if it was a big step up to move to silver, JP replied not huge and in some areas, we are at silver level. LB said this year is incredibly important with being active about climate change, G7 and COP 26 are 2 important things to pray about. AD asked for eco tips on the newsletter, JP said they received mixed messages, but we will try.

**Messy Church** is mentioned in CFM report, RF thanked PF who has been the guiding light behind Messy Church since it started years ago and has put in an enormous amount of work.

**Mens Breakfast** still hasn't met.

### **Mission Partnership**

RA advised a lot of the people we support have struggled through this period. They keep in touch with us. Zoom services make it easier to have links with mission partners. RF thanked RA.

**Craft Group** have been unable to meet, but have created a Covid Banner, CS designed it.

**Coffee Break** and **Hospital Visits** have been unable to continue due to covid. BD advised unable to go into hospital yet. Coffee Break to restart once guidelines change.

**Monday Fellowship** haven't met for over a year, but the committee have met and plan to restart in September.

**Book Club** has been on zoom or in the garden. Always looking for new people.

### **St Andrews School**

Very challenging year, teaching online and in person, St Andrews has many children of key workers, shortly before and after Christmas lots of staff had Covid. Children have been well supported at home and in school and it's a happy environment to be in. Fran and the teachers have done a wonderful job. BP agreed school have adapted well, couldn't praise them more highly.

LB said **Home Group** have met on zoom and in the garden and has been valued.

### **7 Safeguarding Update**

Year of change as Diane Milford has taken over from Cathy Daniels as our Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. Diane has experience in this role and introduced herself. Her responsibilities are to provide support advice and guidance within the Parish on all Safeguarding matters relating to children young people and vulnerable adults, including the policies dealing with those safeguarding issues. She is a point of contact for concerns about

children or adults in the Parish, responsible for making sure proper advice is sought and referrals are made as necessary. She has started to get an overview of all Church activities involving Children and Vulnerable adults. Hopes to offer advice and support of safeguarding matters and safe practice for the people leading those activities ensuring anyone who works with Children has been safely recruited and has Safeguarding training. Will maintain good records and make sure Church is a safe place. Contact details are in the Parish Directory. RF thanked Di M, safeguarding isn't just one person's responsibility, it's a PCC responsibility Di M is doing it on behalf of the PCC, CM is a link for Di M to the PCC.

RF showed a small Safeguarding film by thirtyone:eight, a Christian Charity.

JW Suggested having a parish list of who to contact, RF advised posters are displayed. Di M said we will need to be on the website and is working on this now. RF advised we need to play our part in Safeguarding, we need to take it seriously, and thanked Cathy for all her work in the role and Di M for taking it on.

## **8 Other Matters of Parochial Interest**

AD suggested Church website is not up to date and needs attention, RF aware of things not being up to date, we are working on it, contact ND with any updates.

GH pointed out it is our last formal Church meeting with RF, on behalf of the Wardens and everyone else in the Parish how indebted we are to RF and PF and his family. A big thank you and God bless. RF thanked everyone.

Finished meeting with The Grace

## Review of the Year

**A difficult year**, as with 2020, following the outbreak of Covid19. For all members of the Church, young and old, a year without precedent, in the sense of restricted face-to-face meeting, a cautious approach to activities and continued use of online services and meetings. Covid restrictions limited numbers able to attend funeral, wedding and baptism services.

The pandemic forced us to close both St Andrew's and St Michael's for a major part of the year due to Government regulations. We also had to close our Parish Centre for the first quarter of the year. Not only were church functions not able to take place there, but also our income from outside users was still down on pre-covid years, though up on 2020 income. Some other church functions like Men's Breakfast, hospital visiting, children's groups, Eco Group and Monday Fellowship were severely disrupted.

Essential maintenance was put on hold mainly due to contractors not being available to complete the task required.

Apart from the effects of Covid19, a number of notable people who had been members of the church for many years, sadly died and they will be greatly missed.

At the end of April, Rev Rob Fieldson retired after nearly 26 years of faithful and much appreciated service as vicar. We therefore entered into Interregnum, and for baptisms, funerals, and other services we have been helped by local clergy, although we were also grateful to Rev Fieldson for returning intermittently to take a number of such services. A newly claimed part of St Michael's churchyard was dedicated as a heritage orchard, bearing his name.

During the summer an advert for a new vicar was published within the Birmingham Diocese and interviews held in September but no appointment was made.

**On a positive note**, the Church put together a Parish Profile to enable the process of seeking a new vicar. This not only was a good piece of joint-working but helped to define our Church's aims and character. A second round of advertising in the Church Times resulted in another candidate being successfully interviewed in December and the year ended with the likely prospect of a new incumbent being appointed.

With the aid of retired clergy, vicars from other local churches, and also the Diocese, we were able to keep services going, initially on Zoom only. We had people joining in from as far as Nepal, South Africa, Continental Europe and even from holiday homes. The log-on number on Zoom was often in the 80's, so assuming 2 people per viewing by computer, that put the size of our congregation in good shape.

Ingenuity and dedication from a volunteer 'tech team' enabled us to bring those Zoom services to our houses when the church had to be closed. Members of the congregation helped considerably with children's activities, which were very popular. Our Children and Families Missioner (CFM) continued to work with the school and groups and individuals throughout the year and there was strong baptism preparation and presentation activity, leading to many new contacts being made.

We were pleased to welcome Doug Allenby and Pip Simkiss as new Lay Readers to join our established Reader, Lesley Brown and are grateful to them all for helping us to keep our services going, along with our CFM, Caroline Mara, in running a new All-Age-All-In format.

April saw a relaxation of the Covid restrictions, and we were able to start limited services in church together with events and hirings in both St Andrew's church and the Parish Centre. From August there were regular services in church that were also shown on Zoom. The Churchwardens decided not to make any fundamental change to the service pattern so that no new precedents were being made

Overall, though it was a testing year in many ways, much has been learnt about what it means to be God's people in this place— to listen to each other, to give, to share and support and to continue to bear witness through sustained acts of worship and outreach.

*The Churchwardens*



## Finance and Accounts

This year's results show that we had a small surplus of £437 on the Unrestricted Fund. This is the excess of income over expenditure to meet the objectives of the PCC and compares to a significant deficit of £33,396 in 2020. A budgeted deficit of £29,000 for 2021 had been agreed by the PCC mostly to pay for our Children and Families Missioner (CFM). The unexpected surplus was due to a generous legacy of £40,000. Without the legacy, we would have shown a deficit of £39,563, giving an unplanned deficit of over £10,000. In the circumstances this shortfall is less than might have been expected following a second year of Covid-19 restrictions coinciding with our interregnum.

The Unrestricted Fund Income was 26.8% higher than 2020 but 3.2% lower excluding the legacy. Voluntary Income, excluding the legacy was 5.7% lower than 2020. This is the second year that we have seen a reduction in unrestricted voluntary income (4.9% last year). While this is at least partly due to Covid-19, it is a concerning trend.

Income from hire of the Parish Centre recovered in the second half of 2021 as Covid-19 restrictions were lifted and finished the year 33% higher than 2020. However, this was still 60% less than 2019.

Expenditure also continued to be impacted by Covid-19. Expenditure from unrestricted funds was £2112 (1.3%) less than 2020. The largest cost is our contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund which at £81,064 remained the same as 2020. Giving to missions and charities, from unrestricted funds was £11,100, a reduction compared to 2020 but still representing 10% of voluntary income excluding the legacy. £1518 was also donated from Special Collections, mostly from the Christmas collections. Other areas of expenditure were in line with expectations, bearing in mind reduced use of our buildings and a reduced level of activities.

The PCC have committed to employing the Children and Families Missioner until October 2022 so a deficit on the Unrestricted Fund is again anticipated in 2022. However, with the Covid-19 situation looking more positive, it is hoped that this will be reduced.

### Reserves

Our policy is to place surplus funds with CBF C of E Deposit Fund. On 31st December 2021 we held £98,568 on short term deposit with the CBF and £49,602 (including the legacy of £40,000) 'Cash at Bank and in Hand'. From the total funds available £20,204 is restricted giving £127,906 of available unrestricted funds. It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds equal to at least 3 months running costs (approx. £40,000), to cover emergency situations that may arise. It is also PCC policy to spend legacy money on special projects only. Excluding legacies of £62,416, the general liquid reserves on 31st December 2021 were £65,490.

*Julia Powell*

## Churchwardens Report

The past year was dominated by two things. Firstly, the pandemic which shut both churches for part of the year, although we were able to set up Zoom services at St Andrews. However, St Michaels was shut for nearly all the year as the 2 metres social distancing rules meant that the congregation could only consist of about 8 people. Similarly, weddings were down in numbers owing to restrictions on the size of the congregation. The Parish Centre was shut for the first quarter of the year and consequently income was down from that source.

The other dominant feature was the retirement of the Rev Canon Rob Fieldson at the end of April 2021 after nearly 26 years of faithful and excellent service. We wished Rob and Philippa a lovely retirement as they moved to their new house in Grantham Lincolnshire.

However, the church kept going and whilst our Zoom services were the leading services, congregations were often joined by over seventy people on Zoom and that in many houses meant at least two people. It had advantages as we had people joining from places like South Africa, Weymouth, South of France, Nepal and other world places, which brought interesting discussion in the breakout rooms at the end of the service.

Lack of a permanent vicar has meant that we have been helped by an interesting selection of clergy as well as our Readers taking the services mostly at 9.30am in St Andrews. We are grateful for the support that they have given us. Doug Allenby was licensed as a Reader and Pip Simkiss started to train as one at the beginning of 2021. They have given excellent support to Lesley Brown who had been our only Reader for a number of years.

At the end of the year Tracey Lucas came forward for training throughout 2022 as another Reader. Lesley organised the service plan from 1<sup>st</sup> May for the rest of the year and we are grateful for her help as we did not miss providing a service for the whole year. Also, our most grateful thanks to Katie Leaver who nobly recorded the songs and organised music for our Zoom services.

We maintained our communication with the congregation and other people by issuing a weekly leaflet about services, and news of people and places. We are also grateful for the help given by the Diocese and the new Area Dean in being able to carry on with weddings, funerals and baptisms.

Our CFM Caroline Mara kept up contact with the school in Barnt Green and provided children's services in church and the Parish Centre and together with other helpers kept up social activities for children of all ages. Bill Davis was a great help in keeping Thursday morning Meditation going and also running Friday coffee break when it was possible. The Rev Sheri Gidney did a sterling job in keeping Foundry going, maintaining contacts to be picked up in 2022, despite restricted access at the Cofton Village Hall.

The PCC decided to meet monthly throughout the year and the Churchwardens and PCC vice chair met every Monday morning at 9 am after Rob retired to ensure that issues were raised, and decisions made. We made a fundamental decision not to change any of our service patterns, leaving that decision to a new vicar as and when installed.

Safeguarding has become one of the most important tasks that people in various jobs, both paid and voluntary have to take extremely seriously. DBS checks are required to be updated every 5 years. We must thank Diane Milford for not only voluntarily taking on the role of Safeguarding Officer but also getting all the paperwork up to date, ensuring that people in certain roles went through training courses and setting up the systems to ensure that they were they done at the start but were also continuously monitored.

Interviews for a new vicar were carried out in September, but the two candidates put forward were not thought to be suitable. However, we were grateful to have been able to interview another candidate in December, resulting in the subsequent selection of the Rev Andy Hobbs. We thank our two PCC representatives Gwen Onyon and Brian Partridge for being on the interview panel with the Archdeacon, the Area Dean and the Director of Ordinands.

Finally, we would like to thank Nicola, our Parish Administrator who during her three mornings a week in the office, keeps the ship on a straight course and away from the rocks.

*Geoff Hall, Betty Tilt, Jill Newton, Peter Talbot*

## Report on the Parish Centre 2021

Although some of the groups which had used the Centre prior to 2020 have not returned, many began to re-start activities in 2021 as Covid 19 restrictions were eased. However, annual income was still hit by reduced activity, and fees were maintained at 2019 levels to encourage groups to get back to normal patterns of use. An upwards review of fees for 2022 and strengthening activity will hopefully increase income in the coming year.

Church-based activities such as Friday Coffee morning and Thursday meditation started to reuse the Centre, along with children's groups run by our CFM.

Our generally efficient heating and lighting systems have helped maintain a comfortable environment. Apart from routine service contracts and utilities, there has fortunately been little need for expenditure over the past year, though consideration will be given to upgrading the lighting in the Kendall Hall to further reduce running costs and difficulties in maintenance.

We are grateful to Di White, in particular, for liaising in providing access and timed heating for user groups and to Nicola our Parish Administrator for dealing with bookings and enquiries. To further improve income and housekeeping as life gets back to normal, the Church would benefit from having a dedicated Centre Manager or caretaker, as has been the case in the past. The Wardens would welcome ideas or offers on this.

*Geoff Hall Churchwarden 3/3/22*

## Report for St Andrews Church 2021

The Church has stood as a beacon of hope in Barnt Green village throughout the Covid crisis and the recommencement of services during 2021, including weddings, baptisms and funerals, was welcomed by many in the community. We have sought to present the building as a welcoming and beautiful place to be, so are grateful for all who have provided flower displays, banners and altar frontals, done the cleaning, and continued to provide services both in the church and on Zoom.

Fortunately, little maintenance has been necessary in the past year and expenditure has been kept to a minimum, at a time when income has been hit by reduced congregations due the Covid crisis and having no vicar. New LED lamps however were fitted to external lighting and the wooden handrails on the outside steps and slope were kindly re-varnished by John Waller. A review of necessary future maintenance and planned improvements is in hand for 2022.

*Geoff Hall Churchwarden 3/3/22*

## Report for St Michael's Church 2021

Sadly, St Michael's has not played in big part in our programme during the Covid Pandemic. Social distancing meant that you could only get about 8 people in the church unless they were in a bubble, so regular services were transferred to St Andrews. Funerals continued together with burial ashes, but most weddings were deferred until restrictions were lifted.

The grounds became a walkers' paradise through the churchyard, and we hit upon the idea of getting some chipped bark from a friendly tree surgeon and depositing it on the grass pathways with great success in making discernible paths through the grounds without walkers getting caught in mud bath. We knew the heat output was not good enough following all the work in the church, but the DAC went into hibernation during the lockdown. We asked them when they started up again in Autumn 2021 to consider our proposed modifications to use the installed boiler must better and this will carry on into 2022.

We got 2 apples in September off the trees planted in the Fieldson Orchard as the first crop of the project. One apple tree died and has been replaced.

Much use has been made of the churchyard for ECO projects, religious teaching and for themes and the churchyard continues to look neat clean and tidy and gets much praise

Regarding services we made a start in September of having one evening prayer service per month at 4pm in St Michael's which was very much appreciated by the more elderly section of the congregation. Help from the archdeacon made his possible.

*Peter Talbot*

## Foundry

Foundry continues to be in a season of adaptability as Covid 19 restrictions have impacted how we meet. Between January and June 2021 the Foundry team focussed on supporting and creating the themed interactive prayer stations in the grounds of St Michael's. These were well used and appreciated by many locals as well as those walking by. In late June and early July we met in the garden of Cofton Village Hall for a 'Party in the Pause' a safe way to reconnect face to face.

In September we moved back into Cofton Village Hall, meeting between 3pm and 4pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month. Throughout the Autumn term our theme was 'Wellbeing'. With members of the Foundry Team being practitioners in the fields of Nutrition, Health, Spirituality, Nature and Emotional Well-being, we began with refreshments, before exploring the theme through a Bible passage in a variety of ways to suit all ages and stages.

In December Foundry led the Outdoor Carol Service in the Car Park of Cofton Village Hall.

*Sheri Gidney*

## Children's and Families Missioner Report April 21- April 22

As for many, this has been a challenging yet creative year, responding to the limitations of the pandemic and the extra responsibilities of an interregnum.

It has been a period of both loss and yet also growth, a time to hold together what *is* and yet also respond to new opportunities unique to our situation. It has been a time to hold on in faith for that which will remain and to trust God in stepping out into the new.

Here is an account of the various areas of ministry entrusted to me as CFM, understandably the All Age All In report is lengthy as it is a new service:

### **All Age All In:** Now 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday mornings at 9:30

This completely new service grew out of Rob Fieldson's request for me to provide a setting where families could be invited to a service which honoured the limitations of Covid guidance and gave opportunity to reconnect with our regular church families. My challenge was to ensure safety: keeping everyone at 2 metre distance and keeping the environment sanitised and ventilated. I felt that to honour this required a short, completely participatory, and interactive service, and to keep small children at their tables and adults without children on board, it needed to be engaging for all ages and personalities. It needed to be short and lively, with a good service flow, yet offering genuine moments of encountering God's presence for worship and in reflection. To ensure distance, we set up 13 bookable tables, which one family/bubble per table would occupy for the entirety of the service. To keep even the youngest child engaged, every table had a welcome activity to share so that from the moment of arriving, there was something to explore or create. This booking system was very valuable and meant I could ensure that every table was filled.

Secondly, I raised up an All Age team. I am very grateful for their invaluable contribution. Three children are part of our regular team and three adults besides me. This gives variety, flexibility, the opportunity to use different gifts and voices, and the children are role model for those younger than themselves. They lead singing, teaching new songs, leading the congregation in dramatic readings, Leading the service itself and preparing the 'activity breakout' time. Whilst the service was bookable, a variety of activities were offered in a bag, designed to suit different ways to engage with God – whether craft, puppet making, construction challenges, discussion, creative writing, or reflective prayer.

The service in this format attracted **24** families, some of them new families, between May and October. One of these was a picnic on the hottest day of the year!

In December we transferred the model to our All Age service for the first time. The church was now filled with our usual seating, and the attendance was expected to include far more of the older generation whose children had flown the nest. Happily, the service had always been genuinely designed for any age from any background. We now had the additional challenge of including Zoom users as well.

In place of booked tables, the parts of the service led from the front are with people seated in the central area of the Nave and the side aisles and Parish Centre host the breakout activity times. Space is given for those who prefer to remain seated, as a PowerPoint reflection/discussion slide remains in view for this time. This is also on offer for those participating over Zoom.

The basic principle of the service is 'discovery.' So although we include recognisable (and necessary) elements of Welcome, Prayer, Confession, Word, Response and Blessing/Commissioning, the activities are designed so that the congregation explore the story or theme to listen and unpack for themselves what God is saying to us as a community, or personally. As such, we include a Feedback time, where we silently consider what God has been saying during the breakout time, and share those thoughts with a roving mic with everyone in the room. These Feedback times have been very moving, as we have heard contributions which have come very naturally from 4 year olds to 84 year olds each telling us how God has moved them during the service. Other testimonies reach members of the team several weeks later.

Difficulties to iron out have largely been issues with tech – particularly for Zoom users, and this has added quite a burden. There is also obvious need to update our sound system to offer the best possible communication of what needs to be a contemporary style service. An expensive undertaking, but one I'm sure the tech team are exploring.

**Messy Church:** Now 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday afternoons 3:00

Many people were eager to see Messy Church re-established, and we began with a new core team and established helpers team in November 2021. Again, I am most grateful for their contribution – we have a lot of fun! We have attracted new families (7) as well as established, pre-Covid Messy Church attendees – it is lovely to welcome both there. Messy Church at St Andrew's seems to be largely attended by families with very young children (not exclusively, but generally speaking); so it may be natural turn over we are seeing. I am keen to extend the age group of the attendees and we provide engaging activities which will appeal to older children too.

**Foundry:** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 3:00-4:00

We have continued to find creative ways to adapt to changing circumstances and restrictions, and they haven't really proved to be a limiting factor in providing a service or community gathering in our regular pattern. We enjoyed a brief spell back in Cofton Village Hall then have returned to outdoor gatherings on the theme of Eco-Church this term. Outdoor Foundry is a blend of 'Wildchurch' prayer stations, Community befriending and walks so that we are building relational as well as spiritual links with new families. We have enjoyed larger gatherings of late – people seem to be responding well to meeting outdoors.

**Diddy Disciples:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 9:30

One of the opportunities that the pandemic and interregnum has created is a backlog of around 15 families asking for baptism. Rosemary Aveyard and myself have had the privilege of making first connections with these families and putting on four Baptism preparation sessions. We have been able to offer a tailored group for families to attend with their children making use of a resource for babies and very young children, called 'Diddy Disciples.'

This resource is extremely well written and is very popular. We have had around 17 families in all, around 14 of them new families, many attending every fortnight. **Junior Church** has been less easy to resource as we have had very few of our regular families return to Sunday worship and we have also had most of our volunteer J/C Leaders and Helpers 'retire' following the pandemic. As a temporary measure, where there aren't enough to form a reasonable group, older children have been welcomed to join in with Diddy Disciples with a Leader, who then go for some age appropriate extension material during our 'Creative Response' time. This has been a positive temporary solution until our families return in full.

My appeal is that the congregation find opportunities to get to know all these new families – something like 25 in total. My role as 'Missioner' is attracting new families, but to truly belong as family and develop in faith, they need to be known by name by a wide circle of people from the congregation. All In and Messy church offer huge opportunities for befriending conversations, and the door to Diddy Disciples is open to anyone who wants to join the fun and story making.

**School links:**

Lesley Brown and I continue to offer alternate fortnightly assemblies between us. At the beginning of April 21 the school could only offer us assemblies over Zoom links, but since September we have enjoyed providing assemblies in person again. I have been following an 'Open the Book' style of assembly with a small team, and members of staff and children also participating. Lesley is free to offer a different style of assembly, and it balances rather well.

The Open the Book themes have been following the sequence of Bible heroes, to develop a sense of the 'Big Story' of God chronologically, and fitting with their R.E. programme.

I hope in the coming year, to offer some classroom visits too as we revert to offering one in three rather than one in two assemblies.

**Lego Club:** Mondays 3:15-4:45

I moved Lego Club to a Monday as I have expanded the 8-13 sessions on Tuesdays. As a result we lost some of our boys who have football commitments, but gained some girls. It is a much more manageable group of around 6-12 children at a time.

We are following the sequence of bible heroes as in assemblies and the children quite often ask searching questions which stretch our volunteers somewhat!

A late development is that the school are offering a paying Lego Club simultaneously from March, run by an independent and large company. We will see how that beds down and how to respond in the coming weeks.

**Quest and KUALAS:** Tuesdays 5:15-6:45

In April we were offering cooking over Zoom fortnightly – the children loved it, and we got to chat to some of the parents too. One family who joined us were from Stockport!

Once we were allowed to re-gather at the Parish Centre in September, our pattern settled to fortnightly Quest – where our activities ranged from sea-glass pictures to dodge-ball. We are now pursuing a faith course called 'Thrive' recommended by the Diocese, which is a range of games, film, faith content and response. We are taking the course gently, half a session at a time, and starting sessions with pizza.

KUALAS (Kids Upfront and Leading and Singing!) are the children who meet to help lead All In. They learn the songs and actions, practice any dramatic readings, create some of the prototypes for the activities etc. We practice on the Tuesday before All In.

**Courses and conferences:**

At the time of writing I'm about to attend New Wine Leaders conference in Harrogate, with a breakout day for Children and Youth Leaders. These conferences have been tremendously resourceful in the past, and since the emphasis is upon creating a Holy Spirit led environment with prayer ministry and space to hear God, I am fully expecting to come back re-charged and re-envisioned and with plenty to share.

I have attended a number of Diocese Zoom meetings, some being the regular support meetings but also attending a Messy Church focused meeting, an Outdoor Church one and various themed meetings. I am meeting with Emma specifically to discuss developing our connection with school this month.

**Risk Assessments and Safeguarding:** Action on both R/A and Safeguarding are making good progress

*Caroline Mara*

**Fast Forward**

Fast Forward: teenagers joint with Lickey, small in number but big in character and full of life and faith! Five sixth formers continued to meet regularly on zoom throughout the early year lockdown. With Emma Sergeant leading and Sue & Trevor Edgell and Lesley Brown supporting, an hour was filled talking about their highs and lows, a short relaxing activity and praying for each other. Come the summer we met outdoors in Lickey churchyard and 3 of them went to university in September. Sue & Trevor have 'retired' after 7 years of assisting. In the autumn, the group became four (all young ladies!), meeting at Lickey vicarage once a month for 2 hours, where we share a meal cooked by Sheri and weave God into the chat about their lives and a topic of interest. Emma and Lesley continue to assist.

*Lesley Brown*

## Worship

Worship in 2021 continued despite another extended Covid lockdown, Rob's retirement and the challenge of restarting services ('post Covid') in church during an interregnum.

Loved and hated in equal measures, Zoom was the only way we could gather as church from January until Easter and for Rob's last service there were just over 100 participants. Visiting preachers all enjoyed our Zoom worship, the way we managed the services and the array of faces joining from near and faraway places. There were great contributions from many in planning and leading the worship, in reading and praying; Katy's superb music and vocal recordings and all underpinned by our technical team. A huge thank you to them all and we want to hold on to the benefits of Zoom. God enabled, encouraged and lifted our spirits throughout.

May to December saw the transition back to live services again in both churches. Caroline pioneered All Age All In services, initially with everyone at booked tables and with great enthusiasm from families with children for whom Zoom worship had not worked. St Michael's welcomed good numbers for a monthly Evening Prayer. Remembrance Sunday and the All Souls Memorial services were well supported, but arrival of Omicron suppressed attendance at Christmas services.

We have been very blessed in our search for visiting clergy to preside at Holy Communion during the interregnum, including having Bishop Anne on Christmas morning, and to take baptisms, weddings, funerals, and interment of ashes. Douglas Allenby was licensed as a Lay Reader in January and Pip Simkiss completed her training ready for licensing early next year. The Readers together with Katy, Caroline, Geoff and Irene formed a Worship Action Group to plan and manage the service pattern. The home team of Readers acted as hosts to liaise with our visiting clergy/speakers, plan the worship and prepare the PowerPoints for each service. Katy guided our choice/ chose our music/played/organised other musicians. We rely on a small team of wonderful people to do the IT support. The teams for service support are greatly reduced in numbers. Everything everyone one does to enable our worship is greatly appreciated.

The Thursday morning service resumed in October. Bill Davis leads a meditation in the Parish Centre and Rosemary Aveyard continues a Zoom gathering, appreciated by some who live far away. The Diocese gave Sheri permission to continue her half day a week input to Foundry. Two 'Parties in the Pause' in the outside space of the Cofton Village Hall were held before resuming inside in the autumn focusing on the theme of Wellbeing. The Christmas carol service in the car park had around 70 people attend.

And Rob..? We have found out all the things he did that we never knew about or realised that he did faithfully week in and week out! We miss his loving prayerful leadership and inspiration. We miss Philippa's wisdom, organisation and care. Keep them in our prayers, but we move into next year knowing that God will guide and surprise us and it is Him that we worship.

*Lesley Brown*

## Evangelism

Past years have mentioned Alpha courses and Men's breakfasts, neither of which were possible in 2021. If evangelism is seen as explaining and sharing our faith through what we say and do, then the whole of church life is evangelistic. The peaceful outside space of St Michael's churchyard was used in new ways of witness - for open air 'wild' church gatherings, prayer trails on various themes and 'Enter into Easter', which told the Easter story and was seen by many passing through. Rob's witness over his 25 years here has brought God's love into the lives of many in the Parish.

*Lesley Brown*

## Health and Safety Report

During the year there were thankfully no reported incidents related to failures of H&S procedures and no notified instances that that Covid19 had been contacted or passed-on at regular services or other meetings held on church premises.

We are grateful to Ian Hatherly for assisting the Wardens in carrying out regular H&S checks and for reporting on areas where actions were/are needed. There have been no significant requirements but where actions are

necessary, these have either been dealt with or are programmed for attention as soon as funds and or circumstances permit.

The additional requirement for appropriate Risk Assessments to reduce the spread of Covid 19 has been undertaken or supervised by the Wardens, following HM Government and Diocesan advice. The intention has been to enable as much return to normal activity as possible, in the most sensibly safe way.

*Geoff Hall 3/3/22.*

## Deanery Synod Report for 2021

The new Deanery Synod of Kings Norton Moseley and Shirley, an amalgamation of three previous deanery synods, is probably the largest in the UK, serving a population of around 320,000 people. We have 5 representatives out of about 130 who are eligible to attend meetings. A fully paid Area Dean is responsible to the Diocese.

There have been 3 meetings in 2021, the first on 10 May 2021, held on Zoom, with the first task to elect the Standing Committee; Nick Forknell from Lickey and Blackwell was elected Chair together with 7 nominations to the SC. An Act of Commissioning was led by Archdeacon Jenny Tomlinson. Following, there were presentations on People and Places framework, the new Pathways platform to support discipleship and leadership, and the work of the Property team in the diocese.

The second meeting was on 13 July 2021 on Zoom with 83 people attending, and reports were received from both the Diocesan Synod and the General Synod, and other topics in the church life.

The third meeting was held at Bournville Parish Church on 21 October 2021, at which Phelim O'Hare was welcomed as the newly appointed Area Dean; his task was to be a mediator/facilitator between the diocese and the parishes within the deanery. The principal discussion was on journeying to Net Zero and Eco Champions by the Church, with breakout groups providing input, and appointing two Deanery Environmental Champions to encourage the deanery in their environmental work.

An encouraging start to the new deanery setup, but still worries about the overall size, but hopefully there will be improvements as we are able to meet in person rather than on Zoom.

*Hugh Edwards*

## Pastoral Care Action Group

This group was formed just before Rob retired. It was recognised that Rob within his role did a great deal of pastoral work within the parish and was a point of contact. It was felt that there needed to be an official point of contact for ongoing pastoral issues as was necessary and a variety of team members to be available for a variety of issues which may arise.

People involved in the Group are as below:

Tracey Lucas

Rosemary Aveyard

Bill and Christine Davis

Gwen and Mike Onions

Andrea Potter

Phillipa Allenby

Jane Sykes

Caroline Mara

I would like to say that there are many others who unofficially support and care for others as friends and neighbours within the parish and it has been a real blessing to see this over the last year.

There have been bereavements, illnesses, weddings, funerals christenings and life troubles which we have been able to support both personally but also in prayer. Hopefully this has been felt beneficial and helped keep the church proactive and reflected Gods love to those we have been able to support.



In a more formal aspect, I would like to thank Diane Milford who has guided us with regards to Safeguarding. We obviously needed to be DBS checked which she has completed for us. She has guided us to appropriate training on safeguarding at a variety of levels, which we have completed. We have put into action the Outline job description for pastoral visiting which we have signed and agrees our job responsibilities and hopefully set a plan out for the future. It has been vital in our success to have worked in collaboration with Diane and I am very grateful for her support.

### **Looking Forward**

As you know I have started my readers training, so have had to temporarily step down from leading the group. There is no official lead for the pastoral group at present time and we will have to see what the new vicar plans in the future. The team will continue to meet bi-monthly to discuss any issues which might arise. Gwen and Andrea have agreed to take minutes alternatively and Phillipa has agreed to set the meetings up on zoom.

There are pastoral care courses which you do as a group within the church, and this might be something to consider in the future.

I would like to thank the team for being so supportive and caring over the last year and let us pray the year ahead will see us as a group and a church grow stronger and be there for each other at times of need.

*Tracey Lucas*

## **Safeguarding**

The Church of England and the Diocese of Birmingham have, over the last few years, placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of safe recruitment, safeguarding training and DBS checking of all volunteers that work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults within our churches. Having accepted the role of Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator last year I have spent most of the intervening time in reviewing and consolidating our church safeguarding records as well as looking at our safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Church of England has introduced a Parish Safeguarding Dashboard system to facilitate safeguarding administration as well as helping Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinators ensure compliance with both statutory requirements and Church of England policies. This on-line tool has red, amber and green lights showing action points and level of urgency as well as including levels of compliance to national and local safeguarding protocols. The Dashboard has enabled me to identify and introduce necessary safeguarding policies and procedures and I am pleased to say we have in this past year moved from Safeguarding: Level 1 to Safeguarding: Level 2.

Since the last APCM the PCC has adopted the Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' safeguarding policy statement for children, young people and adults and a Safeguarding Action Plan. It is my intention to continue my review of our various safeguarding policies and procedures into the coming year.

As required by the Church of England's Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance safer recruitment procedures are now being applied to all new volunteers together with ongoing safeguarding training and DBS checking of all volunteers and PCC members. One of the positives to come out of the pandemic is that safeguarding training is now offered in different mediums which allows our volunteers to choose the one that suits them best. I am exceedingly grateful to all those volunteers that have made my task that much easier by being willing to fulfil the stipulated safer recruitment requirements.

I would like to take this opportunity to state how very important the role of the volunteer is in church life and how much our volunteers are appreciated and valued. So much of what we do as 'church' would not, or could not, be done without the sacrificial giving of volunteers of their time, energy and gifts. I would like to offer a personal 'thank you' to all those prepared to help in this way and for their understanding that, as volunteers in the name of the church, this comes with responsibilities to ensure that all those we serve are kept safe from any harm. Safeguarding requirements can seem somewhat 'over the top' but they are there as a sign of our commitment as Christians to ensure that our churches are safe and loving places for all those that enter our doors.

I am pleased to report that no safeguarding issues needed to be reported to the Diocese this past year.

*Diane Milford*

## Eco Group

Eco Group has only met once this year because many members have been very busy with our interregnum.

- Throughout the year the Church of England raised awareness of Climate issues and the COP26 conference in Glasgow.
- We promoted Climate related materials and suggestions during Lent.
- We held our Climate Sunday in May, St. Michaels churchyard nature count in June, Creationtide in September, and various other events in St Michaels Churchyard.
- We took part in the Birmingham Climate Change Rally for COP26 in November
- We promoted Climate Crisis tips in the Weekly Newsletter
- We are delighted that the PCC agreed to donate to Eco charities.
  - ARocha - support spreading Christian message about caring for God's world.
  - Christian Aid - support people in areas affected by the worst effects of global warming.
  - Renewable World - supporting initiatives to enable readily accessible renewable energy for all, helping to end extreme poverty and mitigate climate change consequences.

*Mike Powell, Eco Group*

## Men's Breakfast Report

The Men's Breakfasts are organised jointly with local churches with the aim of providing the opportunity for men to find out more about Christianity. Men come from all over South Birmingham and North Worcestershire to the breakfasts, which are held at Kings Norton Golf Club. Until Covid we usually had 3 breakfasts each year but due to the uncertainty of infection rates we have not felt able to plan dates. We hope to restart during 2022.

*Mike Powell*

## Celebrating Women

Celebrating Women has not met during the last year.

*Pip Simkiss*

## Ark Group

The Ark Group continued in 2021. After lockdown restrictions eased we did "Ark in the Park" and continued to adhere to all social distancing guidelines by meeting outside. The group continued to support each other through our WhatsApp group and we continued to invite people who were joining the church family who had pre school children.

In September we started to meet again indoors on a Monday morning at the Parish Centre. It's an informal meet up where we talk, support each other and for the children to play together.

*Tanya Grassby*

## Mission Partnership

2021 was a quiet year from a mission point of view. The plan to highlight a mission each month has not happened, but we have continued to support by prayer and by inviting our link missionaries to speak in services. We heard from Jon and Elise Fletcher, working in a slum area of Bangkok, Alex and Marie Walker working for Reach Beyond based in Capetown and John and Rachel Waters translating the Old Testament in The Middle East. A Christmas fair raised money for IcFem and Medic Malawi.

The shoe box appeal continued to be well supported. The team filled 332 boxes on Super Shoebox Saturday. Altogether 481 boxes were collected to take to children in Eastern Europe.

The toy service collected toys which were taken to Birmingham City Mission. A small team helped distribute toys to children in Bartley Green on behalf of BCM.

Tracey Lucas is trying to encourage families to have a Children's Society box in their home to raise money for them.

We continue to collect used stamps, ring pulls, old coins and clocks and watches.

The container for Malawi left in June and finally arrived in January 2022.

It is great that we are giving 10% of our income away.

How our gifts were shared out are in Julia's financial report Contact me if you would like to be involved more in our mission partnership.

Thank you to everyone who supports individuals or charities on behalf of the church. A special thanks to those who work so hard behind the scenes preparing for filling the shoeboxes. The team is getting older and in 2022 we do need some help putting out the tables and getting our stock out of the cupboards both in August when we do a stock take and in November on the Friday evening before Super Shoebox Saturday and in the afternoon to put tables away.

*Rosemary Aveyard*

### Craft Group

The Craft Group have continued to meet every 4th Saturday of the month, 9.30-12.30, despite COVID. We've met on Zoom, outside and latterly again in the Parish Centre.

We haven't had any specific projects but have continued to support Birmingham Maternity Hospital with baby blankets and Rosemary and the Shoe Boxes with hats, scarves and pencil cases. Also we continued to provide squares for blankets that are desperately needed in Zimbabwe.

We have 10-20 members who meet for fellowship as well as 'knit and natter', and new members are always welcome.

*Lynn Dewing*

### Friday Coffee Break

Coffee Break was able to resume this year and enabled us to run the annual McMillan Coffee Morning which was well supported and raised £500.

Weekly Coffee Break runs Every Friday 10.30 – 12.00, and attracts both church-goers and non-church goers in the local community, through which many friendships have been formed.

Tea, coffee, and biscuits are served in a relaxed atmosphere, and people drop in for a chat.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who give up their time, without who this important ministry could not continue.

We trust that this ministry will encourage people to explore the Christian faith more, as we try to show God's Love among the people.

*Bill Davis 13 February 2022*

### Monday Fellowship

Social distancing, closure of the parish centre and travel not being allowed, effectively made Monday Fellowship a dormant function from January - June 2021. We started again in September 2021 with our programme up to December. Gordon Forest opened the show with an excellent talk and picture display entitled "The Woodpeckers of Anthill Meadows". This was followed by Robert Cholmondeley who is a volunteer at the local Avoncroft Museum giving a slide show and working details of the windmill at Avoncroft. November's meeting was a hilarious talk by Paul Harding about the English Civil War and its connection with Worcestershire. We finished the year with our usual Christmas meeting accompanied by local musicians to give us musical entertainment and

the Rev Claire Turner from St Chad's church Rubery not only made the grey matter work a little harder but provided us with entertaining stories of Christmas.

Like most organisations numbers have been down, with an average of about 45 per session against the 65 per session we used to get. Once again from little acorns mighty oak trees will grow.

*Peter Talbot*

### Book Club

Book Club The church book club has continued to meet every other month on a Thursday evening. We have continued to read a wide variety of books. We have shared our thoughts on the book at each meeting. At the moment we are only small, about 6 ladies. We would welcome more to join us. We do try to be an outreach group to bring in nonchurch folk or fringe members. So, invite a friend from the village and come and join us. It has been a source of encouragement through lockdown to have a book to read and friendly faces to meet up with. The last few meetings have been in the Parish Centre. So come and join us.

*Rosemary Aveyard*

### Poppies

Poppies didn't meet at all last year due to the restrictions in place.

*Sheri Gidney*

### St Andrew's School

St Andrew's Church of England First School has 221 pupils organised into 8 classrooms from reception to year 4. Over the last year we have seen the school resume to pre covid. In September we welcomed our new reception class and the school has been able to be together as a whole! We have been able to have collective worship together and celebrate our successes. We have been able to go on educational visits and have visitors in school. Learning and laughing has resumed and the school feels like it used to.

The school works closely with the church and each week we have had a church led collective worship led by either Caroline Mara or Lesley Brown. It was lovely to have our harvest festival in the church and the children loved their advent calendars that the church gave them in the run up to Christmas.

Our worship council which we introduce a couple of years ago is really starting to be embedded. The group of children really taking ownership within collective worship. This year we have given them ownership to monitor the reflection areas in classes which they have really enjoyed.

Our weekly community section where we celebrate and advertise the events happening within St Andrew's Parish have strengthen links with the church.

*Fran Barnes*