

ST. MARY'S CODDENHAM: ANNUAL REPORT - 2024

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Our Rector, Rev'd Philip Payne, retired in August and is greatly missed. The parish then started a period of 'vacancy'. As part of the recruitment process for a new incumbent the PCC contributed a Parish Profile and also commented on aspects of the Benefice Profile. Meetings were held with the Rural Dean and Archdeacon to discuss the way forward. We are very grateful to all those who are leading our services in the absence of an incumbent, especially Rev'd Helen Norris, Rev'd Adrian Watkins, Rev'd Bill Rootes and Judy Hailes. Our service rota has changed, with a Holy Communion every other month rather than monthly. Church attendance at the major festivals has been encouraging, with a particularly high turnout for our Christmas services. The coffee mornings which are an important part of our involvement with the village community have also been well supported – our thanks to Sue Groom and the team for running these so successfully. The church continues its lead role in the Babies and Toddlers group (special thanks to Rev'd Helen and Debbie McDonnell). A Parochial Visitation – essentially an audit of our documents, procedures and belongings - was carried out in May.

In January Roy Tricker's talk on the history of St. Mary's was very well attended, informative and entertaining. This was the first of the monthly events we held in 2024 as part of our fund-raising campaign and as an enhanced contribution to parish life in Coddenham. These included concerts by the Raedwald Ensemble (brass sextet) and by the Suffolk Constabulary Choir as well as the sell-out Co-op Band's concert in December. The Coddenham History Society mounted an interesting display and we agreed to place a cabinet near the west end of the church containing their collection of archaeological finds. We have welcomed visiting groups of bellringers on several occasions.

We would like to thank the many individuals who have continued to support the parish both spiritually and materially – a special mention for the cleaners, flower arrangers and providers of refreshments as well as those who serve on the PCC, as sidespersons and as lesson readers.

Margaret Baker and Ian Galbraith

FABRIC

Work completed since the last APCM

Repairs to the plain tiles on the chancel roof have been carried out. It is anticipated that further tiles will require replacement in coming years. The Architect and roofing contractor suggested that replacing a few tiles each year will be more economic than undertaking re-roofing works. Some minor repairs have been carried out to the tower lead roof. The toilet alarm was replaced following the discovery of a fault.

Future Work

Quinquennial Inspection:

The Architect completed the last quinquennial inspection in 2021. There are recommendations at the back of the report identifying: Further Investigations, Priority A Works (12 Months), Priority B Works (2-5 Years), Priority C Works (Next Quinquennium), Improvements.

The key remaining issues are:

- Some areas of stonework repairs, nothing particularly serious and mostly to prevent significant problems in the future.

- A proposal to reintroduce opening vents in the clerestory to allow cross ventilation and reduce dampness in the walls. This would work in tandem with proposed drainage works.
- Drainage works
- Some leaded glazing repairs

Priority Works and Grant Applications

Quotations were received last year for the stonework and leaded glazing works to support grant applications. These works have been prioritised for the next phase of works.

The Diocesan Secretary confirmed that a faculty was not required for glazing work and an Archdeacon's Certificate has been received.

Stonework repairs do not require a faculty as they are like for like repairs but detailed specifications will be required before commencing work. Our Architect David Whymark is ready to do this once we have established that funding is available.

There are some works that are general building / landscaping type works that could be carried out by local volunteers and an offer has been received to help with them.

External Drainage Works

The Architect prepared a specification for external drainage works which could be undertaken together with removing the brickwork structure to the old boiler room and construction of a ground level access hatch. Given the likely cost and complexity of the works proposed by the architect we obtained an Archdeacon's Certificate to remove the concrete channel on the north side of the church and use temporary pipes to see if this solves the problem. It is believed that the concrete channel was actually directing water down the outside of the external wall and then preventing it from drying out. During the quinquennial inspection a lower cost solution was identified that would make use of the existing soakaways that appear to operate effectively. The PCC has not paid the Architect for the design work he carried and whilst he has not sent an invoice he enquired about payment in 2019 but then didn't contact us again. This matter has not been progressed but we should conclude it.

Routine Maintenance

Lightning Protection: The lightning protection is due to be tested again - it was last tested in February 2022. The previous report recommended that we add surge protection. This could be done when the next test is carried out and a quotation has been sought.

Electrical Testing was completed two years ago. There are no issues to resolve and a further test is not required this year.

Gutter Cleaning has been carried out last year.

Broken roof tiles have been repaired this year.

Fire Extinguisher Testing will be required this year.

Boiler Service: The boiler was serviced last year and will require a further service now that we are moving out of the heating season.

Bells: One bell rope has been repaired with a splice this year. Others will need to be done in coming years. The bells were inspected by John Taylor bell founders

SAFEGUARDING

I have not been made aware of any safeguarding concerns this year.

I completed the Leadership training course in July 2024 and have subsequently developed an action plan to ensure our Safeguarding procedures up to date; including ensuring that PCC members safeguarding training is up to date and website information is correct.

The St Mary's Safeguarding Policy was reviewed by the PCC in July 2024.

I have renewed DBS checks for volunteers helping at Toddler Group.

Debbie McDonnell

FINANCE - Year ended 31 December 2024

General Fund

Collections and Gift aid donations held up well, and fee income was up significantly, due to a high number of funerals. Running costs were down, due to a reduction in the amount of heating oil purchased. Thus we ended the year with a small surplus.

Fabric Fund

The Appeal was launched in January, to raise money for repairs to the West Window, and various masonry repairs. Resulting donations and events raised over £10,000, triggering a further £10,000 grant from the Gardemau Church Charity, to give total income of £24,000 for the year. After spending almost £4,000 on minor repairs and maintenance, there is a balance carried forward of £39,000 towards the Appeal target of £60,000.

Soup Lunch Fund (formerly Haysel House fund)

Donations at the regular Tuesday "Service and Soup" meetings, now held at Gosbeck Village Hall, continue to make a contribution to the Benefice Diocesan Share, and to support local charities, including the Mother and Toddler Group. Hall hire costs are covered by the Day Foundation.

Magazine Fund

Thanks to an increase in annual subscriptions, and to continuing support from advertisers, the Ten Village News covered its production costs.

Tim Thomas

FUNDRAISING REPORT

The Quinquennial Report in 2021 identified a number of repairs needed to preserve the envelope of the church. The most urgent of these are repairs to the West window and two porch windows, masonry repairs to the tower and West walls and drainage work. The total cost of these works is estimated to be in the region of 60k.

PCC sub-committees continued to work on the two main areas of fundraising events and grant applications throughout the year.

A calendar of monthly events took place which were well supported by the local community. Events included a launch event talk and tour with Roy Tricker, a clothes swap event, an Easter family treasure hunt, concerts by The Suffolk Constabulary Male Voice Choir and the Songbirds, Raedwald Brass and the Co-op Brass Band as well as our monthly coffee mornings and the village Open Gardens event, which supported the fundraising appeal. In addition, there were donations from individuals and from the Gardemau Trust.

£ 28,743 was raised through fundraising and individual donations, with an additional £10,000 donation from the Gardemau Trust, making £38,743 in total – more than half way towards our target of £60,000.

Grant applications were made to The Historic Churches Trust and Suffolk Historic Churches, the outcomes of which is due in the spring of 2025. Other grant opportunities are being explored for 2025. The Gardemau Trust have also committed a further £10,000 of match funding.

Angela Thompson

SERVICE AND SOUP LUNCH

Another successful year ended with the 21st Birthday Lunch in Gosbeck Village Hall on 18th March enjoyed by over 40 including guests.

The fellowship continues on the first and third Tuesday of every month due to the continued commitment of the team. We are extremely grateful to the Day Foundation for paying for the hire of the hall. The donations from the participants more than cover the rest of the running costs. Because we are a Benefice Fellowship we contribute to the Quota from the donations. We are in the process of deciding where to donate a proportion of present funds. All decisions, whether financial or other are discussed and decided on by those who come.

Birthdays continue to be celebrated with special cakes and these happen at most meetings.

The speakers/worship leaders have agreed to a rota and are much appreciated together with the musician. Our Reader Henry Stanford has contributed as have Steve Cole and Hazel Chittock, Lay Elders, again much appreciated. Bishop Mike was due to visit us but became Bishop of Exeter just before so we were not privileged to welcome him.

We were sorry to have Rev Philip and Mary retire but we were blessed with their presence at our Birthday Lunch when Mary spoke on their trip to the Arctic linking it to a Bible passage. Mary relinquished being treasurer on leaving and Fiona took over to everyone's delight.

We now have another soup maker and the numbers have increased during the year.

Phone calls and visits continue, caring for and valuing all.

The team and participants are all part of the same fellowship.

Thanks be to God.

Judy Hailes

CODDENHAM BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

The Toddler Group continues to flourish with around 15-20 children attending each week. We have a team of six regular volunteers and some 'emergency' helpers. The volunteer helpers do a brilliant job, providing drinks for the parents/carers, preparing snacks, setting and clearing away the hall, helping to prepare the activity etc. and providing me with moral support. More volunteers are always welcome.

The Gardemau Educational Charity kindly pays for the annual hire of The Coddensham Centre which means we can keep the weekly charge low (£1.50), so it is affordable to all. We use our income to provide a healthy snack for the children and this year, have been able to replace some of our equipment. We finished 2024 with a visit from Santa and provided gifts for all the children.

We advertise services and events at St Mary's that we feel will appeal to families and are pleased that some of the families have come to the Christingle service and last year's Easter hunt at the Coffee Morning.

If you are passing on a Wednesday morning, please pop in and see us – it's a lovely atmosphere and we get great feedback from the parents and visitors.

Debbie McDonnell

DEANERY SYNOD MEETINGS

There were three Deanery Synod meetings in 2024 - (1) 14th March, (2) 26th June and (3) 22nd October 2024.

In March, Kevin Stanford, Lay Chair, gave a talk about how to become 'A Welcoming Church'. The usual items of updates on Deanery Plan (with plans for growth), Clergy vacancies and Safeguarding were given. Reports were also received on General Synod & Diocesan Synod, Parish Share, Treasurer's Report and various updates on events happening in our Parish/Benefice were shared.

June's meeting key topic was "Going to Church and what happens next: private faith, public faith & mission". Members were separated into groups to discuss what the topic means to each of us. The usual updates and reports were also given.

At October's meeting, Revd Canon Matthew Vernon (Canon Pastor & Sub Dean, St Edmundsbury Cathedral) spoke about deliverance ministry. Please refer to the minutes of October's Deanery Synod for full details. The usual updates and reports (as per previous meetings) were received.

This year we said farewell to Revd Philip Payne. We wish him and Mary a long and happy retirement.

Frances Collins

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are 27 names on the roll.

Angela Thompson