

The Annual Report 2025

St Andrew's Church in Quidenham

Introduction

This Annual Report is the joint responsibility of St Andrew's Church PCC. It reviews the past year and explores a vision for the future. It is written for all congregants but may also be circulated to the general public and will be placed on the church website and so includes information which church members may take for granted.

This report aims to give a flavour of the church at worship, 'being' as well as 'doing', through ministry and mission, showing how it relates to those in the village and local surroundings as well as to the congregation itself.

Aim and purposes

The primary object of this PCC is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC (Powers) Measure 1956 states that the PCC is 'to cooperate with the minister in promotion in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'.

St Andrew's Church in Quidenham is one of seven churches in the Quidenham Benefice. It is rural, situated in a village of approximately twenty-four households. The church building itself is of varying ages, the earliest part being Norman. It is surrounded by a graveyard and is to be found on the main road through Quidenham. The church houses a memorial window dedicated to servicemen in the US 8th Airforce during the Second World War. The 96th Bomb Group suffered the second highest loss rate of the 8th Airforce and the highest in the Third Division. Altogether the 96th flew 321 missions, lost 190 aircraft and 938 airmen.

St Andrew's Church tries to provide spiritual guidance and support to local residents, usually at very important times in their lives, as well as to the many visitors who come to the church whilst in the area, particularly those from the USA, who visit to discover more about their family members who were stationed here in the Second World War. Weddings, funerals and baptisms may be held at the church and villagers can be buried in the churchyard. The church offers one Holy Communion service each month at 1100. The church welcomes the congregants of St Mary the Virgin, Eccles and All Saints, Wilby and occasionally parishioners from the other churches in the Benefice.

Objectives and activities

General objectives for last year, 2025, and the future have been to involve the village as much as possible in church activities, ideally to 'grow' the church but also to raise much needed funds for repairs and improvements to the buildings. The church is a listed building of historical importance and the PCC feel the responsibility of maintaining it very keenly.

The Burns Night Supper took place at the Cowshed (by kind permission of the Carmelite Monastery) on Saturday 25th January. A full house of villagers joined in the fun and the haggis was appropriately serenaded into the building. Gaelic poems were said and guests enjoyed

canapés including Scottish smoked salmon, then haggis, neeps and tatties and a selection of Scottish puddings including Clootie Dumpling and Cranachan (or Atholl Brose). Practically everyone in the room won a prize in the raffle which rounded off the evening! Proceeds were raised for the church.

This church also recognises the importance of its role in welcoming the families of US airmen who were stationed at Quidenham and Snetterton during World War II and relatives of those in the village and beyond who were involved in establishing the memorial window in 1944. In 2025 the church hosted two visits by groups of American families related to the war time airmen. Donations from American visitors provide a welcome source of income.

A further group of visitors from the Round Church Society visited the church in April and enjoyed a short history talk by Angie and a guided tour of church and churchyard. In October Angie and James welcomed a chaplain from USAF Mildenhall who came to see the US memorial and the church.

St Andrew's Church continues to offer guidebooks and postcards for sale as well as tea towels and generally encourages donations from visitors. These items provide welcome sources of income. This year further stocks of tea towels were bought, this time in navy blue. The church is cleaned thoroughly before each service and the churchyard mown as required by Dennis. He also oils the bells!

Peter Lee has kindly agreed to play the organ for services whenever he can and the PCC are so grateful. The church has acquired a complete set of CDs of hymn accompaniments for the times when Peter is not available. There have been three 'electronic' music services this year and the congregation seemed fairly satisfied with the music provision.

The website *A Church Near You* has been regularly updated and there have been noticeably more 'hits' from those searching for 'the church in Quidenham' during the last year, as compared to previously. During 2025 there were 12,500 hits on our website, up from 10,000 the previous year.

The Flowers & History Festival took place in the church on Friday 2nd, Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th May, both inside and outside the church in the graveyard. The displays comprised a huge number of documents, newspapers, magazines, clothes, recipe books, memorabilia and artefacts detailing life on the Home Front during World War II in Quidenham. The exhibition was assembled and curated by Christine Hewson, whose family worshipped at Quidenham for many years. Many of the records relate to the Patrick family, including an amazing wedding dress made from parachute silk. Alongside the exhibits were beautiful flower arrangements, using flowers which would typically been available during war time. The effect was breathtaking. The parish is so thankful to Christine Hewson for organising the spectacular displays and enlisting the help of her Flower Club members. Refreshments were served throughout each day, with cheese scones and tea and coffee in the morning, lunchtime sandwiches, bacon and sausage rolls and cake in the afternoon. Peter Lee played the organ delightfully for visitors.

The main aim of the event was to welcome people into the church, rather than fundraising, and 320 visitors dropped in over three days! A splendidly large amount of money for the Fabric Fund of the church was raised.

On Saturday 17th May the parish celebrated the marriage of Molly Doig and Harry Russell. The church was looking wonderful, decorated with pretty English country flowers. The sun shone throughout and the atmosphere was joyous.

The Bike Ride in aid of the Norfolk Churches Trust took place on Saturday 13th September. St Andrew's played host to those cyclists passing through the village and dropping in at the church.

After the Harvest Festival service the church was able to donate four carrier bags of groceries to the Foodbank in Kenninghall. A full house of Quidenham villagers gathered at the Cowshed for the Harvest Supper, a lively evening with delicious food and drinks and a huge raffle. A good time was had by all and a third of the revenue from the Harvest Supper was given to YANA (*You are not alone*), the remainder retained for the church.

At the beginning of November there was a fascinating talk in the Reading Room, given by a volunteer speaker, Elaine Brown, from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. She spoke about the grave of Flight Sargeant Ronald Bainbridge who was in the RAF and stationed at nearby Snetterton. He died in 1946, having received the British Empire Medal. Elaine also explored the stories of those who are buried at All Saints Church, Hargham, St Mary the Virgin, Eccles and All Saints, Wilby. This talk attracted a full house and refreshments were served afterwards. Following on from that and with the encouragement of Elaine and Margaret McQueen (who arranged the talk), Angie contacted the CWGC about getting the BEM engraved on his gravestone, awarded posthumously to the Flight Sargeant. The job has been added to their stonemason's list. Meanwhile, she has successfully tracked down the Bainbridge family through the internet and his grandson and his daughter are very happy to be invited to see the gravestone when the work has been done.

This year Carols on the Green, a village event, was cancelled.

Achievements and performance

There have been four funeral services at the church during the past year. Cliff Gothorp was buried in the churchyard on 3rd February in a service taken by Revd Sarah Walsh. The parish said goodbye to Sombra Patrick in a moving service on 28th April taken by Canon Tony Billett and Revd David Hill. Michael Regan was buried in the churchyard at St Andrew's on 28th May, following a funeral service at the Carmelite Monastery, conducted by Father Stephen Blair. The funeral for Jennifer Long, who worked in the Quidenham Shop & Post Office thirty-five years ago, was taken by Revd Sarah Walsh on Tuesday 2nd December.

A baptism service was held on Saturday 6th December for baby Malcolm Austen, Susanna Teteris' grandson.

Last year Holy Communion drew 3 – 14 congregants. Morning Prayer services have been discontinued. The offertory collection ranged from £22 to £60, depending on the size of the congregation. Benefice services draw visitors from the other six parishes and so the congregation for these may be up to twenty-five people.

During the course of this year various church records have been deposited with the Public Records Office in Norwich.

Early in September A C Leigh fitted an automated locking system to the church door. This does away with the need for someone to unlock and lock the church each day. The church is now open between 0900 and 1700 every day but security is regularly checked by one of the churchwardens. The new system is fully insured.

In early November a wifi card reader was installed in the hope of receiving donations from visitors and congregants who do not carry cash. Goodbox generously donated a free card reader and the monthly outgoings are £12 plus 1.59% of actual donations, though givers can opt to pay that percentage as well. In the first two weeks of November donations by card totalled £60. A spin-off benefit has been the installation of a wifi network, which provides reasonable cover, enough to stream a service to American friends. As a result, donations have considerably increased.

Financial Review

Heather Doig has done a grand job of managing limited resources so please see separate financial accounts produced by her and checked and approved by the Independent Examiner, Carol Lotarius.

Risk management

The biggest risk to St Andrew's Church Quidenham is a scarcity of funds, coupled with an older population and the difficulties of drawing more worshippers to the church. The PCC are very mindful of the shortage of finance and continue to discuss ways in which money might be raised.

The Church Risk Assessment, the Fire Risk Assessment and the Health & Safety Policy and Audit have been updated and are displayed inside the church on the notice board, along with an insurance certificate from Ecclesiastical.

The Archdeacon's Visitation was arranged for Sunday 28th September when he took a service at St Martin's Church, New Buckenham. Whilst there was an informal chat for churchwardens afterwards the Archdeacon did not visit individual churches. 'Visitation' would seem to be rather a misnomer.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding training for the PCC is up to date at the time of writing. In line with the Church of England National Safeguarding Policy, the churchwardens have completed the Basic, Foundation and Domestic Abuse Awareness modules. Members of the PCC have completed the Basic module. These training certificates last for three years and so will need renewing in 2026. All PCC members have up-to-date Enhanced DBS Certificates.

Angie McDonald, one of the churchwardens, was the Parish Safeguarding Officer. She has had twenty years' safeguarding experience and closely followed the Diocesan Safeguarding Dashboard in order to keep up with policies and recommended or required tasks. The PCC

had adopted *Promoting a Safer Church* as its own Safeguarding Policy and was completing a Safeguarding Action Plan.

Unfortunately Angie was asked to step down from her post because the Safeguarding Officer became a benefice-wide role last May. No further progress was made by the end of 2025 therefore in safeguarding matters for St Andrew's Quidenham.

Governance and management

The PCC (Parochial Church Council) comprises seven members plus the priest-in-charge and including the Secretary, Treasurer and two Churchwardens. The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England and a registered charity under the umbrella of the Diocese. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Churchwardens are responsible for the recruitment, induction and ongoing training of PCC members. The PCC has ultimate responsibility for a wide range of matters affecting the parish, including compliance with health and safety, disability discrimination legislation and child protection. The PCC also provides two representatives who attend the Deanery Synod and report back to the PCC on their findings. The churchwardens convene for three or four PCC meetings each year (generally January, April, June and October) and an Annual Parochial Church Meeting in between January and May. All significant decisions are agreed by majority vote at these meetings which are chaired by the priest in charge. Simple decisions are agreed by email or in impromptu meetings of the PCC after the church services.

And finally.....

Angie has applied to work for the Broderers' Guild, has joined the Bishop's Course in Christian Understanding last autumn. It runs until May 2026.

Thanks and acknowledgements

The church is so thankful for the following who volunteer their time generously for the church. It would not function without them. Plentiful gifts are given in time, in materials (notably donated food and drinks for events), in money and in moral support.

Dennis Doig for carrying out every practical task around the church, taking care of the building, setting up services and maintaining the church yard and serving as the church's representative on the Deanery Synod and as Churchwarden.

Heather Doig for managing the accounts and reporting on them as Treasurer and also providing flower displays.

Torie Plumbly for helping out with everything, but in particular undertaking weekly flower arranging and decorating the church for special occasions.

Angie Kidd for her pretty Harvest table settings!

Margaret Wilkin for helping out with everything, in particular with catering.

Peter Lee for playing the organ at services.

Jason and Nicola Dorks for giving so generously of their time to run social events to help the church.

James McDonald for assisting in any practical matters and helping to host the American visitors.

Father Stephen Blair for helping to welcome the American visitors to the church.

And, of course our grateful thanks go to **Sarah Walsh** for her work as our Priest-in-charge.

General administrative information

Name:	St Andrew's Church, Quidenham
Location:	Quidenham Road, Quidenham NR16 2BJ
Church Code:	626452
Benefice ID:	26-021BR
PCC members in 2024:	Heather Doig (Treasurer) Dennis Doig (Churchwarden) Angie Kidd Angie McDonald (Churchwarden & Secretary) James McDonald Victoria Plumbly Margaret Wilkin (Deputy Chair)
Bank:	Lloyds Bank Sort Code: 30-98-58 Account No: 00783155 Account No: PCC of Quidenham
Independent Examiner:	Carol Lotarius
Priest-in-charge:	Sarah Walsh

Angie McDonald & Dennis Doig
Churchwardens