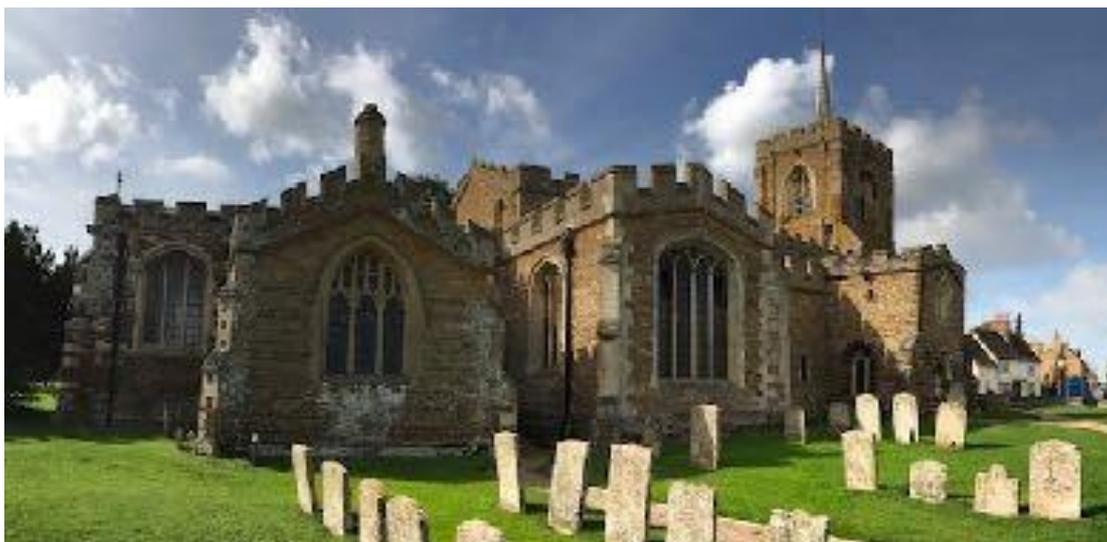


THE ANNUAL REPORT
To
THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
OF
ST MARY, THE VIRGIN, GAMLINGAY
With HATLEY ST. GEORGE AND EAST HATLEY
27th February 2022



**THE BENEFICE OF GAMLINGAY AND EVERTON WITHIN THE DEANERY OF ST
NEOTS IN THE DIOCESE OF ELY**

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

27th February 2022

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Sunday 27th February 2022
Agenda for Vestry Meeting

Welcome

Apologies for Absence

Minutes of 7th March 2021 Vestry Meeting Election of Churchwardens

Election of Deputy Churchwarden

Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 27th February 2022

Apologies for Absence

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 7th March 2021 – acceptance as a true record.

Report on Electoral Roll

Annual Report, Presentation of Accounts and Review of the Year “Questions and Comments”

Election of:

Deanery Synod Representatives

PCC members (names of those continuing proposed en bloc - 3) plus 6 additional vacancies

Electoral Roll Officer

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Closing Prayers

Annual Report
Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and Review of the Year 2021

Incumbent: Revd. Hilary Young
Bank: Barclays Bank, Biggleswade
Independent Examiner: Mr. Colin Airey

Administrative Information

The church of St. Mary the Virgin is situated at the end of Church Street, Gamlingay. The church of St. James the Great is situated on the Astor Estate in Hatley St. George and was designated as a Chapel of Ease when the current parish was created. The Parish is part of the Diocese of Ely within the Church of England. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members. Some members have been re-elected several times and *Churchwardens and Deanery Synod representatives are ex officio members*.

*Revd. Hilary Young	Priest in Charge
*Mr. Christopher Miller	Churchwarden & Reader
*Mr Nick Ingles	Churchwarden
Mr. Mike Wareham	Deputy Churchwarden & elected lay representative
Mrs. Gerry Brunt	Elected lay representative
Mrs. Dawn Martin	Secretary & elected lay representative
*Mrs. Sandra Macrow	Deanery Synod representative
*Mrs. Sarah Titmus	Deanery Synod representative
Mrs. Eileen Thorpe	Elected lay representative

Churchwarden Team:

Mr. Nick Ingles	Churchwarden
Mr. Christopher Miller	Churchwarden
Mr. Alec Hissett	Deputy Churchwarden
Mrs. Valerie Miller	Deputy Churchwarden
Mr. Mike Wareham	Deputy Churchwarden
Mrs. Brenda Elcome	Deputy Churchwarden

Structure Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is as set out in the Church Representation Rules. The membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (Currently Priest in Charge) Churchwardens, the Reader, and members elected by those who are on the electoral role of the church and attended the APCM. All those who attend our church are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are aware of their responsibility for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are raised and spent.

The PCC takes seriously the matter of safeguarding

The PCC met 8 times during the year with the Standing committee meeting in between the full PCC meetings to discuss and set the Agenda and take forward any urgent business.

Dates of PCC Meetings and minutes from previous meetings are displayed on St Mary's and Hatley church porch notice boards and are available for anyone to read.

The PCCs of the two parishes in the Benefice meet together for shared business. It has only been possible to hold 3 PCC meetings (Joint) all meetings have been held over Zoom. Joint PCC meetings (with Everton) meet first, and then individual PCC meetings follow either immediately or the next day for ratifying any decisions and dealing with individual parish business. These shared meetings have enabled the PCCs to work closely together to support each other and the Incumbent.

The Standing Committee has been agreed to consist of the Parish Priest, the PCC secretary and Treasurer, the Church Warden(s) and another PCC member nominated by the PCC.

Much of the business of the PCC is delegated to Task Groups which report to the PCC and are convened by one or two members of the PCC. The Task Groups have a flexible membership and may include church members not on the PCC and also those outside the church membership.

Aims and Purposes

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary the Virgin, Gamlingay with Hatley St George (thought to be consecrated to St James the Great) and East Hatley has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent the Reverend Hilary Young, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building, church hall and church cottage at Gamlingay, the church building and churchyard at Hatley St George and the churchyard at East Hatley.

The churchyard at Gamlingay is closed, its maintenance the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how services can involve the many groups that live within our parish.

Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and the sacraments.

In particular we try to enable members of our local community and beyond to live out faith through:

- Worship & prayer, learning about the Gospel; and developing knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish and keeping everyone safe in connection with the church, especially but not exclusively the most vulnerable.
- Missionary and outreach work including communications within and beyond the congregation, making the love of God known in the world.

Task groups have been set up from the PCC to further these objectives: Members of the PCC who head task groups are:

- Ministry Mission & Worship: Revd. H Young, Mr. C Miller & Mrs. S Macrow
- Buildings & Fabric Revd. H Young & Mr Chris Miller, Mr N Ingles & (Mr A Hissett non-PCC) - this group also links with a group set up to manage the large building project required - this is headed up by Mr Chris Smith, non-church member.

- Social & fundraising: Mrs. S Macrow, Mrs S Titmus, Mrs Dawn Martin & Mrs E Thorpe (Mrs. V Miller non-PCC)
- Benefice Pastoral: Revd. H Young, Mr. C Miller, Mrs S Macrow (Mrs. V Miller non-PCC)

Electoral Roll Report

There were seventy-four members on the Electoral roll at the beginning of the year.

During the year 6 members have been added to the roll.

One member died and 3 members moved away and are no longer able to attend services in the parish.

This leaves 76 on the roll of which 3 members live outside the parish.

Valerie Miller – Electoral Roll Officer

Achievements & Performance

Worship and Ministry

Once again, this year personal worship in Church was affected by Coronavirus with frequent changes. The PCC want to ensure that the range of services during the week and over the course of the year are found to be beneficial and spiritually fulfilling for our community.

As during 2020, everyone was kept in touch with weekly events and services during periods of lockdown when parish churches were closed and services online (see Communications below). A weekly Benefice newsletter was distributed which included information about forthcoming services, updates and a weekly message from Revd. Hilary, items from church members and the community.

One of the legacies of the pandemic has been that most of our services are now available remotely on Zoom- although the quality of transmission has varied.

When we were back in churches we were continually responding to advice and regulations concerning how and if we could gather, and in particular, sing. Special thanks are due to those who have worked on the arrangements, drafting and redrafting risk assessments.

The full worship consultation planned to take place in 2020 had again to be postponed as temporary arrangements dominated the year. Worship resumed under interim arrangements taking into account the time needed to set up and take down under Covid restrictions which required the priest to do much of what had previously been shared.

After consultations and adjustments, more temporary arrangements have continued as Gamlingay church closed for repairs in November, just after the Remembrance Sunday service.

In Lent the study together was on Zoom, an in-house series on Listening and Prayer, which was well received by those who followed it.

Both Parish Churches and Hatley church enjoyed Holy Week and Easter celebrations with beautiful decorations, albeit actual attendance at services was limited.

We welcomed both of our Bishops to services the Benefice this year. The Summer saw a Benefice confirmation at Gamlingay where Bishop Dagmar officiated, and, at very short notice, Bishop Stephen was able to join us in the Autumn for the first Benefice service after Gamlingay church closed.

Baptisms once again took place in the Benefice after a hiatus, with six in four weeks at Gamlingay. Summer also saw a wedding at Hatley postponed from the previous year.

Once again Christmas celebrations were circumscribed by Covid safety concerns. Our previously 'normal' pattern of service was planned but did not fully materialise as infection levels rose in our area. We had to cancel the intended nativity walk in Gamlingay due to illness, and the Christingle services did not take place. The replacement event at the Hub in Gamlingay, was, however, very well received.

Advent study was again on Zoom, with two groups (daytime led by Rev Hilary, Evening led by Mr C. Miller) studying a home-grown series on Angels.

A partnership between the Baptist and Anglican churches in the village has set up a project coordinating previously divided Food Bank efforts in the village and combining this with a Community Fridge. The project 'Gamlingay Food Project' is located in the Almshouse Chapel, by generous arrangement with the Trustees and the local authority.

The Need hub provides a single local collection and distribution centre for food for those in need. It operates as a branch of a project based in Stotfold.

The Community Fridge enables free distribution of spare food within the community. Originally conceived as a means of sharing surplus food within communities by individuals, the Community Fridge is a national initiative which has additionally enabled use of food waste produced by supermarkets, reducing landfill. The Fridge is open to all and does not require referrals.

Lay Ministry:

Lay Ministry continues to be valued in the parishes. We are hugely grateful to our team who report below for their contribution to the life and ministry of the church. They have shared with Rev Hilary the burden and privilege of leading 'being church' in challenging times, and for this we celebrate them.

With the support of the Gamlingay PCC, training of a new ALM in Children's Ministry took place, with authorisation in November on Advent Sunday. The originally planned Benefice celebration of lay ministry including re-authorisation of other ministers was thwarted by church closure at Gamlingay, but the new ALM was authorised at Hatley in a special service as part of the Benefice worship for that day.

Lay Ministry Team Report

Mr. Christopher Miller	Licensed Lay Minister (Reader)
Mrs. Sandra Macrow	Licensed Lay Minister (Children and Families)
Mrs. Gerry Brunt	Authorised Lay Minister (Social Awareness)
Mrs Sarah Titmus	Authorised Lay Minister (Children and Families)

Mrs V Miller & Mrs G Brunt are due for re-authorisation as ALMs

Chris Miller writes: In April 2022 I will have been a Reader licensed to the Benefice for 25 years although owing to the Covid pandemic and the closure of Gamlingay Church, my ministry over the past year has been very different. My ministry normally included preaching at the Parish Eucharist (G), leading and preaching at Evensong (G), and officiating at funerals together with leading Advent and Lent Faith Groups. However, for 2021 opportunities to lead worship have, inevitably, been curtailed. I have, however, preached via zoom on two occasions and I officiated on Remembrance Sunday (E). I also led the patronal festival service for St James at Hatley in July. I have also been involved with three funerals during the year, One was the funeral of the late Tommy Hood at which I gave the Eulogy, another was the funeral of the late Peter Norton which was held in Gamlingay church as Everton church was having its roof repaired. The funeral service was led by Les Oglesby at Gamlingay Church, and I led the committal service in Everton churchyard.

Another funeral was the funeral of the late Colin Knibbs which had the unusual distinction of being held at Gamlingay Baptist Church as Gamlingay Parish Church was closed. Thanks are due to Adrian Semerene (Baptist minister) and all at the Baptist Church who made us so welcome.

Sandra Macrow was licensed as LLM for Children's and Families in October 2020. She continued to lead the 'Sparks' groups with Sarah Titmus, has assisted at funerals and helps to lead first Sunday services when these have been possible in Gamlingay. At these services the children have assisted in leading worship by reading, leading prayers and contributing to 'the sermon slot'.

Sandra has organised many events for the children throughout the year including an Easter Trail and making Easter Bonnets, Lamb Kits which were decorated and put up in the windows of shops/houses, Easter Trail hunt in conjunction with Baptist Church through Millbrook Meadows, contributions to the Scarecrow Festival, Light Celebration, Advent windows, Living Nativity, and Christingle (held outside at the Eco-Hub due to restrictions on large gatherings indoors at the time).

Gerry Brunt officially resigned from her role as St Mary's representative for the Trussell Food Trust this year, with the formation of the Gamlingay Food Project at the Alms House Chapel which brings Food Bank provision based in the village. Gerry has been exploring the setting up of a Memory Café in St Mary's church hall and organised a talk from Jan Payne from the Alzheimer's Society which was open to all over Zoom. Unfortunately, a grant application to enable repairs and re-modernisation to the hall, required before a Café can be started was un-successful, but Gerry is looking at other funding possibilities.

Sarah Titmus : Sarah was authorised this year as an ALM and focusing on Children's & Families, taking responsibility for work with baptisms and younger children. Sarah has helped Sandra with Sparks each week and has also been busy working on Task fundraising task group and helping with the church hall.

Pastoral Group :

During 2021 the Pastoral Group continued to meet monthly. These were mainly on 'Zoom' but we were able to hold the November and December ones in person. At meetings of the Pastoral Team we pray for those known to be in distress of any kind.

There have been no services held in Avenells Way community room.

Once the pandemic restrictions were lifted to allow it, on several occasions, consecrated wafers were taken immediately after a service to two housebound persons who had attended the service by 'Zoom'.

The contact network set up at the start of the pandemic continues to function. The number of those doing the contacting is now reduced to seven. Through this network we have kept in touch with everyone on a regular basis and use this forum to impart information about services and church activities. Valerie Miller

Music continues to be coordinated by Chris Miller, and to feature strongly within the worship of our church, another thing we are very grateful for. Chris writes

"Although throughout the past year rehearsals have been disrupted owing to both the Coronavirus pandemic and the closure of Gamlingay Church, many members of the choir (+ others) have been proactive in recording hymns and anthems which have been broadcast both to the congregation in church and also to services via Zoom. Thanks are due to all those who have taken part, especially to Nick Ingles for his expertise in putting the recordings together and Andrew Smith and Rob Butcher for providing accompaniments.

When services resumed in Gamlingay Church there was a choir which was expanded to include all those who would like to sing, with numbers limited as the regulations required.

Despite all the difficulties surrounding the effects of the virus and the church closure, the choir has been able to contribute to an Advent Carol service and a Benefice Christmas Carol service both of which were held at Everton Church. There was also the usual Carol Service at Hatley Church.

When Benefice services started after the closure of Gamlingay Church in November, a joint choir sang from the choir stalls, although latterly the choir has joined the congregation in the nave. It remains to be seen whether the choir will be able to sing during Lent, Holy Week and Easter as, at the time of writing Gamlingay Church is still closed.

It has been a difficult and frustrating year for the choir, but thanks must go out to all members, whether or not they have felt able to participate.”

Children:

Children's work has been led by Sandra Macrow as above. During 2021 'Outdoor Church' was launched, which involved turning the Church Hall grounds into a wildlife garden. The families loved planting seeds and putting up wildlife boxes.

We welcomed Bishop Dagmar to the garden after the confirmation service in July for three Sparks children and four adults.

Sparks meet every week in the Church Hall and join the service for Holy Communion. On first Sundays Sparks meet in church and the children play a part in the service, reading the Gospel and saying prayers. Events as above were led by Sandra Macrow LLM with Sarah Titmus new ALM.

Communications

There is a regular St Mary's input to the Gamlingay Gazette, which is provided by the Vicar, Hilary Young. Notices continue to be posted in the porch for community and church.

The website continues to be hosted by the Church of England website "A Church Near You" this is regularly updated with details of church services, the current Weekly Newsletter, and any Covid-19 developments. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13924>

Alec Hissett, Sandra Macrow and Sarah Titmus have been updating the various Gamlingay and Hatley Facebook pages on a regular basis with news

As during the past year everyone was kept in touch with weekly events and services during periods of lockdown when parish churches were closed and services online. A weekly Benefice newsletter was distributed which included information about forthcoming services, updates and a weekly message from Revd. Hilary, items from church members and the community.

Many thanks to Mrs. Brenda Elcome & Mr. Ian Parker who continue to edit and lay out this publication, sent out weekly online to all church members through a network of communication set up for the period of the pandemic.

This network has also ensured paper copy delivery to those in the parish not able to access via a computer. The newsletter was also posted on Facebook and the churches websites each week for the wider community to access. Weekly services have been maintained throughout the pandemic, as well as celebrations for the festivals.

Keeping everyone Safe

Safeguarding:

Mrs S Macrow is the Parish Safeguarding Officer / DBS Admin . During 2021, Mrs S Macrow has been updating the Diocese Safeguarding dashboard for both Gamlingay and Everton and helping the PCCs to upgrade safeguarding procedures including DBS checking.

Mrs S Macrow has shared the dashboard with both PCC's and Safeguarding is on the Agenda at every PCC meeting. Gamlingay have completed their Basic Safeguarding training and Personnel files have been updated with Training details and dates. New Starter kits are available for all new volunteers. Risk Assessments for 'Regular Church Activities' are now listed on the Dashboard. We continue to roll out training and policies as per the dashboard requirements.

Health & Safety:

We do not currently have a Health & Safety officer, but Chris Miller has been helping Hilary draw up risk assessments for Covid restrictions and written a specific policy for the Choir.

Risk Assessments were undertaken for all activities and listed on the safeguarding dashboard. The Fire extinguishers in both churches and the church hall were replaced this year and no accidents were recorded in the accident book

Social & Fundraising

Despite Covid restrictions curtailing many of the fundraising activities this year we still managed to fundraise. Thanks must go to everyone who helped organise and manage all the fundraising events this year in what was again a rather difficult one due to Covid restrictions and rapidly changing advice. And of course, our thanks go to all who supported us in any way .

The major events were:

*Pancake Brunch which raised £223

*The very successful Easter Catalogue which raised £345 towards church funds. Our thanks must go to Jane Orchiston who put the catalogue together and organised the collection and delivery of the majority of the items. Thanks also go to everyone who provided the many and varied items for sale.

*May Merrymaking raised £728, this was a new event offering hospitality in small groups, members of the congregation hosting a coffee morning or afternoon tea session for 6 people in their own garden, participants paid £5 each. Thanks go to Brenda Elcome & Valerie Miller for the organising; this was a lovely new idea and proved very popular - most of the sessions were able to be held outdoors and provided much-needed social contact for many.

*The village scarecrow weekend where the children and members of the congregation made scarecrows who joined the congregation in church. The scarecrows listened very attentively to Hilary's sermons! This was a good way to share in a village event and many people came to see the scarecrows at St Mary's during their tour around the village which raised £630

*The Summer Fete on Hatley village green held by St Mary's and Hatley combined, on August Bank Holiday weekend. There were lots of stalls, refreshments, a barbeque courtesy of Woodview Farm Shop also a dog show courtesy of Cyndy Moreau of Top Dog.

Our thanks to Sarah & Jason Titmus for organising this event and to all who contributed. The excellent sum of £1,219.98.

*The annual village show was held on Sat 18th September this year, the ever-popular refreshment stall traditionally provided by St Mary's was organised and staffed by Sandra & Sarah this year with some help throughout the day from others, especially young people from Sparks! The event raised nearly £500.

*The Harvest Supper was held in St Mary's Church Hall and as always was a very popular event raising £558 as well as providing a lovely social occasion. Many thanks to everyone who helped.

*The Christmas Fayre, which is always a big fundraiser for St Mary's this year was not possible in the usual venue of the church due to the ongoing building works, so it was held in the Eco Hub.

This venue was not as popular as St Mary's and was affected by Covid, but still raised £2,233 and offers an opportunity for the dance school which was much appreciated. Thanks to team of people who rallied round to make this event such a success at relatively short notice: Jane, Sandra & Sarah, and many thanks to Amada Hardy for organising and staffing Santa's grotto and Paul Smethurst for being Santa and everyone else who helped.

Also Special thanks to Eco Hub managers for generous rates while the church is closed to enable events to take place.

Fund-raising income includes £250 already received from Brogan for the Christmas Draw. The Draw was held again in December in conjunction with the Fayre. Our thanks go to The Brogan Group who once again sponsored the event, to Alec & Ros Hissett for organising, to the group of people who 'stuffed' envelopes for circulation to the village and to all the local businesses and individuals who provided prizes.

A huge thank you to all our supporters for shopping online with Easy Fundraising. This year £143 has been raised towards church funds - a significant increase from last year. This scheme costs nothing up front to participants, donations to a nominated charity are collected every time participants make a purchase online. If you shop online for large items, it pays particularly well.

Charitable Giving

Niassa

We continue to support our brothers & sisters in Niassa who have also suffered as a result of Covid and now the war in the North of the country is affecting many families and causing them to flee their homes and seek refuge in other parts of the country We continue to send funds to Niassa this has been severely reduced this year due to less fundraising and not being able to hold the soup lunches which were a good fundraiser for Niassa. Several people in St Mary,s congregation support Niassa privately . We keep in regular contact with Fr Mateus Jaime Nkito the priest in the Diocese who sends us his prayers.

Christian Aid

Sandra took over the organisation of collecting for Christian Aid this year and organised a team of volunteers to deliver Christian Aid envelopes. This year those giving were asked to deposit their envelopes in buckets which were left in The Co-op, Woodview Farm Shop, The Eco Hub, The Pharmacy, The Wheatsheaf, Gamlingay Doctors and The Baptist Church.

This year the amount raised for Christian Aid was a wonderful £617.88 and many thanks to Sandra and her team of helpers!

Traidcraft:

71 packs of Christmas cards were purchased from Traidcraft and sold in aid of church funds

The Royal British Legion

As is the custom at St Mary's, collection taken at the village commemoration service was donated to the British Legion. Sebastian Kindersley, who arranges for wreaths to be bought, deposited the collection which amounted to £137.36

Buildings and Fabric

Churchwarden's report to the APCM February 27, 2022

It is customary for the Churchwardens to report on the Fabric Goods and Ornaments of the church at the Annual meeting each year. This year we are still in the middle of our programme of works which includes the replacement of the roof lead (stolen in October 2018) and the repair of the windows (this includes the repair of the glass and the restoration of the stonework surrounding the windows) along with other urgent masonry work. Progress on this work, which began in November and will continue until April, is reported separately below.

The Churchwardens are truly grateful to the members of the Task Group especially Mr Chris Smith who has headed up the group, our architect Mt Gethin Harvey, Alec Hissett, and our Parish Priest Hilary Young. The church is currently closed, the works are scheduled to be completed by 18 April 2022.

A new sound system has been installed at Gamlingay before the closure. Although this has yet to be signed off it has already shown its worth in supporting the broadcasting of services from St Mary's.

On closure of the church, all pews, together with the organ pipes, the screen, rood, pulpit, lectern etc. have been covered by the contractors during the work to protect them from dust and falling masonry

All items such as hymn books and church ornaments have been removed before work started from the nave of the church and stored in the chancel and/or vestry. For this reason, it has not been possible to check the terrier and inventory this year, but this will be done just as soon as the church is back in use.

The Churchwardens are extremely grateful for the patience shown by the congregation while the work is being carried out and alternative arrangements for services are having to be made.

We are truly grateful to our friends at Hatley and Everton churches for their warm reception of members of the Gamlingay congregation at their churches while Gamlingay church is closed.

Nick Ingles

Chris Miller Churchwardens

Hatley St George Church

The building at Hatley St George has not had much attention this year. We are aware there is a damp problem from below, and the electrical and heating system is due for renewal. Investigations and plans concerning this have stalled with Covid providing other priorities for the year, especially as the group that had been formed to take on the building has suffered both from Covid preventing meetings and from loss of personnel. Nevertheless the churchyard has continued to benefit from the generous attention of the Aster estate.

Despite this, some progress has been made. The same architect who inspects at Gamlingay (Gethin Harvey, now of Caroe Associates) has been appointed as Inspecting Architect - the Quinquennial inspection is due- and we have a quote for a visit from that architect towards plans to deal with the damp. There is a small amount of money available specifically for work on Hatley church building, but this is not enough to achieve the scale of work required. Decisions will have to be made in the coming year; it is thought that a significant grant will be needed.

At the decision of the PCC Hatley church has been used for some Gamlingay services since the closure of Gamlingay church, and those who have attended have enjoyed these. It's small size (therefore greater difficulty with Covid safety) difficult heating situation and lack of dry-underfoot access have limited attendance for some.

As previously noted, the customary carol service took place, and was appreciated by those who attended - a very few in person and a number on Zoom.

The graveyard at East Hatley Church (the building St Denis Church being in the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches) has continued to receive care from local residents, who keep in contact with the PCC through the incumbent and have also achieved grant funding for the building.'

Project Report

Following the theft of lead from Gamlingay church roof in Autumn 2018, a Project Group consisting of member of the PCC and others was set up to take forward planning for repair of the roof, alongside other pre-existing plans for repair and improvement.

The project group acts on behalf of the PCC with powers delegated for operational decisions, with strategic and major financial decisions referred to the PCC.

Chris Smith was asked to head the group up and given power to act on behalf of the PCC. Much work was done, with the support of the Diocese, to put together a big single Heritage Lottery funding application. However, at the end of 2019 we learned this had been unsuccessful, despite the encouragement we had received from grant advisers, and then the Pandemic struck, slowing everything down and freezing the grant situation.

Work in 2020, through Covid limitations, took place to appoint an architect (Caroe Associates) to continue the work and re-profile the project. As a result of the re-profiling, work was put in hand for repair of unsafe stonework damaged during the lead theft and additionally for repairing two cracked buttresses (which turned out to be a bigger job than at first thought) - this work was completed in early 2021.

A little later in the year, funding was made available to a central organisation to distribute to churches considered to be in particular need, and the work we had done with the Diocese paid off, as, on their advice our church was asked to apply for a significant grant - the applications were by invitation only.

Alec Hissett put in great deal of the work to make this application, along with other smaller grant applications which have also been successful, and in the Autumn (2021) we were informed of the success of this large application. As part of the bid, significant funds had to be raised locally, a large proportion of which has been achieved through personal efforts of Chris Smith and channeled through the Friends. Other elements have come from the community, including through the Co-op, and through direct fund-raising by the church and Friends organisation. Deep gratitude goes to all who have worked so hard to make this happen, as well as to the generous donors.

Although the timing of the work, from the point of view of weather limitations, and closure over Christmas, is not ideal, it is dictated by the timings of the considerable grant of **£206,786**. The grant requires completion of 80% of the work by the end of March, and will in the long run be worth it, despite resulting in rather short notice for closure of the church.

The work being done in this phase comprises:

Repair to most of the windows

Replacement of the stolen lead on the south side of the church, Replacement of remaining lead which was reaching the end of its useful life. Urgent work to some of the stonework in the north porch.

Separate from the National Churches Trust grant-funded application, placing of solar panels and storage battery on the south nave roof is planned. Originally intended to coincide with the scaffolding in place for lead repair, the solar panel installation awaits Diocesan approval. Some grant funding is already in place from the TITHE Wind Turbine Fund, and calculations on energy cost savings are included in this part of the project, which aims to contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of the church.

There are outline plans for further work as the funds permit, in line with previous consultations, on security of the vestry and tower, usability and access to the building and provision of amenities to enable fuller use of the building both for weekly worship and for special events and services.

St. Mary's Church Hall and Cottage

The PCC is responsible for the old school and school master's house, parts of which are grade II listed. After various remedial works in 2020 the rent for the cottage was increased for 2021, as reported to last year's meeting. The same tenants continue in residence.

There is a new email address for Church Hall bookings, thanks to Sarah Titmus for setting this up and revising the hall booking paperwork. The Church Hall was closed at the beginning of 202 but is now open and has regular bookings on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.

Thanks to Sarah and Lindy Gorton who organise bookings for the hall

Mrs S Macrow applied for a grant from Tarmac for a new kitchen and toilets but unfortunately it was unsuccessful. We continue to search for grants to help with the refurbishment of the hall.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod representatives (Mrs. S Macrow, Mrs. S Titmus) attend and report back on meetings of the Deanery Synod. Gamlingay is part of the Deanery of St Neots.

This year meetings have continued to be held on Zoom due to the pandemic. Items to report this year are:

Finance: Martin Macfarlane is Deanery Treasurer – the Deanery Share was met in full for 2021. Martin expressed thanks to all parishes for their efforts in this. There will be a 1.5% increase in Ministry Share for 2022.

Deanery Plan: Rural Dean of St Neots is Revd. Nicki Bland, the Vicar of Great and Little Staughton with Hail Weston. Bishop Dagmar is encouraging everyone to look for opportunities and challenges in the deanery. The document "People Fully Alive" Ely 2025 is available on the Diocesan website and copies will be sent to PCCs and congregations.

CHCT Event: The Diocese Annual Cambridge Historical Churches Trust held the event in September and St Mary's and Hatley Church were open all day to welcome visitors.

Treasurer's Report

Five months have passed since I have taken the role of treasurer, and at last, this week I have received the Barclays mandate, which in effect removes all previous named signatories and leaves myself and Chris Miller as authorised 1st and 2nd signatories.

2021 has posed many financial challenges, and despite this the PCC has managed to end the year with a small deficit of £119.00. I take this positively, considering we were able to pay our Ministry share in full, timely. As expected last year the increase for 2022 Ministry Share is confirmed as 1.5% (after we had 0% in 2021), this is linked directly to the stipend increase. It's important to point out that this increase is substantially lower than the current rate of inflation. For Gamlingay the total 2022 figure is £39,019.37 to be taken by Direct Debit at £3,865.12 monthly, from February to November.

Energy costs have suffered major increases as expected, as have our insurance costs, though the latter is due to an extra added policy to cover the roof project works. Looking into 2022, a steady return to pre-Covid life will hopefully allow our fund-raising activities to resume to normal levels, which will enable the PCC to meet this year's financial commitments.

The Roof project finances are running to schedule. Thanks to NCT's prompt grant payment claims, and the Friends of St Mary's generous donations we have managed to keep a good cash flow reserve.

Finally, I would like to add how helpful and supportive Ian Parker has been. Being new to the role and having little idea of the demands, Ian has made it easy and straightforward. I value Ian's continued support, coaching and advice.

Nick Ingles Warden/ Treasurer

APPENDIX

Associated Church Groups

Bell Ringers report to APCM – February 2022

Government Coronavirus pandemic restrictions at various levels have been in place throughout this year. Whilst it has been possible to ring some of the bells for Sunday service there has been a reluctance by some ringers to meet indoors and ring. A single bell has been rung prior to Sunday service on 21 occasions and by more than one bell on 4 occasions.

Thursday night bell ringing practices did take place at Gamlingay from June to November, until the church was closed on 15th November for essential repairs to the roof and windows. Practices have been relocated to Bluntisham by agreement of the Bluntisham ringers, for which we are once again very grateful.

Special Occasions for which the bells have been rung in 2021.

4th April Easter Sunday,
10th Apr The death of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
17th Apr Funeral of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in St. George's chapel.
30th May Confirmation Service
11th Sept Wedding
24th Oct Quarter peal as a 'thank you' to Jan Cooper on her move from Gamlingay.
9th Nov Quarter peal in memory of Revd. Andrew Smith on the day of his cremation in Cornwall.

2021 Summary

No. of Sunday services rung for 25
Average number of Sunday ringers 1.5
No. introductory training sessions 9
No. of Thursday practices 17
Average number at practice night 6.3
Weddings 1
Quarter Peals rung 3
Visiting bands 1
John Boocock Tower Captain

Chat Group

In September 2021 the Chat Group gathered together for the first time since Covid restrictions were imposed early in 2020. Nine members met and thoroughly enjoyed the sort of lively discussion we had all been missing during those times of enforced isolation.

The group was originally formed in 2009 as a Mission Action Plan initiative. Some of our current members have been with us from the beginning while others have come and gone. We also have many happy memories of the contributions made by several past members who have, sadly, died.

When we started up again in September it was decided that there would be one significant change to the way the group operates. Choosing the topics and leading the monthly discussions had always been undertaken, alternately, by Chris Miller and Brenda Elcome but after so many years they felt themselves somewhat lacking in inspiration! All members of the group, therefore, agreed to take it in turns and in the five months we have met since then it has worked very well and proved to be an excellent arrangement.

We meet on the second Wednesday morning of each month. Please speak to one of us if you are interested in joining.

Brenda Elcome and Chris Miller

The Guild of St Mary Annual Report 2021-2022

The past year has continued to be a difficult one and our usual Guild meeting format has sometimes either been impossible to adhere to or has had last minute postponements or re-arrangements! However, we have remained an active group wherever possible, and our members have appreciated this.

The first half of the year saw our meetings continue on Zoom. We had a couple of well-known quiz shows, and a wonderful discussion on “positive things from lockdown”. We encouraged members to share any new hobbies they started during lockdown, or for their recommendations on good books they read or TV shows and films they saw. To tie in with International Woman’s Day in March we had a couple of themed meetings where a Guild lady talked about their life. These were both wonderful evenings to learn more about some of our Guild family.

The summer meant we could once again meet in person. However, the weather had a different idea, and our customary ‘Pimm’s and strawberries’ evening in the garden had to be postponed in June, with us finally meeting in July. There was much to catch up on!

The general feeling of meeting in person was positive, so we managed four meetings in our Church Hall in August to November. Learning more about some of our Guild ladies was popular so we had two more give an account of the long and blessed lives they have led. We also had a talk on medicinal uses for herbs, and an open meeting with the amazingly talented ‘Two Lads and a Laptop’. This was a highlight for many of us.

We were able to offer an extra afternoon meeting with a Christmas Wreath making class. Five ladies followed the excellent demonstration and made their own wreaths, with many more ladies watching the proceedings. This was going to be followed by the annual Guild Christmas party a couple of weeks later, however with the rising Covid cases we had to make the disappointing decision to postpone. It was only a postponement as we held the party in January 2022 instead, with our entertainment – our festive themed version of ‘Blankety Blank’ where the committee were the celebrities. Much laughter ensued, and it was the best pick-up for the dark, cold January night.

Liz Huckle & Valerie Miller

The Friends of St Mary’s

The friends have been in hibernation because of the pandemic. It has been difficult to hold meetings or arrange any large gatherings because of the various restrictions we have all been living under.

Several donations have been made to The Friends. The latest being from Mary Bell’s estate. Chris Smith has done a tremendous job raising funds from various businesses in the village. With these donations and the grants, he has successfully bid for the replacement of the stolen lead roof and the repairs needed on the quinquennial report can be carried out.

Since the friends were formed in 1994 by Philip Gorton and Mike Stunnard, over £80,000 has been raised to help with the upkeep of the building .

Helen Wright

Benefice Reflections from the Priest in Charge

2021 has been another year overshadowed and shaped by the ongoing pandemic. It began with lock-down and has proceeded with uncertainties and limitations imposed by the need to keep one another as safe as possible coupled with a growing weariness and frustration.

Although we have had more gatherings, and church worship services were possible again, the life of our churches has not by any means 'returned to normal' if by that one means resumed pre-pandemic arrangements. As I ended last year by saying, the importance of focusing on the good that exists and CAN be done, rather than being thwarted by all that cannot, has been an important theme, not always easy to keep in view, but has been so productive when it has been. Knowing what really cannot be done and what is more convenient to leave undone with 'cannot' as an excuse has been a challenge. This next year we will be looking at what can be done and asking, "should it be?" As we work with the wider Deanery to formulate a plan to maximise the impact of what we can do.

As last year, Covid itself has not been responsible in itself for most of our problems, but it has once more made everything harder to deal with, magnifying issues or speeding up their coming to a head, as our resilience and coping mechanisms have been eroded. The difficulty of taking proper time off for all of us has contributed, and on a personal note, husband Norman's health problems have been a significant aspect of this year. My family, as many others, have found that dealing with an overstretched health service adds additional pressure.

Yet, and as always, through all, our God has been with us, recognised or not. As always, it is up to us to discern what we are to take from these circumstances, and where the work of the Kingdom of God lies for us individually and collectively. I am most grateful for the relationships that have flourished in adversity and for those of the parishes and beyond who have worked kindly with me to enable what we can do to be 'good enough'.

Another year has passed without the full worship consultation planned to take place in 2020. Temporary arrangements have dominated the year, when worship resumed and then again as Gamlingay church closed for repairs. The consultation will now coincide with a wider review of our situation as we contribute to a Deanery plan - Living Ely 2025 - as we seek to live out our faith. We do this in confidence of the provision of a faithful God who meets us in Jesus where we are, not where we think we should be. We shall be asking the question 'where is God in this' about everything we are currently doing as we work with one another across the Deanery.

Personal Highlights of 2021

- The people prepared to take on the tasks of church governance and work with me to ensure the 'nuts and bolts' of being in church are in the place we are set.
- Parishes 'making ends meet' financially, against the odds - the generosity of individuals in giving and working with fund-raising.
- Work progressing on the fabric of both the parish churches.
- Services, some very special to be part of, that were possible despite the various limitations
- The remote access for (most) services, and the people who have 'Zoomed in'.
- last, but certainly not least, the Gamlingay Food Project established this year in partnership with Gamlingay Baptist Church,

My thanks go again to everyone who has worked so hard this year,

- to Ian Parker for his continuing support for the new Treasurers, and to those people themselves.
- to Wardens and all PCC members, especially officers in their work with me.

- to the members of the project/building groups associated with the PCCs, including those people not on the PCCs.
- all the people thanked elsewhere plus others in the background, for their contributions to the life of the Church in this place: cleaning, giving of time, talents, and money, praying, planning, and leading or otherwise contributing to worship, making music, beautifying churches and through all this showing the love of God in action. You know who you are, please know how glad I am that you are there and how grateful I am for all you do.

Above all, I thank God for all of you and pray blessing on all we do in his name, that we may be 'Generous and visible disciples of Jesus Christ'.

Hilary

