**The Parish of St Paul’s, Birkenshaw**

**with East Bierley and Hunsworth**

**The Annual Report for 2021**



Annual Parish Report

for the year 2021

Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, 15th May 2022.

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**LEGALLY REQUIRED REPORTS**

**Parish Information**

The Parish of Birkenshaw cum Hunsworth is part of the Diocese of Leeds and in the educational and local government area covered by Kirklees. The Parish comprises of four villages, Birkenshaw, Hunsworth, East Bierley and Drub. A population of an estimated ten thousand.

Our Parish is situated between the cities and towns of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Dewsbury and is close to the M62 corridor. A busy commuter belt with progressive housing developments, farms and at the moment green spaces. The area is served by a number of local shops and businesses, doctors’ surgeries and the headquarters for the emergency services. The local amenities include a bowling club, a golf course, a cricket ground and children's playgrounds. The area is served by local bus routes. There are also housing schemes run by housing associations.

Other amenities include 1st and 11th Spen Valley Scout Groups Headquarters where a full range of uniform groups meet.

There is a Community Hall which , unfortunately, has not re-opened since the Covid pandemic.

We have a very large open Churchyard. We are grateful to all those who maintain it and have done over the years. The group 'Friends of the Churchyard' meet regularly during the year and it is hoped to continue to improve the area.

Our Church, St Paul's, is not only used for services and prayer but also for weekly coffee mornings, a mother and toddler group, the meeting place for the Mothers Union, the Spen Valley Flower Club, a space for concerts and special celebrations and a place to host schools and the 'Churches Together' Rewind.

The Spotlight magazine produced by an enthusiastic group provides links within our Parish and keeps us all up to date with news and events.

Our Parish includes two nursing homes and one care home. We support them with visiting, services and musical entertainment, encouraging especially the care home residents who are mobile to attend events in Church. Holy Communion is taken out on request.

In our Parish we have three schools. Two Primary and one Academy. Regular visits are ongoing and the Primary Schools enjoy coming into Church for special events especially Easter, Christmas and the end or term, although these were reduced during the pandemic. We are also part of 'Churches Together' and host in turn the 'rewind' children's event.

**Regular Worship and Attendance**

Services at St Paul’s

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 2021 |
| Average Traditional Service including children | 29 |
| Mothering Sunday | - |
| Stations of the Cross | - |
| Good Friday | - |
| Easter Sunday | 42 |
| Harvest | - |

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Remembrance Sunday | 143 |
| Memorial Service | 32 |
| 9 Lessons and Carols | 47 |
| Christingle | - |
| Christmas Midnight Eucharist | - |
| Christmas Day | 43 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Baptisms | 9 |
| Weddings | 1 |
| Funerals | 12 |

**Churchwardens’ Report**

We currently do not have any Churchwardens.

**PCC Report 2021**

Your PCC met on eleven occasions:

21st January 2021 (on zoom) 9 present

25th March 2021 (on zoom) 8 present

15th April 2021 10 present

6th May 2021 8 present

20th May 2021 9 present + Ralph in attendance

15th July 2021 8 present + Ralph in attendance

5th August 2021 10 present + Ralph in attendance

9th September 2021 8 present

7th October 2021 8 present + Ralph in attendance

4th November 2021 8 present + Ralph in attendance

2nd December 2021 7 present + Ralph in attendance.

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**PCC members**

**Elected**

Mrs Barbara Thornton 2016 Lay Chairman

Mrs Sheila Snee 2016

Mrs Pat Trueman 2016

Mrs Vera Evans 2019

Mrs Brenda Bastey 2019

Mrs Janet Fearnley 2020

Mrs Susan Armitage 2021

Electoral Roll Officer Mrs Pauline Hirst

Safeguarding Officer Mr Nicholas Wright

Gift Aid Officer Mr Tony Bannister

PCC Secretary Mrs Linda Newlove

Deanery Synod Reps. Rev. Ralph Davidson

Mrs Pat Trueman.

The PCC meetings follow a similar pattern with a full agenda. The minutes of the previous meeting is circulated beforehand so that members are aware of the work which has been put into place since the last meeting.

The past year has again been quite difficult due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, the Sunday Club and the Hub have not been able to start again but the East Bierley Tots Group and Call-in have been able to meet again.

PCC member, Mike Perry, sadly passed away in November and he is very much missed as he was a much loved and valued member of the PCC.

The PCC meetings are held in the spirit of loving co-operation with the well-being of our congregation and clergy our priority. We will do our absolute best to reach out to the parish community and needs of others.

If anyone wishes to see transcripts of the meetings these are available from the Parish Secretary.

**Electoral Roll**

The number of people on the Electoral Roll for the parish of Birkenshaw cum Hunsworth in 2021 was 74. Of these, 65 were resident in the parish and 9 were non resident.

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**Deanery Synod Report**

Birkenshaw is in the Birstall Deanery and shares meetings with Dewsbury Deanery Synod.

The first meeting of the year was in March and this was a zoom meeting. There was an Election of Officers followed by Katherine Alice Grasham who gave a presentation of “Living in Love and Faith.

The October meeting was “live” at St Mary’s Church, Mirfield. It began with the introduction of our new Joint Interim Area Deans; Revd Hugh Baker and Revd Canon Mark Umpleby. This was followed by a presentation by Revd Canon Debbie Plummer. Debbie is the Area Environment Officer for the Huddersfield Episcopal Area. Her topic was Choosing life, taking the green journey, using the energy footprint tool, and being Eco-Church by 2030.

It was good to return to meeting people after having several meetings on zoom.

**Site Report**

There is no site report.

**Community Hall**

Our Community Hall remains closed

**Church Finances**

A full report of the accounts will be issued prior to the APCM.

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**OTHER REPORTS REFLECTING THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**Safeguarding**

During the past 12 months, 3 DBS checks have been carried out. One for a member of the PCC, the other two were for volunteers of the East Bierley and Birkenshaw Toddler Group. Liz Pennington, the Group Leader, has been advised that if there are any plans to start a new volunteer, they must be DBS checked in the first instance. Liz has confirmed that she will notify me.

All DBS Checks are currently up to date. The next check currently due is June 2023. If anyone joins PCC, or takes up a position of responsibility within the Church (e.g. a new Churchwarden) PCC are advised to notify me in the first instance and they must not commence any duties until a satisfactory DBS check has been completed.

It is understood that the current church website with Church Edit will cease to exist after August 2022, as PCC have agreed to utilise “A Church Near You” – a free website provided for all Anglican Churches. It is imperative that all safeguarding information is transferred across to the “A Church Near You” website. PCC need to ensure that whoever is managing the new website ensures that this is actioned.

I completed an online safer recruitment training module in September 2021. As soon as the following are appointed:

1. Church Wardens
2. Deputy Church Wardens
3. All Helpers who run our Children’s Sunday Club
4. Anyone who takes part in Children’s activities OR with Vulnerable Adults.

**They will need to complete a basic safeguarding training course.**

Details of the Courses and Dates are available on the Diocese Website which is:

[www.leeds.anglican.org](http://www.leeds.anglican.org)

**The Diocesan Safeguarding Team contacts are:**

Jenny Leccardi 07872 005189

Narinder Lyon 07872 005309

Carla Darbyshire 07399 809732

NW

**Mothers’ Union**

St Paul’s Branch continues to meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2.00 p.m. in church. We have 12 members at present and would welcome all who would like to join us.

We have had another very quiet year due to the pandemic but finally met up for our first meeting of 2021 in September.

As we had not met for such a long time, we had a good natter and afternoon tea. We had a lovely afternoon at our November meeting when we chose and sang our favourite hymns, accompanied by Hazel on the piano. Our last meeting, in December, was our Advent Service which was led by Noeline Page. A lovely end to yet another very strange year.

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We continued with most of the Area and Diocesan Council meetings taking place on zoom. It meant members could get together for discussion, but it just isn’t the same as speaking face to face.

Although we are a very small part of a world-wide organisation, we endeavour to make a difference to the lives of others less fortunate and strive to uphold the values of marriage and family life.

**Small Groups**

**Thursday Small Group**

The Thursday SG is alive and well and continued to meet during lockdown when allowed in members’ gardens and more latterly in homes. We have eight members and we also keep in touch via a WhatsApp group which sustained us when we not allowed to meet.

We meet any day that is the most convenient (hardly ever Thursday) usually fortnightly, and have a short time of worship followed by discussion on a wide range of topics.

The sharing of faith and fellowship leads to a close, trusting relationship which we all value tremendously and this has helped us all through the difficult times we have experienced, both personally and nationally.

BT

**Baptisms**

We held our first Baptism since lockdown on the 1st August and between then and the 6th December nine babies and children were baptised.

They were all lovely, joyous occasions. St Paul’s was full of family, godparents and friends celebrating their welcome into the Church.

It was a pleasure to be a part of them and to share in their joy.

SA & DR

**Schools Work**

**EAST BIERLEY CofE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

As with all schools 2021 has continued to be challenging for pupils, teachers and all staff at East Bierley School. Children’s attendance and staff absences were affected by Covid 19. Nevertheless, these challenges have been overcome by the dedication and hard work of all the staff. The younger children have suffered most due to the disruption of them being unable to socialize and learn alongside their peer groups but with targeted interventions they are quickly catching up.

Optimistically, church dates were pre-arranged for the children to attend St. Pauls’ Church. Unfortunately, the Harvest Festival and Christmas Concert had to be cancelled due to the emergence of the Omicrom virus. Despite this, the whole school congregated at the East Bierley War Memorial on Remembrance Day for a service led by the School Council. This was the first time the whole school had been together for over two years so was an emotional morning in many ways. ‘Hand to Mouth’ have continued (when able) to visit and support the school with its’ Christian values. Recent sessions have been about ‘Fairtrade’ and the Trinity. The Curate has recently been able to attend some of the worship in school and officiated at a mock wedding in church with Year 2.

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It was joyous to see the church filled with children from school for the Easter Service and there is no doubt their singing raised the roof!

Despite the difficulties, the school has attained several awards:-

The Gold Level for Reading Award

Gold Mental Health Award

Gold Sport Award

The Music Mark

The school also successfully bid for funding from The Siobhan Dowd Trust and were awarded £350 to spend. Children from years 5 and 6 went to The Book Shop in Piece Hall Yard to choose the books. Local authors Tom Palmer and Nikki Young have also visited the school to lend their encouragement to reading and creative writing.

The school is developing leadership skills of children with child-led groups which are having a positive impact.

The School Council have entirely led a Collective Worship in Assembly.

Play Leaders develop playtime games.

Reading Ambassadors are popular throughout school.

Milk Monitor is responsible for delivering milk to the classes.

Children have worked together with the local Preservation Society to fill and place the Bugs Hotel.

The Pastoral Team have worked well with all the schools’ clubs.

The older children particularly enjoy the responsibilities which helps the children take greater ownership and responsibility which in turn, promotes independence and resilience in individuals.

So, despite the hurdles, pupils and staff are maintaining their School Vision of:-

*‘Always Giving; Always Here’.*

PH

**Food Bank**

Since our Annual Report last year, the Food Bank situation has not improved. In fact, it continues to get worse. When we began in 2012 food banks distributed approximately 12 parcels a month. This has increased year on year and now the average number per month is almost 600.

Although we don’t have regular collections for the food bank at the moment our local primary schools have been very generous during the year. Birkenshaw CE Primary School held their Harvest Festival and collected an enormous amount of food which we delivered to one of our local distribution centres. East Bierley CofE (VC) Primary School had a collection at the end of November and again a tremendous amount of food was donated. The food banks were most grateful for all of their donations.

As part of our charity giving St Paul’s made a monetary donation to the food bank and we purchased a large quantity of goods that they were most in need of.

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The Food Banks we distribute to are always delighted to see us and are most appreciative of all your efforts. Please continue with your generous donations to make sure that we can maintain our support to this most worthwhile cause.

**Spotlight**

Following the sad news of Mike Perry’s illness last year, I was ‘asked’ by the production team to consider being the editor of Spotlight. When I say asked, I am told that my shoulder will improve given time. I’m joking of course. You could not wish to meet a more enthusiastic and dedicated group of people than the production team. They have the printing, folding and delivery off to a fine art.

I have now produced four editions of the magazine, with the fifth to follow very soon. In the main I have followed Mike’s proven format, and I hope that you approve of the mixture of news and entertainment that we gather together for each issue.

The biggest change has been in the way that Spotlight is paid for. This was rather haphazard in the past, but has now been moved to a subscription based payment system. This means we have an exact number of known subscribers and do not need to print more copies than necessary. Also, it means that we have a very good idea of our income and the cost of production.

The combination of income from subscribers and advertisers meant that last year we were able to support our church with a contribution of £935. A good effort indeed and, a massive Thank You to both advertisers and subscribers.

TB

**Social & Fundraising**

Another quiet year with nothing planned. Then things began to open up and in September we decided we would try to arrange a concert for December. The Clifton and Lightcliffe Band entertained us on the first Saturday in December and what a super evening we had. We were well supported by the community and although it was our only fundraised this year, we were encouraged to make plans for 2022. Watch this space!

**Call-In**

Like most things Call-In did not run during most of 2021 due to the pandemic. However, we re-opened in September and it continues to run every Tuesday morning in church between 10.00 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. Most of our regular clientele have returned and come week after week for a chat and a catch up on everyone’s news. Our numbers vary but most weeks we have 12 plus visitors throughout the morning. It’s good to see new faces popping in too. If you’re free on Tuesday mornings “call in” you’ll be most welcome.

**Vicar’s Report**

As the Vicar has been on sabbatical since January followed by a period of ill health there is no Vicar’s report.

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