

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Yarm
Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council
for the Year Ended 31 December 2020

Aim and purposes

St. Mary Magdalene Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend John Ford until his retirement at the end of August 2020, 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.

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 at St. Mary Magdalene. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our 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 sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we were particularly concerned that the age profile of the congregation and our style of service was inhibiting spreading the gospel message to younger people. We were also aware that it is important that we maintain the tradition and fabric of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene and in particular its tradition of organ music at services.

The PCC tasked its GOLD (Generosity of Loving Discipleship) sub committee to look at ways of making the church more robust and less reliant on occasional offices (baptisms, weddings and funerals) and fayres to support the mission of the church.

Achievements and Performance

In January we had a trial café church in the Youth and Community Centre with the PCC. It was lay led by Beryl Nadin, Avril Rhodes, David Yates and John Rhodes and well received. The group had undertaken extensive research into suitable venues and settled on the Community Centre at the Meadowings to roll out to the general public after Easter. This initiative was put on hold when the Community Centre closed due to Covid19. It will be started when the facilities are available.

The Diocesan advice on maintaining organ music in the church was accepted by the PCC and a quotation of £95k for the recommended work was obtained from our organ tuner and accepted. The church could not afford to cover these costs and has started to apply for grants. In order to secure funding the church will need to demonstrate its commitment and therefore fundraising is part of the plan.

Lockdown caused by the devastation of Covid 19 resulted in the work of the GOLD committee becoming important for the maintenance of our objectives in relation to a sound financial base. The committee was well supported by Sammi Tooze from the Diocese and Martin Bailey from the Deanery. A series of letters, emails and articles were written for Trident, by members of the group, explaining the impact of Covid 19 and the ways the congregation could help. The PCC reduced all non-essential spending and we managed to maintain the church and payment of our free will offer to support mission in the Diocese

including clergy numbers. There was a very good outcome as you will see in the annual accounts.

During 2020 the PCC met 6 times; average attendance was 83%. The Standing committee met 5 times during the year. The PCC started the year arranging meetings so that half the meetings were mainly on mission rather than business, however, when the Rector retired and Covid 19 influenced church activity, the PCC concentrated on the benefice profile (the document required before an advertisement can be placed for a new Rector) and maintaining safe operation in church. It became responsible, with the Churchwardens, for the Rectory and in particular the garden. A small team set about with loppers, secateurs and spades and worked tirelessly through autumn and winter months. The diocese sent its surveyor, Jamie Rotherham, to help prepare the house for a new incumbent. The work continues into 2021 with a larger taskforce as the garden starts to grow again.

The vacancy was advertised in December with a closing date of January 2021.

Worship and Prayer

Church Attendance

During 2020, St Mary Magdalene Yarm as the Parish Church has continued to be the focal point for Anglican worship in the Parish, however, two periods of lockdown prevented services in church. Once it was established that services would not resume in the short term, Reverend John Ford arranged for three services per week to be held using the zoom platform for those with access to a computer with camera, microphone and speakers. These were held on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. When John Ford retired, David Local agreed to continue the format and the church is most grateful for his commitment and dedication. Avril Rhodes ensured that the tradition of congregational participation was maintained by sending out readings well in advance. These services continued throughout the year with the Sunday service moving to 4pm when the church was open for a 9.30am service. When the church was allowed to open for public worship it was carried out under strict national and government guidance. A big thank you is owed to the Health and Safety subcommittee for their thoughts and consideration in providing risk assessments.

A total of 197 services were held in 2020, including 36 Holy Eucharists and 86 zoom services. In all there were 1323 communicants of whom 244 received communion at Home or in the Care Homes. There were 1020 zoom service attendees. In 2020, 5 people were baptised, there were 3 weddings and 7 funerals in the Parish Church and 2 interment of ashes. This is a reduction in the figures when compared with 2019, but a great achievement in the circumstances. On a "normal" Sunday before the first lockdown, the average attendance was 89 including an average of 82 communicants.

The PCC decided to close the church for private prayer because it was not possible to arrange safe supervision of the church when open. The well being of all has been a priority for the PCC.

Worship

Until lockdown in March, traditional public worship was based on Common Worship patterns, the 9.30am Sunday Service using Order 1 and the 8am Sunday and 9.30am Wednesday services using Order 2. After lockdown zoom services were started, based on the Daily prayer liturgy. The Organist and Choir director and trainee organist have enhanced the services by supplying recorded music.

New forms of worship also took place. On Monday mornings the informal Pram Service was held at 10am. The Pram Service, which attracts pre-school children and mainly mothers, continued to flourish, The "Pram Service+" in school holidays could not be offered due to Covid restrictions. The "Pram Service" on Mondays at 10am continued to thrive with an average attendance of 7 adults and 6 children, until Covid 19 closed the service in March 2020 after 10 weeks. The PCC is grateful to John Bancroft, members of the Family Service planning group and the Mothers' Union for all their work and support of the Pram Service initiatives. Covid 19 intervened before café church could be started.

Some of the younger children and families attend the monthly Funday Sunday Sparkle.

Beryl Nadin (to follow)

Deanery Synod

Three members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

David Local (to follow)

The Church building and churchyard

The church building remains in good order, well maintained, lovingly tended and cleaned. We thank all those whose efforts contribute to this. Maintenance has proceeded in accordance with the guidance of the Examining Architect's quinquennial report. Our architect Mr John Niven retired this year and the PCC is in the process of finding a replacement.

In the churchyard the Town Council continue to maintain the grass cutting to a high standard. The wall has been repaired and cleared of vegetation and the footpath levelled. Thanks go to Councillor Monck and the Town Council for expediting the matter.

Pastoral Care

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. A team of Eucharistic ministers visited those who have requested it, to celebrate communion with them either at their homes or in care homes until this was prohibited under Covid 19 regulations.

Once lockdown was announced our Care for the Congregation team, organised efficiently by Jean Hodgkinson, sprang into action. Their intention was to offer human contact, support and keep members of the congregation informed.

Mission and Evangelism

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. We have managed to help the Little Sprouts response to Covid19 in the area, NeoAngels, the Childrens Society, Love in a Box and hats for Albania. It is good that these efforts on behalf of others can be achieved in spite of restricted movement. During 2020 the Parents' group, professionally managed by Home-Start, delivered from Layfield Children's Centre was closed due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Our benefice magazine continued to be published albeit on-line for several months for some. Those who could not receive a paperless copy were sent a posted version. The

magazine keeps our parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church and articles that help develop our knowledge and trust in Jesus.

Financial Review

This year has been challenging and looked disastrous in May. However, letters from the Rector and conversations via care for the congregation network, encouraged and facilitated the return of green envelopes and donations to be received. The outcome is a tribute to the value we place on our church and community. We have made inroads into the aim to cover planned expenditure by planned giving. The PCC agreed to trial the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) as a tax efficient way of contributing financially to the church and GOLD group will be looking at rolling it out to the congregation in 2021. More details of the financial position are given in the appendix.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £24,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. The cash balance of £20,166 held on unrestricted funds at the year end, was less than its target. It is the PCC's hope to increase this over time, as life gets back to some semblance of normality and the range of services can restart.

Structure, Management and Governance

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

St Mary Magdalene Yarm PCC is a body corporate and operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Electoral Roll

On 31 December 2020 there were 122 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 53 of whom were not resident within the parish. Jay Yates is the electoral roll officer for the parish.

Safeguarding

The parish has adopted and implemented the House of Bishops 'safeguarding Policy Promoting a Safer Church'. Judy Dent continues to serve as the Parish Safeguarding Officer and maintains the register of those who are DBS checked and carried out safeguarding training. Training for levels C0 and C1 are available on-line and several members of the congregation and PCC have found it easy to use and complete. DBS checks have been carried out on all Trustees and those in positions of responsibility. There were no safeguarding notifications at St Mary Magdalene during 2020.

Vice Chairman's Concluding Remarks

In summary, 2020 has been a difficult year and the PCC have supported the church to maintain as much normality as could be safely achieved. Implementation of the Parish Plan which seeks to interpret the Diocesan vision "Generous Churches, Making and Nurturing Disciples" had to be put on hold. The PCC subgroup to review stewardship, GOLD, looked at the potential financial consequence of lockdown and took action to secure income whilst the PCC and Churchwardens reduced unnecessary expenditure. We come out of the year in a position that allows for optimism and being able to face the future with confidence.

2020 has seen several deaths of members from the regular congregation and they are greatly missed. There has been a dramatic decline in average attendance because of lockdown and it has been mitigated to a certain extent by the zoom services. Keeping in touch has been vital to maintaining a sense of togetherness and the approval of vaccines by the MHRA (the medicines and Healthcare products regulatory agency) has provided a way out for the church to resume its objectives.

I would like to thank all PCC members especially those on the Standing Committee for all their support in 2020, to the Eucharistic Ministers for their work across the parish, especially in the Care Homes, to the servers, Tanya Brackenbury, and Paul Muranganwa and also to every member of the parish who supports the work of ministry in Yarm.

John Rhodes, Vice Chair

ANNEX to the 2020 Annual Report

Administrative Information

St Mary Magdalene's church is part of the Deanery of Stokesley in the Diocese of York within the Church of England and is situated in West Street, Yarm TS15 9BU. The parish is in the Benefice of Yarm with Kirklevington with Picton and Worsall. The PCC of Yarm remains the governing body for the Parish of Yarm.

PCC members who have served as Trustees between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020:

		Dates
Incumbent	Revd Canon John Ford (SC – Chair)	(2012 until August 2020)
Wardens	Mrs Marion Johnston (SC)	(2017-2021)
	Mr John Rhodes (SC – Vice chair)	(2015-2021)
Elected Members		
	Mr Peter Monck	(2018-2021)
	Mrs Doreen Bancroft	(2018-2021)
	Mrs Margaret Nicholls	(2018-2021)
	Mrs Pam Parker	(2018-2021)
	Mrs Ros Carling	(2019-2022)
	Mrs Elaine Huggins	(2019-2022)
	Mr Martin Huggins (SC - Treasurer)	(2019-2022)
	Mrs Valerie Meeking	(2019-2022)
	Mr David Yates (SC – Secretary from August)	(2020-2023)
	Mrs Jayne Gregory (SC – Secretary until August)	(2020-2023)
	Mrs Lynn Alison	(2020-2023)
	Mrs Beryl Nadin	(2020-2023)
Representatives on	Mr David Local (SC from August)	(2020-2023)
Deanery Synod	Mrs Avril Rhodes	(2020-2023)
	Mr John Rhodes	(2020-2023)

SC – Member of the Standing Committee

Health and Safety Sub committee:

Mr David Beeton, Mr John Bancroft, Mr John Rhodes

GOLD committee:

Mr David Local (chair), Mrs Elaine Huggins, Mrs Margaret Nicholls, Mrs Marion Johnston, Mr Martin Huggins and Mr John Rhodes

Organ sub group:

Mr Robin Harrison, Mr John Bancroft and Mr John Rhodes

REPORTS TO THE APCM 2020

In alphabetical order

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

Bible Reading using the BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship) publications continues to thrive within the congregation at St Mary Magdalene, and numbers have held up well although just a little reduced during these difficult times. Our short monthly informal reading and discussion group for our BRF users and anyone else interested have continued, but virtually on Zoom. These have been well supported and generated much enthusiasm, and have proved to be a valuable support and also another welcome chance for informal social contact by those joining in. Our Reader David has also supported and prepared material for these, and many thanks are due to him.

There were 18 subscriptions to the church order for BRF bible reading notes booklets, and this implies 20-30 members of the congregation using daily readings and prayers, several being couples.

- 1 reads 'Guidelines', weekly reading and topic(s) for study.
- 17 read 'New Daylight', daily readings.

Unfortunately as noted above we have not been able to meet monthly around the tables in church with cake and coffee due to Covid restrictions, because the church has either been shut, or when open no social contact is permitted. Similarly we have been unable to provide the usual sample books laid out in church for the congregation to peruse and consider joining in, nor to discuss joining.

Finally I would note that our church members who are using one of the BRF publications find them valuable, often enjoyable, sometimes challenging, and always useful; and those of us who use the booklets highly recommend them to all.

Report provided by David Yates

CRAFT GUILD

DEANERY SYNOD

The Parish representatives for Deanery Synod were Avril Rhodes, John Rhodes and David Local. Our Rector Revd Canon John Ford as Area Dean was the chair of Synod and Kate Brown from St Martin and St Hilary, Kirklevington with Picton and All Saints Worsall was the lay chair.

Because of the Covid pandemic Deanery Synod only met once in 2020 in February at Worsall Village Hall. Our main speaker was Revd Nik Stevenson, Multiply Minister based at St Francis, Ingleby Barwick. Nik outlined how he had approached his new ministry since being installed at Ingleby Barwick in 2019. His main activities had been identifying the groups of people the Church do not reach at present and making himself visible in the community and listening to people's stories.

The then current triennial of Deanery Synod was due to end with effect from 30 June 2020 and the first Synod of the new triennial had been arranged for 1st July 2020. However, because of lockdown APCMs had not been able to meet and the new representatives were not appointed. As a result the current parish representatives continued in post until APCMs were able to elect new representatives.

The Diocese subsequently decided that the 2020 APCMs should meet before the end of November and the newly elected Deanery Synod representatives would commence as from 1st December 2020.

St Mary Magdalene APCM met on Sunday 4th October 2020 in Church and the current Deanery Synod Representatives, Avril Rhodes, John Rhodes and David Local were elected for the triennial 2020 – 2023.

As our Rector and Area Dean Revd Canon John Ford had retired with effect from 31 August 2020 Bishop Paul Ferguson appointed Revd Clay Roundtree of St Francis, Ingleby Barwick as Area Dean. The Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) had arranged for all parishes of the deanery to contribute to a leaving gift for John and Barbara. At a socially distant private luncheon of the DLT the appropriate cheque was given.

As Deanery Synod had not been able to meet after the March 2020 lockdown the Deanery Leadership Team arranged a Deanery Service of Thanksgiving at Christ Church, Great Ayton on 21 October 2020. Although there was no lockdown in place, for those people who were still self-isolating or not sufficiently confident to attend in person, arrangements were made for the service to be streamed via Zoom. 7 clergy and 11 lay people attended in person plus 2 clergy and 5 lay people joined via zoom.

The service was specifically arranged to thank existing Deanery Synod representatives for their service over the past 3 years. Also the new Archdeacon of Cleveland, The Ven. Amanda Bloor was invited to preach and be welcomed into the area.

2020 was certainly a unique year in the life of Deanery Synod, hopefully never to be repeated.

David Local, Avril Rhodes, John Rhodes.

FINANCE

FUNDAY SUNDAY SPARKLE

MOTHERS' UNION

PRAM SERVICE

Pram Service normally takes place at 10am every Monday except public holidays. It is aimed at pre-school children and their carers, and is very informal. We usually start in the Lady Chapel; occasionally the numbers make it too tight in the Lady Chapel, in which case we meet in the Nave.

After initial greetings (and a word in the ear of newcomers so they are not taken by surprise by what happens – although sometimes I am taken by surprise by what happens!), everyone is given a candle. We then each have a chance to say briefly for whom or for what situation we are going to light our candle (and “Pass” is perfectly acceptable), after which we say the Lord’s Prayer together. We light our candles and place them in position on the candle stand. This leads on to a short illustrated bible story read by myself or one of the other adults present – we try to ensure that all the children can see the pictures and maybe have other visual aids or objects which help to make the story memorable.

For the last part of the Pram Service we head across to the Children’s Corner and sing four or five songs together (words provided) such as ‘Wide, wide as the ocean’, and we always end with ‘The wise man built his house upon the rock’. Many of these, including the last, have actions which add to the enjoyment. We say ‘The Grace’ together, and then it’s time for refreshments, served by members of the Mothers’ Union, and a good old chat while the children play. It has been known for some people to stay till noon.

During school holidays we often have an extended session which we call ‘Pram Service Plus’. This starts with the Pram Service, and then we have crafty activities which we encourage the adults to

bring for the children. This might be in the Church or in one of the nearby community halls. It usually lasts until about 2pm, and we have a break for a picnic lunch (we bring our own) about noon. In the Summer holidays we usually have one session in Snaith's Field after Pram Service in Church, and have another session where we meet at Saltburn on the beach and have a fish 'n' chip (or whatever) picnic.

Pram Service welcomes, and is attended by, people of all denominations and none. The carers who come are parents, grandparents and other recognised carers. In the school holidays older children who perhaps used to attend Pram Service come back to join us with their pre-school siblings, and then it really is all age worship. It's great to see everybody listening to the story, joining in the action songs and beavering away at the activities when it's Pram Service Plus.

Most families who find their way to Pram Service for the first time come because of word-of-mouth, often using the well-known mantra: "I'm going to Pram Service, it's great, why don't you come along too". Families having children baptised at St Mary Magdalen are also told about Pram Service.

In 2020 unfortunately Pram Service activities had to be severely curtailed and we only managed to meet ten times before lockdown. One of those was Pram Service Plus and, if you can picture 17 children and 16 adults in Church you'll get some idea of what it was like before the pandemic, and hopefully what it might be like again before long.

John Bancroft

BENEFICE MAGAZINE: Trident

The editorial team comprises Kate Brown, Ros Carling, Debbie Gravestock, John Rhodes and Jay Yates. 10 editions of Trident were published. During the first wave of lockdown on-line publication was started with some copies posted to minimise the risk of infection. The magazine arrived in churches on the last Sunday of the appropriate month. We started the year by meeting a week before to assemble the edition and plan the contents of the next edition. This had to be done on-line from April and continued for the whole year.

Thank you to all who have continued to provide contributions. The editors have never had a month without a varied and full copy. We continue to use Calibri 12-point font for the majority of the content to allow it to be easily read by as many people as possible. It does mean that the number of pages is slightly greater than a standard publication and a two-page article occupies three pages. We have requested that all source material is referenced in any article submitted, that was published. We tried to prevent infringement of any copyright by following the UK Copyright Service advice for news reporting.

The editors are aware of safeguarding and do not publish unnecessary names and contact details. We also endeavour to ensure permission is granted for photographs to be included, especially of children. Mentioning children, we are delighted to receive contributions from young budding journalists. We can assure readers that the work is not influenced in any way by parents, albeit that the standard is high.

We are indebted to our advertisers who allowed us to keep the cost at £5.00 per annum for 2019. Gill Waller who collected the advertising renewals and the printers TopPrint have been stars. Ros Carling received the magazine and ensured copies were available in church and given to the other distributors (Jay Yates, Avril Rhodes and Neville Tate) so thanks go to all who assisted. We are hoping to expand the number of people distributing the magazine.

It is important that our advertisers know that you support Trident by thanking them for advertising in our magazine when you see them. We must remember that they do not do it solely to support the church, but to attract customers like us.

Trident is your magazine and an important tool in our outreach. Please share your copy with your friends and encourage them to purchase a copy for themselves. We try and provide news and articles about events and activities taking place within the parishes. We are conscious that it is a church magazine and therefore should have some theological content. Thank you to Avril Rhodes for writing a regular column about how the bible is applicable today in a column entitled 'What the Bible says about ...'. We have many regular contributors and without you the magazine would not be enriched by such diversity.

We thank all of you who subscribed for the year as it does help us to provide the correct number. Please do ask a friend to consider taking out a subscription so more people can benefit from our efforts.

Thank you one and all for your support.

Trident Editorial Team

CHOIR

The choir has continued to add to services whenever it can during the year. Harry has continued to be a huge asset, recording hymns and voluntaries for online services and I have created improvisations on various hymn tunes too. I particularly thank the choir for their staying back after services each week for a brief rehearsal. John Rhodes is putting much impetus behind trying to get the organ restoration off the ground as, sadly, it continues to be in a very poor state. We have missed John Bancroft dearly. Our Carol Service was a great event, with pre-recorded music by several members of the congregation creating a wonderful sharing occasion. We are very much hoping that music will become an elating part of services again in the not-too-distant future.

Robin Harrison: Organist and Choir director

CHURCHWARDENS

The churchwardens for 2020 were Marion Johnston and John Rhodes and together we endeavoured to support Revd Canon John Ford until his retirement at the end of August and our Reader, David Local to exercise his ministry here in Yarm.

The Redemptorist "Sunday" sheet continued to form the basis for Sunday readings and a big thank you to Avril Rhodes for ensuring readers obtained advance notice of their readings. The reverse of the Redemptorist sheets was used to provide notices when worship was held in church in the early part of the year. Copies are also distributed throughout the Benefice. Later in the year, when the church re-opened after lockdown the reverse of the sheets was used for key elements of the liturgy to replace books, in line with Covid 19 requirements.

The church was cleared in line with risk assessment and PPE purchased and provided. The layout was arranged to allow one way movement in or out of the church and 2m distance between parishioners not in a bubble. The notice boards were cleared of all non-essential items and books stored in the choir vestry.

The church fabric and equipment has been maintained according to the PCC schedule. The loose wooden blocks on the floor were repaired throughout the church and thanks go to Paul Huggins for undertaking the work.

The contract with Orca for cleaning came to an end due to pressures on the company created by extra work due to Covid. Andrea's Angels were engaged to replace Orca. Conyers School again donated a Christmas tree and this was put up by a small group in line with Covid guidance.

Churchwardens would like to thank all the sidespersons for the wonderful job they have done recording names at the door and guiding people to seats. The readers and intercessors have similarly helped deliver 9.30am Sunday and zoom services to a high standard. We would like to thank Avril Monck for helping with drawing up rotas.

Our church building is in good order and the congregation are very supportive. The churchwardens are grateful to all those who support the work of the church on a regular basis, whether by reading a lesson, interceding, cleaning, providing refreshments, acting as sidespersons, washing and ironing the linen, arranging social events, setting up for services, working in the churchyard, serving, taking part in Eucharistic ministry, booking in baptisms and arranging and delivering anniversary cards or by volunteering to do any of the multitude of odd jobs which our parish community needs.

Marion Johnston and John Rhodes: Churchwardens.