

APCM Reports 2020

25th May 2021

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Vicar's Reflection - Rev Chris Hood

One of the tasks I tend to do prior to writing my report for the APCM is to look at what I wrote last year. And although the 2020 APCM wasn't held until October, the report I had written to reflect back on the year 2019, was written in February. As I read through it, I thought back to a time when we had heard of the Corona virus perhaps in the news, but it wasn't at the front and centre of our thinking. In fact, for the first couple of months of 2020 we were planning and thinking about how we would seek to build on all that had happened in 2019 – live streaming and zoom were things very few of us had ever heard.

Then in March everything changed and as I seek to reflect on the year 2020, I struggle to grasp and comprehend all that has happened. 2020 has been a year like no other for us as individuals, as a church, a community, a country and a world. It is hard to think of a single part of our lives that have not been impacted by the pandemic. Many of us will know people who lost their lives to the virus and attended funerals that were impacted by the restrictions imposed to keep us safe. My thoughts and prayers continue to all who mourn and have been affected by the consequences of this pandemic.

Many weddings were also postponed due to the pandemic and yet the two weddings held in the parish last year were joyful occasions. Masks, smaller numbers and social distancing were a part of the ceremonies, but it was a wonderful privilege to see couples make their vows to each other before friends and family and God.

In March church buildings were forced to close their doors for in building worship, yet the church was not closed. We quickly managed to move our worship online and thanks to the hard work of David Jennings and the technical team, problems were solved, further elements were added and we continued to proclaim the Good News of Jesus – albeit in a different way than we had done before. It was wonderful the way people from different parts of the town and beyond could play a part in the service – the furthest participants coming from Australia!

The technology we have used has allowed us to invite people to preach from further afield. We have been blessed to have Josh Hunt, Paul and Sheila Taylor, Archdeacon Jeanette Gosney and Bishop Mike share with us and share their insight and wisdom.

As restrictions were lifted some returned to the building for worship, complete with masks, hand sanitiser and track and trace – and we continued online as well. Restrictions were then reimposed, and decisions had to be made about the best way forward in the parish. I would like to thank the small team who have helped manage the response to the pandemic this year, for their wisdom, time and prayerful responses as we sought to work out the best way to respond – I know it has not always been easy and there is no guidebook. I thank all of you who have prayed for us so faithfully throughout the year.

As time progressed, we continued to keep in touch with people through phone calls and newsletters and DVDs of the services. We also started after church coffee over zoom and many people enjoyed a chance to get together online and chat and share. Zoom also gave us an opportunity to have Bible study as well as social quizzes which raised money for local charities. For those who do not have internet access we have been able to worship in the parish and beyond over the airwaves thanks to the hospitality of Felixstowe Radio and the technical know-how of Rev Paul Clarke. The Sunday Service between 5-6pm has become a regular feature in the Felixstowe Radio offer and it has been a privilege to be able to continue worship in this way with folk joining in from across the world.

When regulations allowed, we continued to serve our community by hosting the Basic Life Pop Up Shop at St Peter and St Paul's, often adapting our approach but meeting needs and demonstrating God's love in very practical ways. A huge thank you to the whole team who have been so flexible and enabled this important service to continue.

Whilst the Pop Up Shop was unable to function online our monthly after school activity "Come and..." was able to do so. Houses became broadcasting studios, and a variety of crafts, cooking and growing activities were shared online with the videos being shared multiple times. We have also been able to continue to deliver assemblies in our local Primary Schools virtually, though they have been well received.

Towards the end of the year we hosted an advent prayer space in St Andrews that encouraged people to reflect on the themes of Christmas. The floral displays were wonderful and people appreciated them to help them enter into the story. Also, in advent a Christmas Carol trail was organised around the parish and a bit beyond. People used their creativity to present a Christmas Carol in their windows or front gardens and it was a great chance to be outside and guess the carol. Both of these events came about because of the pandemic restrictions but I hope they become a part of our regular pattern.

As I come to a close I would like to express my thanks to everyone who has contributed to the ministry and mission of Old Felixstowe Parish in so many ways, and the way people have got involved in caring for and loving our neighbours – whoever they may be. Whilst our buildings have not always been open the church has never been closed – we have continued to worship, to witness and to love. I pray that as we look forward we would keep doing that – I pray that we would continue to be church God has called us to be.

PCC Review of 2020 - Richard Cornwell, PCC Minutes Secretary.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions closing down the country almost completely for large parts of the year, the PCC was still extremely busy - coping with the impact of the crisis on parish life, worship and the running and management of our three churches.

Meetings moved online via the Zoom video-conferencing app in the first lockdown in March, allowing church business to continue as the PCC began working through a process based on response, recovery and reconstruction and looking at what this would mean for the Old Felixstowe Parish in the immediate and long-term future and connecting this work with a project which had started in January, 2020, to create a new vision for the church.

Immediate priorities were pastoral care and worship.

A telephone network was set up to enable church leaders to keep in touch and offer spiritual, pastoral and practical support to everyone in the church family who would like it but in particular to the most vulnerable members of our congregation. This contact was much appreciated and new friendships have been formed and blossomed from it.

Worship was moved online with an informal streamed Sunday service from the vicar's study attracting a wider congregation than those in the parish, thus reaching many more people than the in-building church services. Our pioneering spirit in this has led to praise from the diocese, which has included us in a county-wide project to improve streaming online going forward. The parish has also received some funding from the diocese towards equipment. Online services will now become very much part of church life in the future. As well as proving accessible to more people from the local area and further afield, the online services are a great way for people to explore church and start their faith journey, especially those not yet ready to cross the threshold of a church building. The services can also be watched at any time - useful for people who work or have other commitments on a Sunday.

During the year, other church services, meetings, social events and activities - including "Come and ..." and after-church coffee time rebranded as Zoom Coffee - moved online.

A new online newsletter has been launched and DVDs made of streamed services and delivered to those without internet access.

When possible, church buildings have been open for private prayer and public worship, as well as being available for weddings and funerals in line with Church of England guidelines.

In-person worship at church has been very different to normal. Social distancing has meant a cap on numbers attending, along with the wearing of masks, spoken worship only, no singing, and no use of paper materials to avoid any spreading of virus germs.

There was little opportunity for the church buildings to be used by the wider community, but St Peter and Paul Church has continued to be used on a weekly basis for the community Basic Pop-up Shop, and Music in Felixstowe was able to use St Andrew's Church to record some recitals.

The church hall has been used by the pre-school group throughout the year.

While the project working with Rev Dave Gardner to create a new 'Vision' for the church, guided by the principles of Growing in God and using tools from Mission Action Planning, had - because of Covid-19 - not been able to proceed as planned, PCC agreed to move forward and carry out the process in a different and more limited way. PCC felt the parish could not wait and its churches needed to begin their journey forward now. Rev Gardner had agreed to continue as mentor for the project and throughout 2020 provided ongoing help to Rev Chris with the steering group meeting online to discuss progress and discern which things will change going forward and what God is calling us to do differently.

The steering group recommended a Vision Statement: "In Old Felixstowe Parish we seek to live, show and tell of the love of God that we may become more like Christ and draw people to Him." Going forward, the theme of "live, show, tell" captured in the new 'vision/mission statement' will guide everything we do in future as a parish.

The Communications Group also met to look at future signage for the three churches. The aim is to update the signs at St Peter and St Paul, St Andrew's and St Nicholas - with three new signs with a consistent style, colour and 'branding' so that the

churches would be recognised as one parish. The group looked at a range of sign styles and also those used by churches around the local area. The new signs' design would include the "live, show, tell" theme and essential contact information, pointing to our website and social media for details of our beliefs, activities and services. In addition, the group had agreed to install a banner sign to promote events and activities, a separate and permanent structure which could be changed regularly. PCC agreed the project and costs are being explored.

Also during the year work started on preparations for the submission of a Faculty application for the new sound and vision system for St Peter and St Paul Church, included in the budget for 2020.

Early in 2020, PCC treasurer John Dangerfield became ill and sadly passed away on June 10 after serving the Parochial Church Council for 30 years. A small finance team was co-opted by the PCC to ensure that the treasury function continued and to consider future policies and a strategy to maintain the accounting system. A decision was taken to move from the ledger-based system to a computer-based system using Finance Co-Ordinator from Data Development UK. This is a specialist program specifically designed for Church of England accounting requirements. Opportunity was taken to review the fund structure using Finance Co-Ordinator's ability to clearly show activities in each of the funds. It was also agreed to tidy up a number of legacy liabilities, mainly of low value.

2021 Electoral Role report - Neil Shipley, Electoral Role Officer.

The number on the role for 2020 was 143 , 2 people have applied to be added and 4 have sadly passed away making the number for 2021 – 141.

The number which have been added may be slightly down on what we would have hoped for, but with a portion of the congregation having not returned to worship with the Church building this may account for this.

Communications report - Communications and Administration officer, David Jennings

The early stages of lockdown 1 were spent rapidly researching what was going to be the best way to enable us to still worship together, albeit remotely. The system has meant that we've been able to use multiple people/locations and include them in the services, as well as music videos, photos, overlays etc.

Although very different, our services have enabled people who would never normal consider going to church to learn about Jesus. We've also had people from other parts of the country (or world) who now call our church "home" because they can join with us.

During this year, communicating with our community electronically has primarily been:

- Services
- Regular social media updates
- Regular extra videos from Chris (Message in a minute etc)
- Email newsletter
- Website updates

We've learned as we've got along and adjusted accordingly. Most importantly, we've been able to continue to Live, show and tell, even when we're miles apart.

Lastly a few stats:

- Between 1st November and 31st December, videos on our Youtube and Facebook pages were watched for 44,000 minutes! (The important thing to remember is that these are measured on device, it could be multiple people watching at the same time.)
- We have over 500 people following our various social media pages.
- In 2020 our website was visited 11,000 times by nearly 4,000 users.
- We hope to keep on using tech to communicate the gospel in 2021.

St Andrew's Church

Several outstanding jobs were tackled whilst the church was closed over the lockdown periods.

In September, the old insulation to the heating duct on the north aisle roof was removed as it had become saturated with rainwater caused by birds pecking holes in the cladding. New PIR boarded insulation and aluminium cladding was then fixed.

In January, a frame supporting roof sheet panels was erected over the duct as protection against birds and standing rainwater.

In October, overgrown trees and shrubs to the north side of the Church were cut back giving much needed natural light to the building. The area is now in preparation for grassing over.

All the rainwater downpipes were cleared out using compressed air in January. This seems to have stopped the ingress of water into the church.

St Andrew's Church Hall

Periodic maintenance was carried out over the year ranging from cleaning out the drains to realignment of rainwater guttering.

From the first of January, St Andrew's Preschool have become sole users of the Church Hall and are now paying for all utility bills.

In March, a new vinyl floor was installed paid for by the Preschool.

A new kitchen under sink water heater has been installed

Fabric report for St Peter and St Paul

Although St Peter and Paul church has not been used for regular services for most of 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, the Basics popup shop has continued in the Link with only a short break. This has meant the building has been used on a regular basis and cleaning and routine maintenance of the church and church yard has been carried out.

There have been no major projects at the Church in 2020 but plans have commenced to make alterations to allow for steaming of services from the church in the near future

The council is responsible for maintaining the church yard and after a period where the grass did grow to unsafe heights, due to covid restrictions, the cutting was started in the summer and continued through the rest of the year. The volunteer gardening groups also had late starts due to the restrictions but managed to keep the church yard and Garden of Remembrance looking good throughout the year.

We are grateful for all those who offer their services in anyway, often going into the church or church yard unseen but very much appreciated.

Fabric report St Nicholas

There were only a few occasions in 2020 when St Nicholas was used, we were not able to hold regular evening services there because of the pandemic restrictions.

The building remains in good repair and routine maintenance has been carried out. The grounds are kept neat and tidy by the neighbouring residents at the Ferry, for which we are really grateful.

Basic Popup shop report 2020

The Basics Popup shop has proved a valuable community project in 2020. There was a four month break in the late spring due to the covid restrictions but apart from that there has been a weekly shop throughout the year. The shop ran normally until late March when it was necessary to close but food supplies were available for those in need from the Basics charity in Felixstowe.

Once restrictions allowed the shop reopened in July in a modified way allowing for helpers and customers to stay safe. Collection of food from Lidl and Basic started on Wednesdays again. On Thursdays the numbers of customers in the shop was restricted and refreshments were served in the church rather than in the Link. This continued until December when further restrictions meant many of the volunteers were unable to help and we could no longer serve refreshments.

By the end of the year we had the shop in the foyer of the Link with just two volunteers serving on Thursdays and the Wednesday collecting and sorting team was also cut down to a minimum.

Throughout this time there has been an obvious need for the popup shop with many regular customers seemingly relying on

the food that we offer. There are others who come because they find a welcome and even with no teas and coffees there is always time for a chat and a catch up about family or the weather.

Thanks must go to the many people who help with the shop by collecting and sorting the food, welcoming and serving the customers and making the teas.

Importantly also thanks to the many members of the congregation who donate items to the shop.

The Basic Popup shop gives us the opportunity to live, show and tell the love of God in a practical way to the wider community in Old Felixstowe.

Safeguarding

Gill Hadwen acts as the Safeguarding Officer for the parish and is assisted by Helen Hood as her deputy. Safeguarding is an item on all PCC agendas. Further details on safeguarding policies can be accessed through our website.

<http://www.olfelixstoweparish.org.uk/safeguarding>

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Deanery Synod

Throughout the year the Deanery Synod has not met due to the pandemic. Gill Hadwen has been our sole representative since John Dangerfield's death

Come and... - Becky Copestake

At the outset of the pandemic our activities came to an abrupt stop. It took a couple of months to regroup and plan to offer our activities online, starting with 2 livestreams each month during the summer. By September we returned to our usual pattern of once a month, but still online, with our sessions being shared by the local schools. We have been able to include some of the children who previously attended in person as well as some of the helpers. Our projects have included planting bulbs, making pizzas, creating bird feeders, bug hotels, origami boats, reindeer cupcakes, snowmen tree decorations and many more fun activities. We intend to continue online until it is deemed safe to meet in person, when we will make use of The Link. Many thanks to everyone who has supported us in this initiative.

Monday Fellowship—Edyth Banks

Before Covid, Monday Fellowship met on Mondays at 12.30 in the Link at St Peter & St Paul. We had a bring and share lunch and then a Bible Study. It was much appreciated as a time of warm fellowship and care for one another as well as for the spiritual content. The numbers were usually somewhere around 25.

From March to August 2020 there was no opportunity to meet. However from August 10th to the end of September we were able to meet fortnightly in groups of six in various gardens to chat and pray together, which was a great joy to everyone. Once the weather became too cold and then lockdown was once again imposed, meetings ceased until February 2021 when we began to hold zoom meetings, giving at least an opportunity to catch up with each other again. During April we kept hoping it would be warm enough to meet outdoors in groups again, which finally happened for the first time on May 10th. As lockdown continues to ease we are greatly hoping to meet all together in St Andrews garden on May 24th – the first time together face to face for 14 months.