

APCM - Reports

OLD FELIXSTOWE PARISH
PARISH OFFICE

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Vicar's Reflection - Rev Chris Hood

When I was at college the first time, a long time ago, a friend I shared a house with was into photography. It was the days before digital cameras and part of the joy of photography for him was developing his own photographs. From what I remember this involved a dark room, with infrared light, some chemicals in a tray, an indoor washing line and quite a bit of patience. The part of the process that I remember most was placing the photographic paper into the chemical solution and seeing the image that had been taken ever so slowly appearing and becoming clearer.

As I have been praying and thinking about the events of 2021, this image of patiently waiting for something becoming slowly clearer has stayed in my mind. And as we journey through 2022 it still feels very much the case. Parts are becoming clearer but, as situations change, we need to be attentive and notice what God may be calling us to do.

Last year began and ended with the pandemic and this was a significant factor in thinking and planning throughout the year. Plans and risk assessments were made and revised in the light of an ever-changing situation. We became adept at pivoting as new evidence and guidance arrived. When we returned to buildings initially it was with masks and no singing, we then slowly began to develop with singing outside, followed by coffee, again outside. Slowly people began to feel more comfortable around others only for the pandemic status to change leading to yet more adjustments.

Throughout 2021 we continued to worship together online and deliver DVDs to those who were unable to access online or come in person. We continue to connect with people near and far and see this ministry developing. In the light of this new ministry, the PCC successfully applied for a faculty for St Peter and St Paul in order to install audio and video equipment enabling more flexible worship, as well as the ability to record services and live stream them. This project is continuing to develop, and we are excited by the flexibility this will offer us going forward.

2021 saw the launch and regathering of small groups in the parish. These are called Link groups, giving people the opportunity to link up with each other, and with God, as part of a small group and grow in their faith – thank you to all people involved in these. The fledgling theology book group was reconvened and every other month we have gathered to explore a range of Christian books and share what we think.

Throughout the year we continued to prayer walk throughout the parish, praying for our community and listening to what God is saying to us. This was a great way to get into our community and meet up with each other when meeting indoors was problematic.

In July the parish welcomed Rev Emma Haggar to serve her curacy with us. Whilst the numbers for her ordination at the cathedral were limited, I was privileged to be there and it was lovely to be able to welcome her to Old Felixstowe which will be her home for three years. We have all been blessed by Rev Emma's ministry and we look forward to journeying alongside her throughout her time with us.

We have continued to develop good working relationships with the schools in our parish. Assemblies and lessons have been delivered on-line and it was a joy to be able to host and film Colneis' Christmas service towards the end of the year. Come and... continued online – more of which you can read later in the report.

The parish continued to host the Basic Life pop up shop, helping to meet local need by providing food as well as creating an opportunity for people to meet together. It was a joy to begin to serve

refreshments again every Thursday morning and create spaces for people to chat and share with one another.

Having started the Sunday Service with Rev Paul Clarke on Felixstowe Radio last year in response to the first lock down, we have continued this and it is now very much part of our pattern of worship. We have feedback from people from near and far afield and we are thankful to Felixstowe Radio for allowing us to broadcast.

As a parish we also ran Christianity Explored online, with people from Walton, Trimley and Old Felixstowe joining together to explore questions associated with our faith. We were also about to host online one of the Churches Together in Felixstowe Lent groups exploring environmental issues. As you can see from this report, Old Felixstowe Parish has continued to **live, show and tell** of the love of God, becoming like Christ and drawing others to Him. This is done in a whole variety of ways and I would like to thank you all for being a part of God's mission in our community. The support and encouragement received throughout the year is evidence of God equipping us to fulfil His calling – our task has been, and will continue to be, that of listening to His voice and responding. I give thanks for all involved in this and would encourage us all to be attentive to what God is calling us to.

PCC Review of 2021 - Richard Cornwell, PCC Minutes Secretary.

It was a busy year for the PCC - dealing with the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on worship services and church activities, seeing through the conclusion of the faculties for the new sound and vision system at St Peter and St Paul Church, and preparing for a time beyond the pandemic.

The PCC also launched a new way of working which aims to cut its number of meetings and enable members to focus more clearly on specific and strategic matters.

The year began with the country once again in lockdown and the PCC having to agree to suspend worship services until March 21 after another winter wave of the virus.

Services resumed at the end of March but again with spoken word worship, no singing, social distancing and mask-wearing. But as more people were vaccinated and the spread and severity of the virus curtailed, the remainder of the year saw a relaxation of restrictions - with agreement to sing an end hymn outside in the summer months and later singing resuming indoors. Later in the year, some church activities were also restored.

The PCC met nine times during 2021 - and abandoned Zoom to meet in the Vicarage garden for one meeting and at St Nicholas Church, Felixstowe Ferry, on another occasion.

An Away Day involving clergy, Elders and PCC was also held at St Nicholas on September 4 to pray about and consider the values of the parish in church, ministry and its community outreach - "the principles that undergird, influence and clarify what the church does and how it does it". This work was also taken up at a PCC meeting attended by some of the Elders to look at "Who are we?" "What defines us?" "What is really important to us?" and "What are the non-negotiables?" The work is continuing.

Following the work of the previous year, a series of faculty applications were made for the various elements of the new sound and vision system at St Peter and St Paul Church. After work with the Diocese, these were all granted - and work started on the project in the church building in the autumn. Pews were removed at the back of the church next to the door into The Link to create the

"room" for the sound engineers and visual team and the new equipment. Work also took place to install the internet, and the project continues with a completion date set for late 2022.

In connection with this work, the PCC also agreed a new pattern of worship ready for when the new sound and vision system is up and running. This will see the 8am Book of Common Prayer Communion service take place at St Andrew's Church, and a 9.30am service and an 11am service take place at St Peter and St Paul.

The 9.30am service will be informal Morning Worship using the new screen and projector, streamed online and recorded, with band-led sung contemporary worship.

The 11am will be a formal Morning Worship with organ/piano-led sung traditional worship but not using the screen.

The PCC agreed the new pattern of services would bring consistency - having services of the same style, in the same location at the same time each week. This would make it easier for people to know what they are attending and when and end confusion for those who are part of the church and those attending infrequently about where services were being held.

In the autumn, the PCC launched a new way of working which saw the creation of three new Working Groups to focus on specific topics - Outreach and Mission; Fabric (upkeep and work on the buildings); and Finance. While PCC members are involved in the groups, the groups are also open for other members of the church family with an interest in the topics to contribute to and join.

The aim is to cut the number of PCC meetings to every other month instead of monthly, with the Working Groups meeting in between. This will enable the PCC to focus on strategic matters, while the Working Groups would look in detail at their topics and bring a bullet-point report to the PCC of their discussions and any recommendations for action, with the PCC making the final decisions.

Electoral Role report - Neil Shipley, Electoral Role Officer.

The number on the role for 2021 was 141 , this year we have 143.

Communications report – David Jennings, Communications and Administration officer

This year has seen an interesting and challenging hybrid of in-person and our online church.

Our livestreams continue to be watched by many people, with a good percentage of views taking place at times other than Sunday morning.

The subscription to our email newsletter is over 100 people. We print a few copies for those who don't have internet access, but we keep that to minimum. As restrictions reduce, we've also produced a few flyers for events, but again we've tried to keep these to a minimal, as we want to direct people to our website for further details.

Between our YouTube channel, social media and the newsletter, we have over 800 people who follow/like/subscribe to the content we put out – sharing the amazing news about Jesus!

Safeguarding

Gill Hadwen remains safeguarding officer with Helen Hood as assistant, supporting with IT and training. As a parish we have signed up to and follow the diocese safeguarding policy - details on our website. Training has been in hold over the initial pandemic but is now being instigated both online and hopefully soon face to face. Any safeguarding issues are raised with Chris and/or Gill and

referred to the Diocese Safeguarding Team if required. DBS for worship leaders and elders are in place as recommended by the diocese.

St Andrew's Church

No major works had to be carried out over the past year, only general service and maintenance.

Various damp patches to the kitchen and toilet walls were addressed.

In October, asbestos surveys were carried out to all three churches, no problems were encountered.

In March, one of the leaded windows in the eastern porch wall was badly vandalised, this was subsequently repaired in April by Jon Messum of Bures.

St Andrew's Hall

The church hall has been used exclusively by the St Andrew's Preschool and this arrangement has worked well. There are regular meetings held between the church and the preschool.

Because of their sole use of the building the preschool have been able to find funding to upgrade the premises. The back room has been redecorated, cleared of excess furniture and is now used as an office and occasional room for small groups and meetings. Regular maintenance has been carried out on the fabric of the building, the rear fire door has been fitted with a push pad lock, window frames and heaters have been repaired, and fuse boxes replaced.

Although there have been some major costs in the various repairs this year, it is expected that, going forward, the hall rent will cover the running costs of the building.

St Peter and St Paul

There has been restricted use of the church this year as, following the easing of covid restrictions, work commenced on the alterations to the interior to enable the installation of streaming and sound equipment as well as Wi-Fi connection.

However there have been regular weekly evening prayer and monthly communion services as well as occasional services at festivals weddings and funerals.

The Link has continued to be used each week for the community Pop-Up shop as well as various other church meetings.

Apart from the internal building work there have been no major repairs needed to the church, routine checks and maintenance have been carried out.

The church yard is maintained by the council who cut the grass and hedges and look after the trees. There is also a group of loyal volunteers who maintain the Garden of Remembrance, tidy various areas around the church and regularly clean the Link and the church, and we are really grateful for their help.

St Nicholas

St Nicholas was used during the summer for evening services and some church social events. The simplicity of the building and the nearness to the sea make it a popular choice for church away days. It was used for some musical events during the spring and early summer which kept the building aired and used. Routine checks were made but there was no major work done to the building.

Basic Pop-Up shop – Judy Jones

The weekly community Pop-Up shop has continued to provide food and a place to meet throughout the year. As covid restrictions eased we were able to have more helpers, extend back into the Link and later on to reinstate the coffee and chat, now in the church to allow more space. This has proved a useful outreach opportunity for the church. Towards the end of the year the way we received goods changed, we had been receiving food from Fareshare via the Basic Life Charity, Felixstowe. This arrangement ended and we are now in partnership with St Mary's Church, Walton and share a delivery from Fareshare each week with them. There has been a noticeable increase in numbers coming to the shop and it is probable that the need will increase in the future.

A large team of people are involved in the shop each week, collecting and sorting food, serving, providing refreshments, and donating goods for the shop. We are grateful for all their support and help.

Deanery Synod

Due to restrictions, the Deanery Synod only met once last year on October 5th at St Andrew's Church. Rev David welcomed everyone and Rev Sally Gaze presented an update on the Lightwave community. Our representatives this year have been Gill Hadwen and Jean MacPherson.

Come and... - Becky Copestake

During 2021 the effects of the pandemic meant that "Come and..." remained mostly online. There were just two months, September and October, when we felt able to meet in person, in the Link, to build with Lego and to plant Autumn bulbs. For the rest of the year we offered cooking, crafts, more planting – we even made juggling balls! In all of these activities we were able to include Poppy and Daisy who were keen to stay a part of it all whilst safely at home in their kitchen. Many thanks to everyone who has supported this initiative throughout the year.

Ladybirds – Barbara Bown

Lockdown meant that Ladybirds were unable to meet for 16 months. In June last year the Committee met and decided that we would change our meetings from evening to afternoon. This has turned out to be an enormous success with previous members who felt unable to attend on dark nights returning with enthusiasm and, as an added bonus, we were delighted to see new members joining us too.

We started our return cautiously with an afternoon tea at St Nicholas Church in July which was a lovely afternoon and was surprisingly well attended, despite the fact that many people had not been out and about for a long time.

We held our first 'proper' meeting in September and have had such interesting talks ranging from The Suffolk Punch, Felixstowe Museum, The Hospice Retail shop, a Life in Music, and the 1953 floods. In December, Emma Haggar finished off 2021 by telling us about Mary, Mother of Jesus.

After Christmas we were given a glimpse of how difficult it was to travel for businesses behind the Iron curtain and we then had our traditional meal out at the Ferryboat Inn, which again was very well attended by members and partners and enjoyed by everyone.

This year we have had talks about the Dolphin Lights of London, Thomas Cavendish and flowers in the Bible.

Our talks are very diverse and we are very lucky that we live in an area where there are so many interesting people who are prepared to give up their time for a very nominal fee or a charitable donation.

Ladybirds has been in existence for years and it is pleasing to know that it is still a place where we all enjoy meeting together, listening to stories and having a natter with friends.

Monday Fellowship – David Isbister

The Monday Fellowship continues to meet but only fortnightly in the back area of St Andrew's Church. A survey of members was taken to decide what form the meetings were to be held. It was agreed that a shortened time with no bring and shared lunch would be best.

We meet at 11.00 for about 1 hour, during which we will have a short study. Since Christmas we have been looking at some of the Psalms of Assent. Our next studies will be looking at Joshua. We still have about 30 members, which includes 4 new people. On most Mondays between 15 and 20 attend.

We are grateful to our leaders which includes some of the retired clergy as well as Rev Chris and Rev Emma. We are always ready to welcome new members even if they cannot commit to attending every meeting.