



[The Venta group of churches](#)
Arminghall, Caistor St Edmund, Stoke Holy Cross and Dunston
Celebrating and Reviewing 2021
For the annual meetings in Spring 2022

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1. The year in overview

Vicar's report

Once again, an enormous **thank you** to all of you for everything that you have contributed to the life of our churches in the past year, much of which you'll see in the pages that follow. Please take the time to sit and read it all over, and take time to thank God for all the good things that you'll notice, and pray for us as we look to follow him into 2022.

As the year started, another lockdown was enforced, and we took the decision to suspend services in person. We didn't let this daunt us, and continued to meet online to pray every morning, and to gather on Zoom and YouTube for worship on Sundays. We're really grateful to a number of friends who recorded us some brilliant talks which we used in our Sunday worship. From there we moved into the season of Lent, and used our time on Saturday mornings as well as on Sundays to explore ways of going **deeper with God using some amazing spiritual disciplines**.



Easter is always a time of great rejoicing but all the more so this year, as wonderfully we were able to **gather at Stoke for an outdoor service** on a beautiful Spring day. This followed on from being able to meet at **Caistor on Good Friday** as well. Easter is always an exciting time in Arminghall because we gather for **St George's Day** as well, and this year it was lovely to have a number of residents join us in the churchyard, and taking it in turns to ring the bell in the building.

After Easter came some welcome changes, as meeting in person seemed more appropriate again, and we were able to follow the government roadmap to encourage more in the way of **fellowship for individuals and small groups**. Groups for children were near the front of the queue, meaning that **Sparklers could resume meeting in the hall** after a very long year of absence.

Seeking sustenance in faith in what was a challenging time for everyone, **we gazed on Jesus and who he** is all through the summer, reminding ourselves of what he is like using words inspired by Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

Brilliantly we were able to rediscover something like normal life in the summer and run a **brilliant holiday club** for 30 children over three fun-filled days thinking about the wonderful world that God has made for us.



The summer brought something new and exciting for us as a family, as for the first time we had a period of **sabbatical leave**. Cathryn and I had time to do some amazing things as a family, a couple, and as individuals – below a few pictures of one of my personal highlights, some time on retreat in the Yorkshire Dales in pretty much the warmest week of the year.



Over that three month period some great stuff was going on in the churches here. One of those was the fruit of much preparatory work and prayer over many years, and the fulfilment of a journey we had clearly seen God leading us on, as we began **partnership with Youth for Christ** and their youth worker Gary Watson. Gary worked with us on assemblies and the holiday club before launching in evening meeting in the autumn. This grew rapidly over the first few months to the point that we now have about **25 young people on the books**, and often up to 18 now meeting weekly on a Thursday. Many thanks to Gary, Lyn, Tom and a huge team of volunteers for all that you have brought to this. Gary and Lyn have been able to run games sessions in the school alongside this.

Alongside this we had approaching 20 members of our **church and wider community coming together to form a choir** that sang at all of our Christmas carol services this year, which was an absolutely brilliant thing. We also began a monthly get-together for people who might feel in need of company to drop in for **coffee at the Church Hall**.

A huge amount goes into covering a sabbatical even just to keep things running “as usual” – not that those words really apply any more – so for things like this to bubble up and grow as some of them did is a **sign of God’s faithfulness**, a willingness from lots of people to courageously **follow the way his Spirit is leading**, and in the end quite a lot of hard work. I want to say a big thank you to Lyn, the wardens, and our administrator Carolin, and to all of you for everything else you picked up – and have not necessarily put straight back down again!

I’m so proud of the way that we all continue to find ways **to see lives and communities transformed by sharing the love of Jesus**. I’m so encouraged by the way that you long to be **disciples who make disciples**, to **engage in all kinds of evangelism** to bring people to Jesus, and are determined to find new ways to **connect with community and create community** of our own. We’re so aware of the need as we move into 2022 to press into all of these areas once again, and especially in seeking out ways to connect with families in our community, including those we feel we’ve lost touch with a bit through the pandemic.

God has started some great things, and there is **much to be thankful for**. But we know there are challenges as well, and so we hang on to **God’s amazing promises**, including the one which reminds us to **“be confident that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”**

Thank you so much, everyone



Churchwardens' reports

Caistor St Edmund

At the start of 2021, we had been hoping that the end of the pandemic would be in sight. Instead in January we were back in lockdown due to the alpha variant. At the same time we witnessed something amazing when the vaccination campaign was rolled out across the country, giving us hope.

The impact on our church life was that we were once again meeting together on zoom for our church services and other meetings. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this possible. By Easter we were able to meet outside. On Good Friday some of us walked with the cross from Stoke Holy Cross to Caistor St Edmund Church, followed by a service in the churchyard. Easter morning dawned with beautiful sunshine and we celebrated Christ's resurrection in the churchyard at Stoke Holy Cross. By June we were able to start services in the church building, and during the rest of the year we had Praise and Worship on the first and Holy Communion on the third Sunday of the month, whilst observing appropriate measures like social distancing and wearing of masks.

The Remembrance service in November was very well attended, as was the Carol service where we enjoyed listening to the newly formed community choir. We served refreshments before or after these services and enjoyed meeting new people and reconnecting with others. Attendance at the regular services averaged between 5-10 people.

We managed to keep the church building open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays during the first half of the year. In the autumn we were open every day again, thanks to the help of our volunteers. Many people come into the church building each week, leaving comments in the visitors' book, writing messages on the activity sheets and putting prayer requests in the box. There is also a box with donations for the food bank in the porch.

In the second half of the year we were able to start some social activities. We had Cream Teas on five Sundays during July and August. We are very grateful to all the helpers, some new ones and some returning after the pandemic. Many people came and enjoyed the excellent scones and the opportunity to chat and meet up with friends. Half of the profits were donated to the Vidyal Trust, helping elderly and sick people in India.

During the pandemic, many of us reflected on the importance of our local community and helping neighbours and friends became something of great value. Lia and Jani visited the majority the homes in the village during the summer, with the aim of making contact and finding out how people had fared. People were very friendly and welcomed our visit. We found several small local groups had got together and looked after each other during the pandemic. We asked people whether they would be interested in doing things together as a community and received many affirmative answers. As a follow up from this we have started, in a small way, with organising a few get-togethers and community walks. We hope to gradually expand this as appropriate, with some of the activities taking place in the church. Together with the Parish Council we are also planning to have a street party during the Queen's Jubilee.

We are considering the future of our church building and thinking about how, in addition to our services, we can make use of it for the village community and the many visitors who walk around the Roman Town. We are right at the start of this process and will report on it as we progress further along this path.

We would like to thank all those who have helped to keep things going this year, in particular those who

- Plan and lead a variety of services
- Clean the church
- Arrange beautiful flowers
- Play the organ
- Unlock and lock the church
- Maintain the churchyard and its surround

We also thank our Treasurer, David Spurgeon who looks after the finances presenting very clear accounts and Louise Collins who, as Secretary looks after the PCC administration.

We look forward to working together with our community to shape the future of our church building and the life of our church. While we face challenges such as the low attendance at our services, we are also excited and grateful for the many good things that have happened and we ask God's blessing on our life together as a church and village community.

Lia Day and Jani Wymer

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston

Have you seen the sketch in which Michael McIntyre plays the role of an imaginary fortune teller in 2019 who is telling his visitor (also played by Michael McIntyre) that 2020 might not work out the way he expects (due to the pandemic)? He'll no longer be a successful comedian and instead will be a substitute teacher and amateur hairdresser. McIntyre mentions how excited he is to be going on a safari with friends in the summer, only to be told that the most exciting trip he'll make in the next 12 months will be a visit to the garden centre. Oh and don't expect too much from friends now – they're not going to come within 2 metres of you! The humour kept flowing, all with the benefit of hindsight of course. Now imagine if the fortune teller had continued to predict that the safari holiday would also not be happening in 2021 and that he'll have the opportunity of another year to develop his career as a substitute teacher!

And who would have believed it if we'd been told that for much of 2021 restrictions on meeting in Places of Worship would continue. We do regret how these impacted those celebrating weddings or mourning the passing of loved ones. But even when government restrictions were eased, we have had to keep in mind that many in our congregation are in higher risk categories and so we continue to keep a few precautions in place. And praise God! Throughout the whole of the pandemic we have not lost anyone in our church family to the virus. We do thank God for his protection and many blessings. We serve the living God, the ruler of heaven and earth. He who is mightier and more powerful than any virus, and who holds our lives and the world he created in his hands. Let's praise and worship the King of Kings and celebrate his amazing blessings.....

The early weeks of 2021 were cold and raw and, when the church boiler packed up, no one felt like worship! Even more so because as we solved one problem, we found another, and then another.... Finally we got to the root of the problem – forgive the pun – the drainage pipework taking waste water from the church roof near the boiler house had become a highway for tree roots – packed so tightly that the pipes were effectively completely blocked. So the waste water from the roof was pouring into the boiler house instead and the pump there (which was supposed to remove flood water) simply piped it back into the same blocked network of pipes. Once again, Roy Harding came to our rescue and responded quickly to lay a new drainage channel. And thank you to the church members who so generously dipped into their savings to pay for the urgently needed repairs.

2021 saw us redouble our efforts to progress the building works identified in the quinquennial report. For some time progress was on hold due to lack of funds and so we embarked on a coordinated effort to raise funds – in response we received a number of charitable grants, in addition to some unexpected and very much appreciated gifts from our church family and the village community. We now have sufficient finance to progress the bulk of the repair and redecoration work and there is one more challenge to overcome – the availability of contractors, who have never been so busy as now. Nevertheless we are hopeful to progress the remedial works sometime in 2022. Our sincere thanks go to the Carrington family for their diligent work in securing grants for these much needed works.

Churchyard maintenance has always been a challenge in rural village churches and has relied on the willingness of a very small number of people who are willing to give of their precious time. Thanks must go to Andy Driver for leading a team including Anna Lipp, Chris Lawn, Roy Harding and others. We estimated that their time would be worth several thousand pounds if we were hiring external contractors. In addition to their voluntary work, we have also employed specialists to help with tree management and other areas of concern.

The latter part of the year saw our vicar Rob taking a much needed sabbatical. During which time a team of people helped to keep church running and even launched new initiatives in the shape of a new youth group and community choir, both of which have been well received. Our sincere thanks go out to all those who have helped during this time.

Andy Harding

PCC Secretaries' reports

Caistor St Edmund

Background

Caistor St Edmund with Markshall PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the mission of the church, be it pastoral, evangelistic, social or ecumenical. It also has the responsibility for the maintenance of Caistor St Edmund Church and churchyard.

Membership of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The following people served on the PCC from the date of the 2021 APCM:

Incumbent: The Reverend Robert Baker (Chairman of the PCC)

Churchwarden: Jani Wymer (Electoral Roll Officer; Deanery Synod rep)

Churchwarden: Lia Day

The Reverend Lyn Marsh

Elected members:

Louise Collins (Secretary)

David Spurgeon (Treasurer)

Brian Day

Church Electoral Roll

At the end of the year, there were 34 people on the electoral roll.

Church attendance

The first few months of 2021 again saw a disruption to the pattern of services as a result of the pandemic.

From late May onwards Praise and Worship and Holy Communion services resumed, with a service usually taking place every other week.

Services

Holy Communion: 6 services with an average attendance of 7.

In 2020, average attendance was 11; in 2019, it was 10; in 2018, it was 15.

Praise and Worship: 7 services with an average attendance of 7.

In 2020, average attendance was 14; in 2019, it was 16; in 2018, it was 10.

During 2021, there were 4 special services with the following attendance:

Good Friday Service: 29

Remembrance Sunday: 33

Carol Service 58

Midnight Mass 14

There was one service of thanksgiving for a wedding.

Louise Collins

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston PCC

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston PCC has responsibility for both Stoke Holy Cross and Dunston churches.

Membership

During the year the following people served as members of the PCC:

<u>Incumbent:</u>	Rev Rob Baker	<u>Wardens</u>	Mrs Viv Carrington
<u>Assistant Priest:</u>	Rev Lyn Marsh		Mr Andrew Harding

<u>Elected Members</u>	Mrs Eostre Caswell (Secretary)
	Mr Henry Caswell (Treasurer)

Mr David Carrington

Mr Andrew Driver (elected in September 2021)

Mr Roy Harding (Fabric Officer)

Mrs Veronica Wilson

Church Attendance

The number of members on the Church Electoral Roll will be advised at the meeting.

It has been impossible to work out any average number of attendances at Stoke Holy Cross church for the year 2021 because of the ongoing impact of Covid. Venta Group Services were held weekly on Zoom for several months, as well as being available on You Tube. There were a few occasions when it was possible to worship outside in the churchyard, as well as inside the church. Since the summer of 2021 services have been resumed in church and masks have continued to be worn.

Review of the year

The PCC met ten times this year.

- The PCC is working together to enable our wider church family to achieve our vision to see lives and communities transformed by sharing the love of Jesus.
- Rev Rob Baker was on sabbatical for three months during this year; Rev Lyn Marsh led the PCC meetings during this time.

- Many discussions have taken place on the state of the finances and the importance of regular tithing by church members.
- There have been continuing discussions about the state of Dunston church because of bats; Natural England have agreed to fund works to contain the bats in the roof spaces and the tower including putting bat boxes in the tower.
- The church continues to partner with Tearfund to support the Diocese of Kilimanjaro.
- It was agreed to look at a different area of ministry each PCC meeting.
- It was reported that the administrative assistant sadly had to resign for health reasons.
- A safeguarding update and follow up on GDPR was received.
- Another successful quiz evening was organized by Andy Harding.
- Viv and David Carrington continued their successful plant sales.
- The importance of prayer has been continued to be regularly emphasized, including praying the LYCIG prayer for church growth.
- Difficult decisions had to be made during the Covid epidemic as to the best way forward for holding services; for part of the year Sunday services were held on Zoom and were also available for access on You Tube.
- Detailed fabric reports on remedial works needed, particularly for Stoke Church based on the quinquennial report, as well as for the church hall, were received from Roy Harding and Andy Harding
- Considerable time was spent on considering the best way forward with youth work; the decision was made to employ a part-time youth worker for four hours a week
- A proposed Welcome Leaflet was considered by the PCC.
- An updated risk assessment report was received from Andy Harding.
- The decision was made to fell the copper beech tree in Stoke churchyard, as it had been looked at by a tree expert and deemed unsafe; work was also carried out on trees in Dunston churchyard with the work being overseen by Andy Driver.
- Time was spent discussing Open Gardens to be held in 2022.
- It was decided to continue ongoing Morning Prayer meetings on zoom.
- Consideration was given to implementing Kintsugi Hope training; Lyn had hoped to carry this out but time pressures have not yet permitted it.
- It was agreed that the new administrator would update the GDPR policy.
- A great deal of input was given about how to open up church buildings for worship during the Covid epidemic.
- Time was spent on planning Christmas activities and services; many changes had to be made because of Covid.
- At every meeting time was given to worship, prayer and thanks.

Eostre Caswell

2. Areas of mission and ministry

Schools/Youth Ministry

God has been faithful. We continue to be welcomed into the school community and were particularly pleased that in the autumn, we were once again able to go into the school once more and lead assemblies. The school has been cautious and has been working for most of the year in year bubbles so assemblies have been to a smaller audience, but nevertheless, we have been able to follow in Jesus' footsteps to talk to children.

Rob and I were pleased to welcome Gary Watson onto the assembly team during the course of the year, initially in making videos with Rob and then from September to go into school. While Rob was on sabbatical the opportunity also arose for Gary and me to support a teacher at the school to run a games club in one of the lunch times.

I continue to serve as Chair of governors at the school, a pleasure and a privilege but also costly in time in order to do a good job. Staff have been under immense pressure, particularly Headteachers with changes being made by government needing quick reaction on the ground during the pandemic. I would be very happy to talk more to those who are interested to know more about the work of governors, how you can support me with prayer and becoming a school governor.

In September, we were pleased to formalise Gary Watson's appointment as a part-time youth worker for the church. We advertised a new club on Facebook and through invitations at Framingham Earl High and Stoke Holy Cross primary schools invited years 5-11 to come along. We started with 3 meeting on a bi-weekly basis but each week more were added so that by the end of December, we had 25 on the books, had agreed Embers would be our name and a regular attendance of 18 were meeting weekly. We ask the young people for suggestions of what to do and try and accommodate as many of them as we can, however, sometimes we need more helpers to ensure safety and to enable fruitful conversations to happen.

Thank you to all those who have helped on or behind the club nights – especially Barbara, Andy, Carole, Hayley, Eostre, Henry, Jan, Viv, Helen, Gary M. Also Tom for bringing the Tracks van.

None of the above would be possible without prayer. Thank you to those who pray please carry on and if you're unsure of what to pray for, just ask. God has been faithful and has done far more than we could ever imagine, praise the Lord.

Lyn Marsh

Homegroups

Beech Cottage

We have continued to meet, albeit in a different way, but with more members in 2021. After finishing Mission-Shaped living at the beginning of the year we carried on meeting for prayer and support on Zoom until March. When the weather improved between April and July we took it in turns to meet physically in a group of 6 in David and Viv's garden/conservatory. A few of us at the same time, joined in the training course provided by Norwich Youth For Christ, in preparation for the launch of the youth ministry in the Autumn. We then met on a monthly basis on Zoom again in the autumn, reading the book Bouncing Forwards, with different people leading the sessions.

During the course of the year, I shared with the group that I felt God wanted us to provide a space for people to meet each other, to chat and be alongside those who had been isolated due to the pandemic, to build community. This resonated with several members of the group. So later in the year we started Coffee and chat in the Church Hall and invited specific people who had contacted us asking if there was anything “going on”, or who we felt would welcome the opportunity to meet in a small group. Coffee and chat occurs once a month, attracting up to 10 people (but not necessarily the same people each month!) and since the beginning of 2022, we have now started to invite more parishioners along.

Thank you to all the members of the group, each one contributes something whenever we meet but particularly thank you to Viv and David who have opened their home/garden to us, when the weather permitted.

Lyn Marsh

Caistor Lane

Last year we started this report with the statement : ‘Usually there would be accounts of all the things which have happened in 2020 but it definitely was a very different year indeed’ and this 2021 report could start in exactly the same way because of the various lockdowns from the pandemic.

During the year the majority of meetings have been online on zoom, though we were fortunate enough to spend one summer evening together in Roy and Jan’s lovely garden. There have also been other occasional in-person get-togethers.

As a homegroup we decided to look again at Pete Greig’s course on Prayer; this proved to be a great input for meetings together on zoom. The course also encouraged many discussions and hopefully encouraged us to pray more. Even with all the limitations of lockdowns, people have been praying for others when out on walks, on phone calls and when there have been deliveries at the door. We continue to encourage each other in outreach in a way which works for each of us as individuals and, most importantly, letting others know that Jesus loves each and every one of them.

In the midst of everything, we have continued in our homegroup’s financial support of a young child living in poverty in India. Our funding pays for her education, as well as her overall wellbeing, through the charity Dignity Freedom Network, which works for the poor, the marginalised and the outcasts in South Asia.

In this second difficult pandemic year, some homegroup members have struggled with meeting on zoom and have chosen not to join in. This is fully understandable and we look forward to the time when we can meet together in person and celebrate all the good things which our amazing Lord has done for each and every one of us.

Eostre and Henry Caswell

Praying together

We have been excited to continue our daily prayer meetings, which were such a success when they started during the early lockdown last year, and have continued to be a place of intercession, blessing and fellowship as we have called out to God together.

We have made a slight change so that we no longer meet on Mondays, but continue to gather Tuesday-Friday at 9, and a lie-in to 10am on Saturdays! Our prayers have been for everything from

the big picture of Covid and the wider world, to all the things affecting our lives as local church and as individuals. We are careful to pray for things happening in the communities on given days, and for people we know and love who don't know Jesus.

A couple of us heard separately from God that we should work through the bible in a year, and so over a period of 12 months we are using selected readings from all the Scriptures to do just that.

This is real teamwork, with different people taking on a different day of the week, so we tend to get a variety of styles as well. I'm really grateful to everyone else who has led, and all who join in regularly, whether most days, or at particular times in the week. That's especially true thinking of the way the praying continued through my sabbatical between August and November.

Rob Baker

Children and families

In early 2021 our ministry to children and families again looked different from previous years, as we took the decision to suspend **Sunday worship** in person between January and Easter. We wanted to continue our commitment to provide for children every week, and continued our **LightHouse** family videos which we had begun in November 2020. At the same time as this, we provided bags of material for families to use at home to engage with the videos we were putting on YouTube. Some of these videos got views well into double figures, meaning a good number of families were engaging with them.

At the same time, **Sparklers** continued to meet on Zoom every Tuesday morning for stories and songs and other lovely things, and we went on providing a bag every month for up to 15 families.

After Easter we were able to increase meeting in person, introducing family events in the church building, Sparklers in-person sessions for a small number of families, and starting to offer a children's group every Sunday morning alongside our morning service at Stoke.

A wonderful highlight of the year was the **Holiday Club**, which ran again at the school in the first week of the summer break. We had approaching 30 children who joined us for three days of great activities, stories, drama, crafts, sports songs – all getting us to think about what it means that God made the world, and all of us, and loves us so much that he sent Jesus for each of us. It was such a blessing to be able to do this after a tricky time trying to find ways to minister to children, and we're really grateful to the school for allowing us the space to do this.

Cathryn has continued to meet to disciple women in a range of ways – socially outdoors, one to one for walks, meeting up online, individuals at home where regulations have allowed. Rob has met up with men one-to-one as well over this period. Cathryn gathered a group of women from Sparklers, her discipleship work, and other contexts for a craft event in the hall before Christmas.

Immediately following the Holiday Club we were on sabbatical leave until the early part of November, and we are especially thankful to all the **amazing helpers** who ran Sparklers all through the autumn, and stood ready to welcome children at our Sunday morning service at Stoke.

At Christmas, we had a number of children and families from the school join us for our Stoke carol service. Some children came who were connected with the community choir members as well. Some of the same families came back again for the crib service on Christmas Eve. There were also families present at the Caistor and Arminghall carol services.

Moving into 2022, some key aims for us are

To have in-person worship engaging children and families every week in the group

To have a core of 5 families at the heart of our worshipping life as a church

We'd really value your prayer for this ministry, and your continued listening to God as we strive to hear what his Spirit is saying to us about it.

Cathryn & Rob Baker

Worship

We're so grateful that God has come close to us through Jesus, and for the privilege of worshipping him in Spirit and in truth. Again in 2021 this looked rather different from the way it had for many years before.

As we entered lockdown in January 2021, and took the decision to suspend services in person again, we were grateful for a wonderful selection of worship videos, many recorded by our musicians here, and some others we supplemented them with, which enabled us to meet with Jesus as we sang.

When we were able to gather in person, for much of 2021 we were asked not to sing, so it was a great blessing to be allowed to again, albeit with masks on for most of the year. One advantage to all being in our separate homes is that we were at least allowed to do that! It made us all the more grateful for the amazing gift that singing together is as we inspire faith in each other as well as worshipping God ourselves.

As the year progressed there was more call for live worship, and so our brilliant musicians got back into action, and we're really grateful for their contribution throughout the rest of the year. The Christmas services were a special highlight this year, with an amazing contribution from our community choir. We're so grateful to all the hard work so many people put in to making it such a success.

We're hoping and praying for no lockdowns next year, some new developments for the choir and all our musicians, and for lots of great opportunities to glorify God with our music as we gather together.

Cathryn Baker

St. George's Dementia Support Group Report 2021

The users and volunteers really missed meeting during the pandemic. Thankfully, as restrictions gradually eased we were able to meet again in September, following Covid rules. An outing to Gorleston later in the month was much enjoyed by all. The icing on the cake was the beautiful weather. 27th of September we had entertainment by the Squeegees. 25th of October we had a very enjoyable reminiscence session with Angela Bishop, remembering all the tradesmen that used to deliver to our homes.

In November we had a themed craft session. Lunch at the Feathers on 6th of December was a great success, as was our Christmas party on 13th of December with entertainment provided by Stewart Hull. Valentine's Day was celebrated with some lovely card-making and Valentine-themed cake and biscuits.

Our numbers are gradually picking up again after some hesitancy since the pandemic. We continue to be very grateful to our wonderful and caring volunteers for their support. We are also grateful for

the donations we have received, and our finances continue to be in good health thanks to our treasurer.

Unfortunately, we are sad to report the death of our chairman, Dave Gudgeon, who had been ill for a time. A meeting will be held soon to elect a new chairman. Dave was very hands on in helping set up the cafe, bringing much experience, contacts and enthusiasm. He will be greatly missed.

3. Some vital nuts and bolts

Safeguarding report

Thank you to everyone who has completed or updated the necessary training and checks for safeguarding this year. It's a very vital part of church life now and so important that we keep up to date with all the changes. So it is much appreciated that everyone has played their part.

We were busy as usual around holiday club time with various DBS checks and updates. All went smoothly when Rob was on sabbatical and it's been a quiet year generally for our churches with regards to any safeguarding issues.

Of course there are constant changes /legislation from the Diocese so we need to be aware of these and act accordingly.

We will let you know if anything needs to be updated or refreshed.

Once again thanks to everyone for your cooperation.

Alison Peck

Fabric reports

Caistor St Edmund

The major work to revamp the drainage in the churchyard was final signed off in January 2021 and this completed all the work as recommended in the 2017 Quinquennial report .

The organ was tuned and one repair carried out to correct a stuck key. With thanks to Mr Antony Jarrold for arranging for this work to be done.

The fitting for the chancel spot light had to be replaced.

The guttering and downpipe on the extension were unblocked and cleaned through – with thanks to Brian Day for arranging for this work to be carried out .

Jani Wymer

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston

Dunston Church – Ongoing Works

- An area of rendering outside the front entrance is still outstanding
- The outer drainage will continue to be maintained
- The footpaths are being kept open by grass cutting
- There is an ongoing problem with bats inside the building
- The boundary fence with Dunston Hall has been damaged by a fallen tree, which has now been cleared away. The fence is in process of being addressed.

Stoke Church Hall – Ongoing Works

- There is an ongoing need to investigate the vertical cracking in the kitchen. An explorative dig needs to be done to examine the foundations/below ground drainage
- Internally at the far end of the gable wall, there is need for repair to the plasterboard (damaged by others). The hall in general internally might need to be considered for redecoration
- Storm damage to roof tiles and chimney requires investigation

- The heaters are old and insufficient to the task. Ongoing process to select appropriate replacements are in hand.

Stoke Church – Ongoing Works

- The gates at the bottom of the main church pathway are still pending replacement. The Kidner family have offered to do this
- During the last year we had problems with the heating and drainage which have been rectified
- There is also outstanding considerable work from the quinquennial report to be completed pending quotes from various contractors. The work is considerable and final decision on the quotes received is now in process

Roy Harding

St. George's Hall APCM Report 2021

The major maintenance item to report is the re-felting and re-pointing of the roof. Mould appeared on the ceiling and on the wall nearest the entrance lobby. On investigation the concrete roof edge was crumbling and the lower quarter of the roadside roof needed re-felting. Three estimates were

sought but only one materialised. The work was overseen by Mr Roy Harding, fabric officer, to whom we are indebted for supplying 15 plastic trays to go under the felt all along the length of the hall. The work was undertaken by M. D. Mann Roofing, who also made good the interior by removing and treating the mould patches and redecorating. The problem seems to have been rectified.

We thank the Reverend Rob Baker and Mr Andrew Harding for their advice and practical assistance in formulating the Health and Safety policy and for their understanding and interpretation of the various Steps of the Covid rules and regulations and to Brian Williams for implementing them.

It is our annual pleasure to record our grateful thanks to our team of volunteers who faithfully continue year after year to serve St. George's Hall:-

- 1) There is far more to the Booking Secretary's job than just letting out the hall. Joyce Williams skilfully and successfully managed to negotiate with all the hirers the need to respect the hall and its property, and to leave it clean and tidy as well as observing the Covid rules and regulations.
- 2) Brian's meticulous attention to detail saves us hundreds of pounds a year in solving day-to-day maintenance problems before they become too big.
- 3) Justin Cogman continues to serve us well by keeping the roadside verge in trim and cutting back the shrubs and vegetation at the sides and back of the hall.
- 4) Persistent weeds would soon take over the shingled area of the car park if it wasn't for the voluntary but surreptitious work of our long-term friend who wishes to remain anonymous.

With all this help, and the respect of all our hirers, St George's Hall remains a well loved community asset.

Richard Raines

Deanery Synod

This year two meetings of the Deanery Synod were held, for the first time since just before the pandemic, in February 2020.

Across the two meetings some “normal” bits of business were done, such as electing new members to the Diocesan Synod, welcoming clergy who had joined us, and a report was given on Diocesan Synod meetings.

We touched on a number of areas of interest and concern in the wider church, including

- *Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic*: Diocesan vision and strategy
- *Living in Love and Faith*: engaging with issues of sexuality and gender and how to live well with disagreement here.
- *Lament to Action*: a response to racism in the church and wider society
- *Clergy health and wellbeing covenant*: a document all PCCs are asked to discuss and abide by
- *Post-pandemic mental health issues*
- *Reviewing the Trio parish share system*
- *Future deployment of clergy/ decreasing clergy numbers*
- *Duty to the public*: the church’s response to the possibility of terror attacks on places of worship

We’re grateful to our PCC members, Jani Wymer and Annie Leathers, who serve as Deanery Synod reps and maintain our connection with the wider church in this way.

Rob Baker & Lyn Marsh

Please find the finance reports for Arminghall, Caistor and Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston on the pages which follow.