

WHATEVER IS
true
 honorable
 just PURE
lovely
 COMMENDABLE
praiseworthy
 THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS

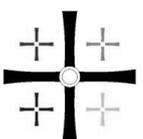
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FINAL ANNUAL REPORT OF 2019

A Look Across The Churches

Financial reports, including the independent examiner's report, along with an agenda for the APCM and minutes of previous APCMs, will be available as separate documents.

The Venta Group of Churches



Arminghall, Caistor St Edmund,
 Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston

	Creating Community	Deepening Discipleship	Encouraging Evangelism
I will...	Catch opportunities to bless people that come my way	Develop a pattern of spending time reading the bible and praying every day	Expect to have opportunities to share my faith, and try to take them
Our small group will...	Connect with the community around us in ways that show God's love	Devote ourselves to growing in faith through worship, prayer and the bible	Expand and grow, involving new people and aiming to multiply
Our congregation will...	Continue to be known in the community for generosity and kindness	Decide to meet together with God often, to learn to follow Jesus closely	Explore ways to make new people welcome when we meet, and make leading people to faith a priority

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ROB'S REPORT FOR 2019



Towards the end of 2019, a wise friend shared with me the words of Paul from Philippians 4v8:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

I have spoken about them since, and wondered out loud if the most important space for each of us isn't the gap between our own ears. What we think about is so important. When I was reminded of them, I did what I had been meaning to do for a long time, and I took down all the things on the noticeboard above my desk which were more in the way of helpful information than hopeful inspiration. And underneath them I found these same words of Paul. I had put them up there myself, but all the other stuff of life had got on top of them.

But no more! Now, as I look back over 2019 in writing this report, I am doing it with these verses in mind. What lovely things have there been to think about and celebrate, and to remember to worship God for?

It is always wonderful to see new things springing up and God working in new ways. For me, one of the absolute standout ways I saw Him doing that in 2019 was through the Prayer Space at the school. You might know that we have been hoping and praying for some years that we would be able to run something of this kind, and we were really encouraged to see so many children, and a good few staff, engaging with all the things we had got set up for them. One teacher wrote

It was a fantastic experience for Class 4. As soon as Class 4 entered the peace and beauty of the prayer space eyes widened and shoulders relaxed. The children were instantly engaged with the many different opportunities for prayer and self-expression. Many chose to focus on others and found it incredibly therapeutic to lift up those who were on their hearts by hanging personalised leaves on the prayer tree. Others enjoyed the opportunity to think about how loved and special they are as they took the time to draw self portraits and to study their unique thumbprints. The only problem we had was persuading the children to leave! Having time to be thoughtful and

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This year the Synod met on 26th February, 19th June, and 17th October. At the February meeting a good deal of time was given to preparation for +Jonathan's prayer visit to the Deanery on 2nd July. This began with breakfast at Stoke church, where he led us in prayer for our new kitchen. The June meeting included a report from Rachel Foster on her visit to Peter and Christine Knight in Tunisia, and in October we welcomed Richard Aldridge from the Norwich branch of the Gideons, who filled us in on the work they do locally and around the world to distribute the Scriptures to thousands of people.

Following the retirement of 3 incumbents from the deanery in 2018, the year saw a lot of hard work from David Owen, the Rural Dean, and the faithful associate clergy and people in those three groups of churches. Gladly, new incumbents were appointed to the Rockland and the now combined Raveningham and Waveney groups to begin work in 2020.

All meetings of the Deanery Synod continue to be open to all, and we do encourage you to come along with us if you would like.

Rob Baker

School Work

Last year I wrote that it had been a very exciting year at the school. Well this year was even better!

Lots of new staff have settled in, including some lovely Christian teachers, who provide warm encouragement and prayerful support to us as we share Jesus with the children almost every week. We are grateful to Miss Chaney, Mr Claxton, and all their time for the wonderful welcome that we get when we go in. Following on from last year's Holiday Club, we gathered again in the school hall for three great days of activities, travelling all across Europe with packs on our backs. There was a great BBQ for the families at the end as well, and a brilliant team who made it all happen.

This year we continued our annual tradition of welcoming children from the school to sing at our carol service, and we presented year 6 children with a book as they left the school, to help them understand that God goes with them wherever they may find themselves. We have also loved having some children from the school coming to join us at our Allstars Club. A huge thank you to Lyn, Tracey and Karen for the very faithful help with that.

The highlight of our time at Stoke school this year, however, was certainly the Prayer Space, which ran for a week just before SATs. Every child in the school had the chance to come in, and encounter God through all that we had prepared. I have written a little more about this in my main article at the beginning of the report, but it was an absolutely wonderful thing to be part of.

Rob Baker

LODDON DEANERY SYNOD

Each parish is allowed to elect a representative to stand on the Deanery Synod, together with clergy who do so as part of their role in the wider church. The representatives for the Venta group are Annie Leathers (Arminghall) and Jani Wymer (Caistor St Edmund): we continue to have a vacancy for a representative from Stoke Holy Cross and Dunston.

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prayerful really stirred something for Class 4 and every child expressed their desire to repeat the experience again. Thank you to everyone involved for the obvious effort and care that had gone in to bringing the prayer space to Stoke Holy Cross.

A huge thank you to everyone who was involved in this wonderful project. We are so pleased that we already have permission to run another one in 2020.

This lovely thread of what God is doing in our community runs forward a little further. At the time I wrote about it in our magazine, and got a very excited response from a newcomer to Dunston who had helped with lots of prayer spaces before. We had a chat over coffee and prayed about it, and as I was there I asked Gary if he would look after delivering the Free for All while the usual person was away. As he got to know his neighbours, the thought of organising a Christmas event, the first in Dunston for some years, began to take shape, and wonderfully took place on 23rd December. We hope that Gary will get more involved in the life of our churches in 2020, and are so encouraged by what might be next.

While we are on the subject of lovely things at Christmastime, we had a great time at Arminghall singing carols, hearing readings, and sharing wine and other refreshments together. Having welcomed so many on St George's Day over the last few years, we tried to apply something of the same format to our Carol Service, and a lot of us gathered and had a wonderful time. A big thank you to Pam, Jim and Annie especially, but also to everyone else who got the church and the service ready, including Joyce, Brian and Alison, who have done so much cleaning there over recent years.

I've written at length about a couple of wonderful, lovely things which I have done quite a bit of thinking about, and the only sadness in a report like this, really, is that there isn't room to write that much about everything that God has been doing in our churches in 2019.

I might write more about the lovely events we had on the playing field at Stoke on Good Friday, and this year in September as well; about the times we gathered together to worship as a group, especially on Mothering Sunday

at Caistor, and after Christmas at Arminghall; about the meetings we had at Caistor in the autumn to think about ways forward for the church, and the tremendous effort again at the Cream Teas last summer; about the community café and feeding hub at Stoke; about the work with Stoke and Dunston PCC to settle on the new vision statement and pray it into being; about some tangible progress at last with the 'bat problem' at Dunston – this tremendous list could go on and on and on.

A list of everything that is lovely in the churches makes me think of two more things that really need a mention as I finish. The first of these is that things are sometimes hard in the life of the church, and I want to recognise the huge amount of work that has gone on at Caistor this year, especially on the part of Jani and Lia, the churchwardens, to address the hurt and sadness all of us have felt following Graham and Margaret Ford's decision to take a significant step back from their involvement in the life of the church. I would like again to express my regret for the distress that this has caused, and my thanks to Jani and Lia, together with our mediator Ruth Adams, for all that we have been able to do together to try and address this.

But so much thanks is due to so many people around the churches, for all that you have done to make so much possible in 2019. Of course I want to mention Lyn and the wardens, all the other PCC members, and everyone in the life of our churches who has spent themselves for Jesus and his kingdom in 2019. I have done a lot of saying thank you this year, but I won't have remembered everyone. I really do notice more than I mention, but some splendid things will have gone unnoticed too. Hopefully it helps and encourages you when I say thank you to you all once again.

Secretary's Report for Caistor St Edmund Church

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.

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boxes for children at Christmas. We have also been encouraging families to contribute to the food bank box in the church hall, and some are bringing donations regularly when they come to Sparklers. We share Bible stories sometimes during a story time, and especially around Christmas and Easter when our activities focus more on Jesus and introduce the children and parents to who he is.

Our team is made up of a mix of church members and those who might not be otherwise involved with our church but who want to serve the community in this way - all our helpers make the sessions run smoothly, from setting up to signing in families and serving refreshments; and often act as a listening ear at difficult times. This year I have had conversations about baptisms and the value of church and faith with at least four different families.

Since the two new housing developments have been built in Stoke, we have grown significantly in numbers (now regularly 25-35 children each session, plus adults), and in the proportion of families coming from this village. It's clear that there is a real sense of community among a lot of the families living on the new estate. We are working to develop deeper connections and for the first time held a women's craft night before Christmas, mostly attended by Sparklers mums - we're also planning a similar evening before Easter, which we'll broaden to other women living locally.

More Sparklers families than ever came to our crib service, and some parents helped with refreshments while the children sang a Christmas song. We'd like to increase this sense of belonging and ownership by including Sparklers families in other ways at church events, perhaps at the Good Friday park afternoon.

Praying together

This year we have continued the pattern from 2018, where we have met somewhere around the churches to pray every week. A feature of this year has been a prayer introduced in response to the *Leading Your Church Into Growth* course in 2018, and which featured on the front of last year's magazine: Father God, who alone brings growth to your Church: apart from you we can do nothing. By the power of your Holy Spirit bring vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness, and help our church to grow in numbers through creating community, deepening discipleship and encouraging evangelism. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. These meetings have tended to be a little more busy where we have included food, so there is something to look at there. A hope of mine for 2020 is that we gather Christians from around the village, whatever church they might belong to, and encourage them to join with us in prayer that our friends and neighbours would find faith in Jesus.

Many of the Wednesday night meetings especially have been hosted and run by different home groups, and I am very grateful for their contribution especially.

Rob Baker

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Sparklers

This year at Sparklers we've met dozens of new families, and provided a welcoming, friendly space to come to with young children. At each session we have toys and games to play with, craft activities based on the week's theme, a carpeted corner for babies and carers, and a singing time. There is always plenty of coffee and cake, and snacks for the children. We talk about church events each week at the end of the session, send out email updates and provide flyers about what's happening.

We try to model generosity at Sparklers, raising money for Stoke pre-school, and packing up Samaritan's Purse

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Membership of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

During the year, the following people served on the PCC:

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)

Liz Humphrey (Safeguarding Officer)

Brian Day

Bryan Elsey

Groups and Committees

During 2019, the PCC operated with one sub-group, the Social Committee, which plans and co-ordinates social and fundraising events.

Church Electoral Roll

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

Church attendance

Excluding special services, there were four different types of regular services held during 2019: Holy Communion, Praise and Worship, Family Service and Taize.

Holy Communion: 16 services with an average attendance of 10.

In 2018 average attendance was 15; in 2017 it was 16; and in 2016 it was 16.

Praise and Worship: 9 services with an average attendance of 16.

In 2018 average attendance was 10; in 2017 it was 10; and in 2016 it was 10.

Family Service: 9 services with an average attendance of 16.

In 2018 average attendance was 15; in 2017 it was 17; and in 2016 it was 22.

Taize: 2 services with an average attendance of 12.

In 2018 average attendance was 13; in 2017 it was 17 and in 2016 it was 16.

The average attendance at regular services during 2019 was 13. In 2018 it was 13; in 2017 it was 14 and in 2016 it was 16.

During 2019, there were 8 special services with the following attendance:

Mothering Sunday 40 (of whom, 6 under 16)

Good Friday Service 9

Service of Remembrance and Hope 17

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because of storms!

As individuals within the homegroup we all continue to be involved in a variety of activities in church, including leading worship, praying for others, two teams catering for Café Church as well as several of us being members of the PCC.

At the beginning of last year we decided that, as a group, we would like to sponsor a child through Dignity Freedom Network (DFN) in India. It has been such a blessing and privilege for us to be able to support a disadvantaged child both financially and in prayer.

During this year it has continued to be encouraging for us all to hear how members of the homegroup have taken opportunities to pray for others, whether at work, on bus journeys or in shops. We have a creative God who gives us so many chances to reach out to others and it is such a joy when we join in!

Homegroup provides a great opportunity for us to grow in faith as well as to receive and revitalise ourselves. During this year it has been a tremendous time of encouragement as we have experienced the works of the Holy Spirit in our lives, both individually and as we meet as a group.

Thank you again, Jan and Roy, for your unfailing love and hospitality as you host the Caistor Lane homegroup. And thank you Veronica and Nigel for offering their hospitality when Jan and Roy have been away.

Thank you to everybody within the homegroup for all that you do to encourage both of us.

Henry and Eostre

We, once more, organised a Christmas outreach party on 6th December for the elderly bereaved and others in the Benefice. Again a lot of effort was made to invite more people from the community.

We continue to cater for Café Church four times a year, and to help to provide coffee and biscuits for some of the services.

Five of our group are privileged to be part of the St. George's Dementia support group which meets twice a month, with two of us on the committee. We helped to provide a lunch for the pre-Christmas café, and to organise a pre- Christmas dinner at the Old Feathers who kindly open for us on the first Monday of December.

We are aware, of course, that many of our congregation are also involved in pastoral care and outreach, and we thank God for the privilege which we all share, to be alongside others in Jesus' name.

God's love has continued to support us as we have supported each other with faithful prayers and practical help. We feel very privileged to be part of such a lovely group.

Caistor Lane Homegroup

We have so much to be thankful for during the past year as a homegroup. We are so blessed to be able to meet together for prayer, study and fellowship on a regular basis.

As in previous years, we have spent time studying the Bible in more depth, as well as seeing how the passages apply to us in our daily lives today. We have learnt so much from doing this as a group. We have also carried out further in-depth studies on passages which Rob and Lyn have spoken about in church services. And several of us went to New Wine at its new venue in Peterborough in the summer. Such a shame the week had to end early

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Family Communion for Harvest 36 (5)

Remembrance Sunday 29

Advent Service 19

Carol Service 48 (8)

Midnight Service 30

Total services

The total number of services held during 2019 was 46.

The average attendance across all services during 2019 was 16. In 2018 it was 17; in 2017 it was 17 and in 2016 it was 22.

There were two weddings and four funerals in 2019.

Review of the year

Holy Communion services continued to be held on the 4th Sunday at 9.00 am and this will continue throughout 2020. Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday ceased mid-year. A service of said communion following breakfast at 9.00 am will be taking place on the 1st Sunday from January 2020.

Family Services followed by refreshments continued to be held monthly, usually at 9.30 am, on the 3rd Sunday and this will continue throughout 2020.

Praise and Worship Services were held monthly, at 9.30 am, on the 2nd Sunday, and this will continue throughout

2020.

Two Taize services were held during 2019.

The PCC met on 6 occasions.

Cream Teas were held every Sunday during July and August, and at the start of September.

The church was open, unmanned, every day throughout the year.

Arminghall secretary's report to follow

Secretary's Report for 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:

Incumbent: Rev Rob Baker **Wardens** Mrs Viv Carrington,

Assistant Minsiter: Rev Lyn Marsh Mr Roy Harding

Elected Members

Mrs Eostre Caswell (Secretary), Mr Henry Caswell (co-opted, Treasurer)
Mr David Carrington, Mrs Jean Foster, Mrs Janet Harding, Mrs Veronica Wilson

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with great respect and leave them clean and tidy as they found them.

Richard Raines

St. George's Dementia support group report 2019/20

We have had some new members which have brought the numbers up again. It is inevitable that our numbers will fluctuate. Funds remain healthy and steady through donations, café sales and a tombola day held at Tesco.

We had 2 excellent outings one to Pensthorpe and the other a boat trip at Wroxham.

Our cinema shows were Driving Miss Daisy and Paddington 2 both causing much amusement. An excellent Christmas lunch was held at The Old Feathers and a fun Christmas party with entertainment provided by Stewart Hull, he had us all dancing.

Two talks were given: one on Hydration and the other on Music Mirrors. We continue to give support to carers, people living with dementia and also those who have lost their partners. This is all possible because of the wonderful caring volunteers who give up their time twice a month.

Ann Raines

HOME GROUPS

Viv & David's Home Group 2018/9

We have continued to meet on a Monday fortnightly between 4pm and 6pm.

We have continued to read the bible, pray for each other, our wider friends and family, and our church and community especially via the Prayer Chain.

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O. DEDICATED COLLECTIONS the balance OF £333.02 shown is the Christmas collections from carol services and I now have another 192.97 from crib service making £525.99 to be paid out to homeless charities – the proportions need to be agreed.

P. YEAR END BALANCE IN HAND is the sum of the restricted and unrestricted funds and the figures at P show my accounts figures balance with the total in the bank figure Q.

Henry Caswell, Treasurer, March 2020

St. George's Hall Report to the Stoke Holy Cross APCM 2020.

Maintenance during 2019 included:

Security lights—one repaired and the other replaced by a 20w-PIR

Redecorating the Storeroom.

Roof over the disabled toilet re-felted and made waterproof.

Glass panel in entrance lobby replaced following accidental breakage.

Octagon walls sealed and redecorated.

Water extinguishers replaced by two new ten year maintenance free P50 -foam extinguishers.

Again it is an annual privilege publicly to thank: Brian and Joyce Williams for their many years of dedication and enthusiasm for the smooth daily running of St. George's Hall. Roy Harding and Henry Caswell. We know they willingly provide sound, practical, helpful advice and support whenever needed. The anonymous person who for many years treats the weeds in the car park two or three times a year. Finally all the hirers who treat the Halls

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Church Attendance

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

The average number of attendances at Stoke Holy Cross church for the year 2019 was:

10.30 am 1 st Sunday	Informal Holy Communion	20 adults; 4 children
10.30 am 2 nd Sunday	Café Church	20 adults; 10 children
11.00 am 3 rd Sunday	Traditional Holy Communion	20 adults; 0 children
6.30 pm 3 rd Sunday	The Gathering	14 adults; 1 child
10.30 am 4 th Sunday	Sunday4Everyone	19 adults; 4 children

There were five special services during the year at Stoke Holy Cross and the figures for these are not included in the average attendance shown previously:

Easter Sunday Service	41 adults	10 children
Carol Service	60 adults	25 children
Thursday Group Carol Service	25 adults	0 children
Crib Service	82 adults	32 children
Christmas Day Service	23 adults	4 children

Throughout the year at Stoke Holy Cross there were 10 funerals, one baptism service, one renewal of wedding vows and one interment of ashes.

There was also a Carol Service around the Tree held at the Church Hall and an outdoor service in the park held in September.

Six services were held at Dunston Church during the year.

Review of the year

The PCC met six 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.*
- ✦ Prayer, discussion and much consideration were given to a new vision statement for the church, which was then shared with the wider church.
- ✦ Many discussions have taken place on the state of the finances and the importance of regular tithing by church members.
- ✦ Regular discussions took place on Community, Discipleship and Evangelism and LYCIG (Leading Your Church Into Growth)
- ✦ Rob gave regular feedback on the Arrow Course which he had been attending
- ✦ There have been many discussions about the parlous state of Dunston church because of bats; after seeking advice from the Archdeacon, it was decided to hold six services a year.
- ✦ Further expert advice has been sought about the bat situation.
- ✦ A decision has been made to partner with Tearfund to support the Diocese of Kilimanjaro; a visit was also

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the budget for 2020 is increased up to £1,300

H. CHARITABLE GIVING It is great that we have been able to pay £2,000 out as budgeted. £1,000 of this has been transferred to CHARITIES FUND ready to be sent to TEARFUND re TANZANIA.

I. BUILDING FUND DEFICIT is very high this year due to the cost of upgrading the electrics as quite rightly required by the insurance company and also the costs of looking after both the churchyards.

J. CHURCH HALL INCOME is the great bonus this year resulting in a healthy surplus thanks to the Flower Pot Café which we sincerely hope will continue for years to come. £2,000 of this surplus figure will be transferred to the Building Fund as approved at the November PCC and as shown in the 2020 budget.

K. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS total of £7,410.29 results largely from the generous donation and would allow me to transfer some to Building Fund as in J above.

L. BUILDING FUND deficit this year has been high as referred already at I above despite the fund raising efforts largely by Viv. This deficit has to come out of general income.

M. DISABLED TOILET AND NEW KITCHEN AREA We have managed to achieve both the accessible toilet and the improved kitchen at what I believe is a very economic overall cost and I am hopeful of recovering VAT of around £1,000 too. Whilst our builder Martin has taken his time over it he has charged us a very reasonable amount for a lot of good quality work.

N. CHARITIES FUND figure is now held towards our proposed three year sponsorship of the Mount Kilimanjaro area of Tanzania which should start very soon.

day too as we have little in our reserves and the diocese will no doubt be looking for us to move back to paying considerably more in Parish Share.

I believe it was one of our previous vicars who used to say *"We have the money; it is just that it is in our pockets"*.

Henry Caswell, Treasurer, March 2020.

NOTES RE 2019 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

- A. SERVICE FEES are higher than we might generally expect - hence I have been conservative in my budget for 2020.
- B. DONATIONS – We have been very fortunate to have received a significant single donation this year making the major part of the total.
- C. STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN did not take place this year but may well be needed in 2020.
- D. VICAR'S EXPENSES appear low this year as I have put appropriate expenses into MISSION AND YOUTH WORK as shown below. I think I could reduce next year's budget now to say £1,000
- E. EQUIPMENT expenditure was low again but I still believe we need a reasonable budget for this.
- F. OFFICE EXPENSES were lower than expected as I was able to recover some monies due from other churches for 2018 expenses. I could I believe reduce the 2020 budget to £1,100.
- G. CHURCH UTILITIES The increase is due primarily to more oil deliveries. Given this may occur again I propose

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organized for a Tearfund representative to come and talk at Café Church.

- ✦ A quiz night was organized by Rob to start fundraising for the Diocese of Kilimanjaro.
- ✦ Regular updates have been given about both the financing and building of the new kitchen and toilet in the church.
- ✦ The importance of prayer has been continued to be regularly emphasized, including praying the LYCIG prayer for church growth
- ✦ New fire extinguishers have been placed in both churches and the church hall.
- ✦ Discussions took place on the best way forward for mowing Stoke churchyard; plans have also now been put in place for sowing wildflower areas and regular mowing of paths is now organized.
- ✦ Fabric reports on the churches and church hall were received from the wardens as appropriate.
- ✦ Initial discussions have taken place on the possibility of employing a youth worker on a part-time basis.
- ✦ Several members of the PCC attended the final LYCIG course day at Ditchingham.
- ✦ Throughout the year Rob reported back on outreach events including the Good Friday and September Fun in the Park afternoons.
- ✦ Arrangements were made for all to help with clearing and sorting the church portacabin.
- ✦ Rob talked about the arrangements which he had made for his sabbatical in 2020.

Formal approval was given by the PCC to those who act as Holy Communion Assistants in services.

Eostre Caswell, PCC Secretary

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston Church Wardens' report 2019/2020

Once again, Roy and Viv would like to begin by thanking everyone who has contributed to the smooth running of the churches. So **thank you** to all who:

- do a month of church cleaning
- provide coffee, cakes and biscuits for everyone after the services including the evening Gathering celebrations
- set up for the communion services and who welcome people as they arrive
- read lessons and prepare prayers
- set up for worship and handle the audiovisuals during services
- play and sing
- act as vergers for funerals
- provide the food and drink for Café Church, for Church parties, and other church events
- clean and help maintain the halls and keep the hall diaries
- help with Sunday Club and those who help with Sparklers – our outreach to parents\grandparents\ and carers and pre-school children
- lead assemblies at the primary school
- lead services across the Venta Group
- lead and host home groups and the “House of prayer”.
- serve on the PCC (especially the secretary and the treasurer) and all who dedicate their time and efforts to the work of the church
- give sacrificially to help us pay our way as a church, and to outreach to others with our charitable giving.

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church at an overall cost of £11,170. We received grants totalling £1,500 from the Jarrold's Trust and the Paul Basham Trust and further donations of £2,213 towards this.

After much deliberation we have agreed as a church to support Tearfund in the work they are doing in the very poor rural Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. We hope to be able to provide £1,000 each year for three years from our Charitable Giving budget plus a further £1,000 by fund raising and we hope that members will commit to giving monthly to provide a third £1,000. You will have seen reports in the Free for All magazine.

Our long established aim has been that we should raise our parish share from our tithing and that we should also seek to give away 10% of our income to local and national charities. This giving is something we have had to cut back on in the last few years as we needed to concentrate on trying to reach our allocated parish share contribution. In 2019, however, we were able to give £1,000 to Tearfund Tanzania and a further £1,000 divided between The Amos Trust for their work in Nicaragua, St Martin's Housing Trust and Christians Against Poverty.

We would not have been able to complete the above improvement works, or do our charitable giving, if we had not had our overall income boosted by a generous single donation and other smaller ones totalling nearly £6,000 for which we are truly thankful. We are fortunate to be blessed with a very generous, albeit quite small congregation, many of whom are clearly giving a significant percentage of their income to the church by tithing and other gifting. We have seen a small increase in our offertory collections and regular giving by members this last year. Our fervent hope is that through our prayers, our teaching, our evangelism, our discipleship and our outreach and community work, many others will come to know Jesus and join us so our church is able to grow in numbers and financially too through the joy of giving.

We are likely to need to have a stewardship campaign again this coming year and maybe also a building fund gift

Caistor St Edmund Church Fabric Report 2019

There was no major maintenance carried out during 2019 but following recommendations in the Quinquennial report we progressed through the faculty process to improve the drainage channels from the church. All permissions have now been granted and we are awaiting a start date for the work to begin in spring 2020.

The kitchen tap was replaced in February and a new toilet fill valve was fitted in November .

Septic tank was emptied in July and November

Jani Wymer

Stoke with Dunston Financial Risk Management Report for 2019

I think it is important to remember that we have in recent years struggled to meet the Stoke and Dunston portion of the parish Share allocation for the Venta Group. We had managed to meet our parish share up to 2016 but only by reducing our small reserves. Since then we have had to seek support from the Diocese regarding our parish share. In 2018 we were allowed a reduction making our share proportion £32,094 but still fell well short of this managing just £23,000. Following our Benefice Support meeting in October 2018 we have been granted considerable relief for 2019. Also our fellow churches have agreed to revised division of parish share reducing the Stoke and Dunston proportion from 64.5% to 61% for the coming years. This meant we needed to raise £25,620 in 2019 and I am pleased report that we did manage to pay that reduced figure in full and have been asked for a 5% increase on that for 2020.

We had had considerable extra expenditure in 2019 with our insurers requiring our electrics to be updated to current standards at Stoke church which resulted in an overall cost of £3,480.

We also needed to complete the much needed major improvements to our kitchen and toilet facilities at Stoke

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A huge thank you to Rev Rob Baker and his wife Cathryn and to Rev Lyn and Gary for all they do faithfully to live out the gospel in this place

WE repeat that the new style Free for All is an excellent showcase for the Church and we say a big **Thank you** to Eostre and Henry for their work in compiling it

AND FINALLY THANKYOU TO GOD WHO CONTINUES TO LOVE AND CARE FOR US ALL.

What have we been doing this last year?

Lent Breakfasts began on March 9th and we had the opportunity to consider the LYCIG (leading your church into growth) model.

Good Friday we processed the Cross from the church to the church hall where we held our Witness Service. We then took the cross to the Playing Field where we provided refreshments; giving us the opportunity to connect with the local community.

Plant Sale June 1st raised money for our Buildings' Fund, and indeed plants continued to be sold until well into the autumn.

BBQ on Sat 6 July. Rob and Cathryn hosted at the vicarage. This offered the possibility to invite friends from the wider community and was very well attended by a large age range.

LYCIG (Leading Your Church into Growth) On Saturday 15 September we gathered together as a Benefice at Mulbarton to start to explore LYCIG. We committed ourselves to working to "grow" our Church. We have met together several times since.

Toilet and Kitchen We have continued to strive to build God's kingdom alongside our other, more material, building project this year. Thanks to peoples' generosity, some grants and some fund raising, we now have an excellent toilet with disabled access and a new "bijou" kitchen at the west end of the church. We are very grateful to Henry who project-managed the work and to Martin Waters and Giancarlo Iaccarino for their expertise.

A Tea Party was held on 6th December in the hall. Invitations had been sent to the elderly, especially the bereaved, in the Benefice.

Church Wardens Roy and Viv, have continued to meet regularly with Rob and Lyn.

The PCC has met four times at 51 Norwich Road.

Home Groups have met regularly, joining together once a month for a "House of Prayer" meeting hosted by the home groups in turn.

5th Sundays We have gathered together as a benefice and occasionally at other times.

New Initiative – Community Café launch This provides a "feeding" Café, an outreach to new mums, as well as being open to anyone in the community.

Advent and Christmas Season Once more we made a big effort to outreach into the community

Carol Service at Stoke Church on 15th December. Children from the primary school contributed to the music.

Carol singing around the Christmas Tree on Sunday 22nd December was followed by drinks and refreshments in the hall.

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examine the foundations. This is still outstanding.

A new carpet runner has been installed in the entrance hall.

The front door, which was damaged by a member of the public reversing into it, has been replaced and paid for by the relevant person.

Stoke Church

A local family have kindly offered to fund the manufacture and installation of replacement gates at the bottom of the main church pathway; this is ongoing.

Churchyard maintenance has been booked with the Probation Service; one session has been confirmed and we await the final session.

We have had some issues of wind damage to our trees. The first one was the Cedar which brought down an electric cable. This was dealt with. We also had a problem with a Copper Beech, which sustained damage to a large branch. The Copper Beech damage was safely dealt with by a generous donation from another family in the village.

The new kitchen and disabled toilet facility has been built; we are currently awaiting final minor adjustments from the builder to be completed.

Following on from the PAT testing it was found that the electricians did not meet current regulations. Work was carried out by our electrician in order to comply with the requirements of our insurers.

Roy Harding, Fabric Officer

We now have a situation where a number of people are happy to move forward together in a spirit of forgiveness and acceptance. However, others are still finding this difficult. This is a matter of great sadness to us and we will continue to reach out to them where possible.

With God's help we will continue to encourage each other to work for the good of our church community.

Lia Day and Jani Wymer, Churchwardens

Fabric Report – Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston 2019/2020

Dunston Church

The “bat problem” is still ongoing. The Bat in Churches Project representative has been to investigate the situation and the church is deemed to be one of the few with the most pressing needs. Actions have been planned and the Project will follow up with reports and proposed follow on action.

An area of rendering outside the front entrance is outstanding.

The outer drainage will continue to be maintained.

Roy has kindly volunteered to keep the footpaths open for public access but leaving the area in front of the church to continue to grow wild for the benefit of the wild flowers.

The church windows, which were vandalised, have been repaired.

Stoke Church Hall

There is a need to investigate the vertical cracking in the kitchen. An explorative dig needs to be done to

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The Crib Service on 24th December in the church was very well attended with a wonderful amount of “Sparklers” families.

Café Church We have been pleased to welcome new people to church and pleased the numbers, especially for Café Church have grown. On Dec 8th there were 15 children and 22 adults and on January 15 children and 29 adults.

A speaker came in January from Tear Fund to share with us stories of the work being done as we begin our support to a community in the parish of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. This will commit us to raising £3,000-00 annually for the next three years of the project.

Bats at Dunston Church This year we have moved a little further with the “bat” difficulties. Following nocturnal surveys with technical equipment, the project leaders now know what species of bats are involved and where they are accessing the church. We await the next stage when they have produced a report with an action plan. This will contain the bats within the roof space of the Church without giving them free access to the whole building. The project will also fund one session of Church cleaning. Meanwhile, with favourable weather conditions, the required amount of services were held in the churchyard.

We thank God for His grace, His love, and His patience with us as we continue to know Jesus better and to make him better known in our community.

Caistor St Edmund Churchwardens' report

There was a service at Caistor Church each Sunday during 2019 apart from the late summer and the autumn months when we changed the Sunday Service pattern temporarily to 3 a month. The church was unlocked on every day. To make sure there is a welcome to everyone on the Sundays and throughout the week there has

been a lot of commitment from members of the church community and we would like to thank those who:

Plan and lead a variety of services

Clean the church

Arrange beautiful flowers

Play the organ

Unlock and lock the church each day

Provide refreshments

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.

Thanks also to Liz Humphrey (Thistledown) who acts as our Safeguarding Officer and ensures we all comply with the ever-changing regulations.

For many years Terry Humphrey has done a lot of working helping to maintain the churchyard and surrounds and has now decided to step down – our great thanks to him for all his help in keeping the churchyard and driveway tidy.

The church building has also been used for other purposes during the week

- Meetings of the Parish Council and Roman Town Joint Advisory Board
- Serving coffee for people taking part if the 'Healthy Walk's round the Roman Town
- Schools visiting the Roman Town make use of the facilities at the church

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Training sessions for Caistor Roman Project

On Sundays in July and August, the Cream Teas were even more popular than previous years, raising record funds to ensure we could pay our allocated parish share. Thank you to everyone who helped in so many ways to make this successful for another year.

This year the PCC reviewed the support we have continued to give Elizabeth House in Beccles for so many years and decided to focus on more local needs.

During this year we have been dealing with the upset in our community regarding the events leading up to the last APCM, where the matter of the disagreement between Rob Baker and Graham Ford was discussed. The churchwardens and the Rob sought the advice from Bishop Alan. The result of this was that a series of mediation meetings were held between the Rob and the church wardens, led by the appointed mediator, the Rev Ruth Adams. After a series of meetings we agreed we wanted to move forward together in a spirit of forgiveness, whilst accepting that we held different views on the events concerning the disagreement and letter sent to Graham Ford. Rob did express regret that he had not taken steps at an earlier stage to deal with the disagreement, and also offered apologies for the hurt that had been caused.

During the summer months Lia Day and Jani Wymer visited and talked to all the members on the Electoral Roll to report on the mediation process and the outcome. This was followed by two meetings led by Ruth where all members of the Electoral Roll were invited. These meetings helped us to explore our identity as a Caistor community and to work together on our way forward. It served as a positive way to think together and talk about our feelings. In January 2020 this was followed by a session with the PCC, also led by Ruth, where we focused on the different ways we felt we might move closer together and move forward as a community.

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