

St Peter's Church Horningsea

Church Wardens Annual Report May 2021

A year unlike any other because of the impact of the Coronavirus/ Covid 19 pandemic. By April 2020 we had just gone into Lockdown. The Church of England had told us that all churches must be locked and not even opened for private prayer. As soon as the rules changed and we were permitted to open the Church for private prayer the PCC decided to open the church each Wednesday and Sunday from 11am to 3pm. Risk assessments were carried out and each week we checked that the assessment was being followed. The church was cleaned, hand sanitisers were in place, spare face masks were available. The QR track and trace notice was in the porch and a track and trace register was available for visitors to sign. The Annual meeting for 2020 took place on 5 July by which time a new routine of Zoom services and podcasts each Sunday had been established.

On 19 July 2020 we had a farewell party for Reverend Alun Ford in Ben Quash's garden in FD. On 26 July we had a farewell service in Horningsea churchyard with a link to Zoom for those who were not able to attend in person. We were very sad to see Alun depart to become the chaplain to the Bishop of Southwark as he had brought huge energy and many skills to our parish.

Pam and Trevor Thorn took over running the weekly Zoom services and sent out the weekly e-pew notice.

From September 2020 we were able to have "live" services once more on the basis of ensuring that the congregation were socially distanced, masked and that there was no congregational singing. Communion Services were held one Sunday each month, with the October service being a celebration of Harvest. From January the pattern of one "live service" a month continued until Easter.

From December 2020 until May 2021 we were fortunate to have the assistance of Reverend Diana Johnson to take our services. This provided much needed continuity during these difficult months. She shared her energy and enthusiasm, particularly for open air services.

Special Services:

VE Day Service held on 10 May 2020 by Zoom with some Horningsea children providing music and the names of the fallen from each village being read.

Remembrance Day service was held at the War Memorial led by Reverend Malcolm Brown

Carol Service was held in a "hybrid" way with a choir of 4 and children providing the singing and music as congregational singing was not allowed. Readers from the three parishes came either live or by Zoom. There were 30 people in the church (maximum allowed) and about 60 on Zoom.

Christmas Day service in the Church with a congregation of 10.

Ash Wednesday was celebrated remotely with the congregation at St Andrews Chesterton led by Reverend Nick Moir

Mothering Sunday was a "wild" open air service with 20 adults and 6 children in the congregation.

In Holy Week there was a Quiet Hour on Good Friday followed by a short service on the river bank. On Easter Day Reverend Diana led a dawn service on the river bank followed by a Communion Service in the church at 9.30.

Julian Warren came and played the organ at most of the “live” services from the autumn of 2020.

Weddings, baptisms and funerals

There were no weddings or baptisms in the year but sadly there were five funerals, which led to one burial of ashes and three burials in the new grave spaces. Only one of the deaths was recorded as Covid related. Two of the funerals involved setting up screens and projectors in the church so that the services could be joined by family and friends from around the world.

Outreach

New Life, the Parish Magazine continued to be published for most of the year, electronically and from September 2020 both electronically and on paper.

From the beginning of the first lockdown the Horningsea Parish Charities used the Church porch to provide fruit and vegetables for anyone in the parish who wanted to help themselves. Over the weeks this developed into a “foodbank” as other donations and contributions appeared. During the summer months the food bank was paused but restarted once the country went back into lockdown in the winter.

The Church contributed to the Besom Christmas appeal by donating food for their hampers. At Easter some parishioners donated “real” Easter Eggs to the food bank.

The Church made donations to Farm Africa from the Harvest service and supported the British Legion collection on Remembrance Day.

The Church organised Advent Windows which involved 23 parishioners decorating their windows with a Christmas theme. The Christmas Eve window was in the Church Porch. The village embraced this with enthusiasm and daily photographs were posted on the village Facebook page.

Other Events

The Friends of Horningsea Church commissioned and paid for a new Guide to Horningsea Church written by Michael Yelton who gave a talk in the Church (also by Zoom) in September when the book was launched.

A summer concert by Zoom was organised in June with a number of children and adults performing and reading. A second spring concert was held by Zoom in March 2021.

Ebarocum, a professional baroque ensemble asked to use the church to record the Messiah in December, at their rehearsal they decided that the church was too cold but they recorded some short pieces of Christmas music which were available on You Tube. They came back to rehearse for a spring concert in March 2021.

Bellringing stopped completely for the first months of lockdown and then only restarted with a single bell ringing except on special occasions when 3 or 4 bells could be rung. At least one bell has been rung whenever there has been a “live” service during the year. Bell ringing practice restarts on Friday 28 May.

A three parishes quiz by Zoom was arranged by members of the Church and village in support of McMillan Nurses.

Horningsea Lockdown Short Story competition was organised by members of the Church and village in the spring of 2021

The Church depended on the technical skills of a number of parishioners who gave great assistance whenever “live links” were required and led us to consider if we should arrange for a broadband connection to the church.

No progress was made during the year with the lowering of the church porch or creation of the ramp to the accessible toilet.

The Mary Muhr award for contribution to the life of Horningsea was awarded at the Carol service to Chris Lindley for writing and publishing the Horningsea Herald – twice a month for much of the lockdown period - and never missing a month. He ensured that the village was able to find out what was happening locally and he added in some stories and reminiscences from members of the community.

Planning for the future

An attempt was made to complete a lengthy questionnaire about the future of the church for a project being run by the Diocese and the Judge Institute but as it proved impossible to save the answers it was not completed.

Regular meetings were held with Reverend Nick Moir the former Rural Dean who has acted as our main contact during the vacancy. Occasional meetings have taken place with the Archdeacon. No firm plan has been devised but it is probable that a part time priest will be appointed to the three parishes with special responsibility for the new housing developments in FD and Teversham and to link with the priest to be appointed to Holy Cross. The new priest will also have Diocesan responsibilities. A team of “focused” ministers (some ordained, some lay) will probably be recruited to assist. Discussions are taking place as to the pattern of services to be established once we move out of lockdown, with particular discussions as to continuation of some Zoom services.

As everything opens up again we look forward to welcoming back congregations to our live services, musicians, artists and visitors.