

St Olave's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 17 May 2023, 7:30pm

Reports on Aspects of Church Life in 2022

Bell ringing (*Roger Button*)
Choir (*Keith Wright*)
Church Hall (*Vera Silberberg*)
Communications (*Peter Wells*)
Electoral Roll (*Clare Steele-King*)
Fabric (*Buff Reid*)
Go Green Eco Group (*Kingsley Boulton*)
Holy Dusters (*Gail Murden*)
Knit and Natter Group (*Jane Lockley*)
Parochial Church Council (*Helen Jones*)
Safeguarding (*Mike Thunder*)
Social Events (*Jane Lockley*)
Walking Group (*Robert Brock*)
Website (*Tina Sanderson*)

Bell ringing

The bells have been rung regularly on the first Sunday in the month, with a practice on the Wednesday evening preceding. The bells have also been rung for several weddings, the late queen's jubilee, and mourning, and the king's proclamation. We have also welcomed several bands of ringers visiting York. We look forward to training some more people to help us ring so that we could ring more frequently on Sunday mornings.

Roger Button

Choir

The choir report for 2022 must record once again that – whatever the excitements of the big occasions – the choir's bread-and-butter work remains providing music for the Sunday liturgy. The choir has maintained this tradition outstandingly well during the year, with a handful of new members joining us and slotting in straight away with the choir's routine. I remain grateful for the support of everyone in the choir, and impressed by the skill and dedication that they show. Having said that, there were many significant 'big occasions' in 2022, at which the choir sang and excelled itself. The death of Duncan Campbell in August was not unexpected, but affected many in the choir quite deeply, and the singing at Duncan's funeral showed the choir at its very best, with heartfelt performances of pieces chosen specially by Duncan in the weeks before his death.

Happier occasions included a joyous Ordination service for Nicky in June, at which massed choirs from far and wide gave Stanford's Te Deum in B flat a stirring performance. And for many of us the musical highlights of the year were the Acton sisters' weddings: Kitty and Oli were married in April, whilst Jessie and Steve were married in September, and across the two services there was feast of choral music, from Tallis and Brahms to Stanford and Parry, with a nod towards France along the way, and John Scott's storming descant to Blaenwern (Love divine) the common link in the music choices. Both brought a number of extra singers with them, and once again the chancel was full to overflowing (with impressive congregational singing as well!).

Two long-standing members of the choir stood down in 2022: Mary Owen and Clive Goodhead. Clive sang with us for over 20 years, having come to us from All Saints Huntington. In addition to being a faithful regular member of the tenor section, he showed his versatility by singing bass from time to time, and there were very many outstanding and memorable solos – including a wonderful The Trumpet Shall Sound from Handel’s Messiah, in which Clive gave the trumpet soloist a run for their money in terms of projection, agility and drama. Mary’s contribution was not as prominent in terms of solo singing, but she joined the choir in 1983, and so completed 39 years of service to us, again as a faithful and regular member of the choir. Mary was also a good supporter of the choir on the occasions when services were on days other than Sundays, such as weddings and funerals, and having a singer there with such wide knowledge of the repertoire sometimes made the difference between a choir being possible, and not. It has been good to see both Clive and Mary continuing to support us from the congregational pews since their retirements.

The **Junior Choir** continues to meet weekly and work hard at developing musical skills and knowledge of the repertoire. The junior singers are holding their own in the choir-stalls on Sundays, and have sung solos from time to time. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow, and to benefit from their consistent effort and commitment to the choir.

On a personal note, I would like to reiterate the thanks I express every year for the appreciation I receive from the clergy and the congregation, and the support I receive from the choir and - especially - Max, whose work at the organ, with the choir, and behind the scenes makes it possible for us to keep the musical diet interesting and varied, and to perform it to such a high standard.

Keith Wright

Communications

Our website - which has links to the sites belonging to the other churches in our group - continues to be expertly managed by Tina Sanderson. Tina has written a separate report regarding the website, included below. Another success story is Ben Pugh’s unobtrusive but unfailingly efficient management of the streaming or recording of our services. An area of concern, in my view, is our social media.

Since 2014 there has been a page for all the churches in the Group, and in a sense there still is, because items of news from all the churches are put on it. However, SS Helen and Martin, and All Saints Pavement both started their own pages some years ago. As the originator of the group page, I have long since come to the conclusion that it would be constructive to move forward to having a page for St Olave’s, with an enthusiastic team of ‘Editors’ (the people empowered to make posts). This would involve the closing of the present Group Page and the possible creation of a page for St Denys.

The rationale is essentially that each church has its own identity and characteristics, and Editors might be happier and more productive contributing to a page for their own church, rather than to a page representing the group.

At the same time, it could also be argued that a complete overhaul of our use of social media is desirable, preferably under new, younger, and more knowledgeable leadership. For the last few

years our Facebook page has been little more than an electronic noticeboard, whereas it could and should be an interactive tool of outreach and also an internal forum for the exchange of ideas and news. Other media might be deemed more appropriate to this present generation, considering that our page has been running for nearly ten years, and Facebook is beginning to look a bit dated.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of those Editors who have continued to post occasionally, and the support of Liz, who with me is the joint Administrator of the page.
Peter Wells

Church Hall

The hall is open most weekdays, although some previously regular groups have either reduced or cancelled their usage, due to the increase in rental and falling numbers. [I am told that our charges compare favourably with venues outside York, but we still need to increase numbers if possible, especially regular bookings].

Mrs Gloria Stead has continued her faithful and invaluable service of opening, locking and cleaning the hall.

Maintenance has been facilitated by Roger Button, churchwarden and conveniently close in case of emergency.

At the end of 2022 Mrs Carol Colbourne began to take over the administration of the hall, including maintaining the booking calendar, but illness has prevented a full transfer. In any case, she is unable to take over the “on the ground” duties, as well as deal with emergencies, so someone else will be required for that part of the work.

My thanks are also due to Ben Pugh for facilitating the proposed transfer of duties, and providing access to the Google calendar.

Note to the P.C.C., Clergy et al

-

The problems alluded to in the last paragraph of my report require some person(s) to

- [a] print and put the fortnightly schedule in the hall lobby
- [b] set the heating [in season] for the week
- [c] check the fire/smoke alarm weekly
- [d] show prospective hirers round the hall
- [e] check for property left behind [by mistake or deliberately, like milk in the fridge!]
- [f] generally deal with emergencies – see next:

Also note that requests/late cancellations can appear at any time of day or night, so someone should be able to deal with them – especially over the weekend!

Vera Silberberg

Electoral Roll

Following an annual review of the electoral roll, which concluded on 30th April 2023, the number on the roll now stands at 116. This is 25 less than the 141 reported to last year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting but includes some additions as well as deletions.

Church representation rules state that a person should be removed from the roll if they have moved away from the parish or no longer habitually attend worship in the parish (online worship excepted). Such deletions were not made during last year's review because of Covid, but have now resumed.

Clare Steele-King

Fabric

Early in 2022 the large weeping ash tree at the front of the church was found to be diseased and had to be felled.

In March the main church door was vandalised with red graffiti all over it. This was removed, after taking advice from conservation experts, by York BID. Unfortunately this left the door looking very mottled with remnants of red paint deep in the grain of the wood. A quotation for the renovation of this ancient door was obtained from Messrs Houghtons of York who had successfully refurbished the door of St Martins. They are a recommended contractor for the DAC. Regrettably as of May 2023 this work has not yet been done despite plenty of reminders. The insurance claim has been paid and the perpetrator was apprehended and sentenced.

In May Matthias Garn, stonemason, began work on the restoration of the ETTY tomb in the churchyard. The work was paid for with funds raised through grants and donations, including from the ETTY family. On 7th August on completion of the work the tomb was blessed by Nicky Gladstone our Assistant Curate, in front of members of the congregation, invited guests and several members of the ETTY family.

The Quinquennial inspection of the church was undertaken by our architects Purcells in 2019 and eventually presented this year. Quotations for the repair of some of the stonework on the parapets on the roof were obtained along with a quotation for the replacement of the badly rotting flagpole on the tower. A quote of £55,000 + VAT was accepted from Paul Furniss & Sons who regularly work at St Olave's. It is hoped this work will be started following the granting of a faculty.

During the year, at the request of our Insurers, the electrical systems were checked over and all appliances PAT tested. The cable holding the font cover was also safety tested.

The condition of the St Giles Room roof was also noted. It was leaking badly, with plaster falling down from the ceiling. A full report was made by Purcells and planning permission from York City Council and Historic England has been applied for as has a faculty for the complete replacement of the roof in a slightly different configuration, with a different roofing material and a changed sky light.

Over the year there have been ongoing discussions on the benefits and costs of changing the church lighting in the roof to LED and whether to look at the benefits of fixing solar panels to the church roof.

The sound system has been assessed and quotations obtained for upgrading and improving our Audio Visual system.

Buff Reid

Go Green Eco Group

The St Olave's Go Green Eco Group was formed at the beginning of 2022 with the aim of raising awareness of environmental issues both within and outside our congregation and to explore practical steps we can take as a church. A particular goal was to attain an Eco Church Bronze Award administered by A Rocha UK, a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment. We received much encouragement from the Revd Liz Carrington at our neighbouring church of St Luke's, Burton Stone Lane, which had already received a Silver Award.

As well as meeting online with the group at the end of May Liz also came to preach at the Sung Eucharist at St Olave's on Sunday 16 October. With much hard work, particularly by Helen Robb, and with the support of the churchwardens, we received our Bronze Award in August 2022. Our next goal is a Silver Award.

Our particularly strong asset which very much helped us achieve our Bronze Award is our churchyard, a real haven both for people and wildlife. Our particular thanks are due to Helen Robb who has spent so much time in creating habitats to encourage wildlife, such as bird boxes and even a bug hotel (nicknamed Bingham Palace) as well as her sterling work in looking after the churchyard and researching the lives of those who are buried there.

The group was very involved in the York Unlocked Festival on 15 and 16 October, when we were able to showcase our church and churchyard to the large number of visitors who came on those days.

There are over a dozen members of the group, who are very committed to this aspect of our church life and mission. However, we would very much welcome others to join us. Interestingly, I am the only man in the group. We continue to look for ideas as to further ways in which we can enhance our environmental credentials and involve others. One thing we agreed at the end of the year were regular articles and eco tips in the Friday email newsletter, which then started at the beginning of 2023.

I would like to express my personal thanks to all the members of the group for their enthusiasm and commitment.

Kingsley Boulton

Holy Dusters

The Holy Dusters continue to meet Friday mornings from around 9:15/9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. We dust, polish the pews, shine the brass, vacuum, disturb the spiders' webs high up, clean the windows until they squeak, sweep outside and generally keep our lovely church sparkling. We welcome all the visitors who come to look round and when appropriate have a chat and answer their questions. At around 10:30 a.m. we take a break along with the flower arrangers and anyone else who happens to be in church for coffee, tea and biscuits and sometimes cake when there's a birthday to celebrate. We are a close friendship group and send group birthday cards to each other and check up on anyone who has been unwell.

We are an ageing group, several in their 90s and some with serious health problems. It is quite obvious that we need new recruits, but despite having advertised in the Friday newsletter, none

have come forward. Anyone who can spare an hour or so on Friday mornings would be warmly welcomed to the Holy Dusters. Just show up and give it a try with no obligation to continue.

I would like to thank Jean Evans, Wendy Grundy, Anne Hall, Penny Jubb, Ann Mackrory, Penny and Chris Mitchell, Mary Owen, Gill Pace, Malcolm Smart and Maureen Steel for their faithful service to the church on Friday mornings.

Gail Murden

Knit and Natter group

Over the Lockdown period of the last year several of us had been knitting squares to create blankets for refugees. Since March 2022 we have been meeting together once a month in the St Giles room to knit or to sew the squares together. It is a social occasion with the 'natter' being an important part of our activity. Our numbers vary from 7 to 13 each month and between meetings there are exchanges of squares to be sewn together or for crocheting around the edges of the blankets to finish them off. Other people, who are not able to come to join us, knit or crochet squares through the month.

Initially we were keen that our blankets should go to Ukraine, and some indeed did, but it has become increasingly difficult to find transport for them. Recently the finished blankets have been sent to refugees in this country, who often have nothing once their application for asylum has succeeded. Additionally, at the request of the University chaplain via Liz, we have also provided some smaller blankets for overseas students at the University who have been feeling the cold this winter. We have lost count of how many we have completed but we know it is over twenty!

Jane Lockley

Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council for St Olave's met once every two months throughout 2022. The first two meetings were held online in light of continuing Covid risks, but the remainder of the year's meetings took place in person.

Some of the key business of the PCC in 2022 included navigating the return to "normal" Sunday worship with the gradual easing of the Covid risk; various issues of church maintenance and beginning the task of replacing the church sound system; and the need to recruit administrative support for the priest in charge. The PCC also undertook two surveys in 2022, one of parishioners and one aimed at both parishioners and visitors, seeking views on the future direction of St Olave's church, its worship, message and mission, and its presentation. Taking forward some of the results of these surveys is now becoming a key part of PCC business moving forward.

Helen Jones

Safeguarding

I took over the role of Parish Safeguarding officer in March 2022 from Gill Pace and I acknowledge her help and support, which made the transfer less difficult. Looking back over the year a number of things have changed:

The diocese has changed the frequency of DBS checks for members of the PCC and for others in the St Olave's community. 16 DBS checks have been completed, and as of time of writing there is one in progress.

All required training is either completed or in the process of being completed. There is a new requirement for PCC members to complete the Domestic Abuse training, and all have completed this training. The training cycle is now three years, but the diocese requires only the highest level to be retaken.

I only keep records for lay members of the congregation – the diocese keeps records of training and DBS for clergy and readers.

St Olave's along with other churches in the diocese now is part of the parish dashboard – this is an online system which provides a very useful aide-memoire to safeguarding, especially in terms of policies and written procedures. Our progress is at 68% i.e. level 2; there are still some areas to develop, but the key thing is that there are no red flags, i.e. urgent action required.

This month May 2023 there will be an audit carried out by the diocese. I will report back to the PCC at the next meeting, where the policy will be discussed, and an action plan agreed.

I have met with Liz several times to discuss safeguarding issues – not high-level concerns. I have also benefited from expert advice from the diocese, especially around DBS procedures.

I have been very pleased by the way safeguarding is regarded in St Olave's; I have encountered a genuine desire to make sure that this is central to our mission, and that our church is indeed a welcoming and safe place.

Mike Thunder

Social Events

Due to restrictions of the previous two years, it took time for people to start to feel comfortable again about social events this year.

Our Easter Day celebration was the first occasion for social connection, when following the Eucharist, we served wine and opened the doors into the churchyard with its Spring sunshine and burgeoning life. We have continued to make use of the churchyard as a safe space for socialising throughout the summer.

In June we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a party for the parish, neighbours and friends in the churchyard. It was well attended, drawing in many people who are not regular attenders to services. As Nicky's ordination to the priesthood took place the following week, we were able again to use the churchyard for the after-service drinks. Another very sociable occasion.

Throughout the summer through the monthly Voices from the Pews series, we learned about the lives of various members of the congregation. These were organised by Frances Brock and provided the opportunity for 6 different social occasions with good attendance. They were much appreciated.

In October St Olave's was a contributor to the York Unlocked weekend. The churchyard was open and many people came in both through the gate from Museum Gardens and through the main church entrance. Refreshments were offered as well as activities and guides. It felt a very sociable occasion.

Jane Lockley

Walking Group

The Walking Group continued in 2022 to provide the opportunity for church members to enjoy walks in the wonderful countryside within easy reach of York. Many find in the beauty of flowers and trees and wildlife and in the landscape itself a great contribution to both physical and spiritual wellbeing. Walking also offers an ideal opportunity to build friendships with other members of our church community.

Four longer walks were held in 2022, visiting the Howardian Hills in April (Hovingham - Slingsby area), the North York Moors in June (Sneck Yate - Hawnby - High Paradise), the Pocklington Canal in August (Hagg Bridge to Pocklington), and the Wolds in October (Fridaythorpe – Huggate circular). The average distance was about 8 miles. Around 7 to 10 people took part in each walk.

Shorter walks were held in June (Sneck Yate – High Paradise), August (Hagg Bridge - Melbourne and back) and October (Huggate - Horsedale circular). The distance covered was in the 2 to 4 mile range. Around 3 to 6 people took part in each walk.

Five people organised and led the walks. Thank you to them and to all who participated.

Robert Brock

Website

The new St Olave's Church website was built in 2020 and 2021. It is full of interesting information which has been provided by members of the congregation. The last new page, "How to Find Us", was added in December 2021. However, in 2022 many parts of the website were improved or brought up-to-date, including Safeguarding, Churchyard and Church Bookings.

Between 400 and 1100 people accessed the St Olave's Church website each month – there were peaks in March, May, November and December. Most people land on the website via the Welcome page, which got 10 times more traffic than any other part of the website (10,470 views in 2022). The next most popular pages (with annual number of views) were:

Church Hall (1512)

Our Ancient Church (1467)

Music (1270)

Watch Read & Pray (948)

Our Community (822)

How to Find Us (783)

In December 2022 the website achieved over 700 clicks from Google Search, together with a congratulations certificate!

The technical side of the website was updated every 2-3 weeks. These updates are ongoing and invisible, but they need to be done to keep the website secure. New content was added to the Welcome page and to "Watch, Read & Pray" on a regular basis to keep the pages fresh, e.g. details of the Eco Church Bronze award.

Peter Wells and Carol Colbourne were trained in how to update the website content, and I am grateful for their assistance in uploading the monthly Prayer Diary and Music Lists. In a new departure for 2022, PCC Minutes were added to the website (when received).

Tina Sanderson