

**ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
ALL SAINTS' THORNTON HOUGH
DIOCESE OF CHESTER**

Charity Commission Number 1131417



ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2020

**All Saints' Parochial Church Council
The Parish Office, The Parish Hall, Church Road, Thornton Hough, Wirral, CH63 1JW**

Part 1: Trustees' report to the Charity Commission

1. Aims and Purposes

Our aim is

'To promote the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'

Our purpose as a church is to worship God through our regular services and through the fellowship of our loving community. We share the love of God with those around, serving the community and witnessing to others about the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All Saints' Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the legal responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish of Thornton Hough the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building and churchyards on Raby Road, and the Parish Hall on Church Road.

2. Objectives

Statement of Vision and Goals for 2017 to 2022

Vision

Our aspiration for All Saints' Church is:

- for God to be central in all that we do and in the lives of all our members
- to share the love of God with those around, serving the community and
- witnessing to others about the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Goals

1. Spiritual Growth

To promote a deepening of love and spiritual growth.

To develop and grow our knowledge through study of the Bible, through prayer and through teaching at our services and other events so that we are better able to apply the Bible's teaching in today's world.

2. Mission

To share the good news about Jesus Christ with others so that they too may receive and enjoy the grace and blessings of God in their lives.

To support others who also work to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

3. Care for others in the church and in the community

To reach out to others and demonstrate his love in practical ways by caring for and serving others within the church and without, including all age groups, newcomers, and those in need.

4. Worship

To use our talents to make our worship more meaningful.

To ensure that our worship and events are worthy offerings to God, that they meet the needs of our existing members and are attractive and accessible to those outside the Christian community who are interested in what we do.

5. Organisation

To promote the smooth running of the church we need to:

- Devise and explore ways of involving more of our members in all aspects of running our church.
- Ensure that we are using people's God given talents in the most effective way possible.
- Generate sufficient income to balance the books.

6. Communication

To improve our use of appropriate communication channels to support and enhance all of our activities at All Saints’.

3. 2020 Activities, Achievements and Performance

Regular Sunday Worship

Our regular pattern of Sunday worship has been affected by the Covid pandemic. We closed the church from 22nd March and resumed public worship on 19th July 2020. A second lockdown later in the year meant that we paused our services from 5th November and reopened for the Second Sunday in Advent: 6th December. We resumed worship at our Sunday morning services only in order to ensure that appropriate time was set aside for cleaning. We maintained our pattern of having one service of Holy Communion available each week: either at our 8.00am Book of Common Prayer service held on alternate Sundays or at our weekly 10.30am services. A careful Risk Assessment for the conduct of Holy Communion services has been carried out and followed.

The numbers of those attending the early service rose from a regular cohort of 5 pre-pandemic to 9 after July. Worshippers appreciated the quiet service and the space around them which enabled them to feel safe. Individuals were encouraged to either bring their own Prayer Book with them or “adopt” a church copy to bring with them and take home each time to avoid transmission of the virus.

The 10.30am services resumed with new service sheets printed for each week. This meant that we were able to be more flexible, using a wider range of liturgy resources to fit the changing seasons and themes. We introduced sharing the Peace using British Sign Language to maintain our social distance but also making gesture and eye contact more meaningful. We involved some members of the congregation in the service who were keeping safe at home by playing recordings made of them reading the lessons or intercessions. The choir was only able to resume singing in August and congregational singing has yet to be permitted again.

The impact of Covid on attendance was marked; prior to the first lockdown, regular congregations were around 50 adults and 4 children, however they settled at nearer 40 and no children on return during the summer and early autumn.

Opportunities for worship and reflection during lockdown were provided through a mixture of written reflections and video recordings, made available for Sunday mornings. People were signposted towards other resources to help nurture their spiritual life as well, such as the Daily Hope phonenumber: 0800 804 8044.

Tim Allen-Price and Pam Machin have been steadfast welcomers at our 10.30am services; thanks to them, Rachel Brothwell and others who have ably assisted, often at short notice, to ensure that people have been able to worship in safety.

Festivals and Occasional Offices

On Friday 6th March we welcomed visitors from other churches to All Saints’ for the World Day of Prayer. 42 people attended this service.

The Mothering Sunday service on 22nd March 2020 was the first service which had to be cancelled due to the lockdown for the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 26th February we held an Ash Wednesday Service at 7.00pm; this was the first time for many years that there had been an imposition of ashes service to begin the Lent season.

We were still in lockdown for Easter but provided online reflections, prayers and hymns on the All Saints' website and posted the material out for those who were unable to access the online material. We had established a contact list during the 2018 interregnum and this has proved invaluable for keeping in touch with our congregation.

The annual Thornton Hough Primary School Year 6 Leavers' Service and presentation of books which is usually held in All Saints' church in July had to be cancelled in 2020.

We celebrated our patronal festival on Sunday 1st November and 43 people attended. In the afternoon of 1st November we held a Remembrance of the Departed service and 62 people were present.

By Remembrance Day we were back in lockdown and the church service in the morning, the parade to the War Memorial and the village service in All Saints' Church had to be cancelled. Instead we made an online service available.

The Advent Carol Service was held a week later than planned due to the lockdown and this was attended in person by 43 people and also viewed online.

We were unable to hold the Christingle Service and the Crib Service in December due to worries about Covid safety, but we did have an interactive Nativity Service with props from goody bags. This service was also made available online with the goody bags delivered to anyone who was unable to join us in church.

The Service of Lessons and Carols became a bookable service and was run twice with an attendance of 49 people at the first service and 47 at the second.

44 people attended church at Christmas (24th and 25th December), all of whom were communicants.

During 2020 we conducted the following occasional offices:

Baptisms	0
Confirmations	0
Weddings	1
Funerals	21 (7 services in church, 14 at the crematorium)
Burial	1
Thanksgiving services	2

Regular Midweek Worship and Fellowship

Our Wednesday Holy Communion service became a regular weekly fixture when it returned in September after lockdown and a summer break – but without coffee and biscuits. Numbers rose from a steady 10 to 14 by December, as people enjoyed a quiet, informal, socially distanced service.

Sadly, the impact of Coronavirus on nursing homes meant that our visits to Westwood Hall and Brimstage Manor had to cease after February.

Children and Families

The Children's Sunday Group ran for the first part of 2020 until the lockdown came in March when it had to be paused.

Visits by Revd Vicky to Thornton Hough Primary School have also been paused due to the Coronavirus, however she continues to liaise with the school through her role as Governor. She led a small Act of Remembrance by the village War Memorial for pupils as they gathered outside school on 11th November.

Pastoral Care

The Prayer and Pastoral Care group have continued to share concerns about individuals on a confidential basis via email and telephone. Home visits by the group and home communion by the vicar had to pause due to restrictions, however a slightly larger team of 9 committed to telephoning a designated small cohort of individuals on a regular basis. Regular walks round the parish during lockdown have helped the vicar to establish links with the wider parish “over the garden fence”.

4. Governance and PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules (2017). The PCC at All Saints’ consists of: the incumbent (our Vicar), the Churchwardens, elected representatives to the Deanery Synod and elected lay representatives.

In 2020 the PCC membership and Standing Committee membership was as follows

Elected Members of the Laity		Other Members	
Mr P Arch		Rev. V Barrett*	Vicar (Chairman)
Mrs R Brothwell		Mrs P Baker*	Churchwarden Until September 2020
Mr S Deakin		Mrs A Jones*	Churchwarden
Mrs M Gamble		Dr P Machin*	Churchwarden From September 2020
*Mrs D Hughes		Dr E Macbeath	Deanery Synod representative
Mr D Jones		Mr B Brennan	Deanery Synod representative. Until September 2020
Miss E Roberts	Until September 2020	Mr G Allan Price	Deanery Synod representative from September 2020
Mrs L Russell		Mrs S Stinson* (PCC Secretary)	Deanery Synod representative from September 2020
Mr A Splitt			
Mr I Stinson* (PCC Treasurer)		<i>* Members of the Standing Committee</i>	

Members were also elected to the sub committees dealing with Finance, Fabric and Health and Safety, Remuneration and Three Churches Together. The committees exist to discuss and, for more major issues, make recommendations, which are then taken to the full PCC.

In 2020 PCC meetings were held on 3rd February, 9th March, 2nd September, 15th September, 13th October, 10th November and 8th December.

The Standing Committee met on 8th June, 13th June and 4th July in 2020.

The Annual Meeting was held on 15th September 2020, having been postponed from April due to the pandemic.

5. Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding and vulnerable adults). (Church Representation Rules 2020 p76)

6. Activities of the PCC in 2020

2020 has been a challenging year for the PCC due to the lockdowns and being unable to meet in person for some of the year. The meetings in February and March were the only ones in which all the members were able to meet in person. Subsequent meetings have been hybrid meetings held with some people meeting in person and others online using Zoom, or, during total lockdowns, only on Zoom with members receiving the minutes and having a chance to vote on proposals just after the meetings. This meant that people who could not access the Zoom meetings still had a chance to vote.

The PCC has continued to consider regular reports on the Finances, Fabric, Health and Safety, Prayer and Pastoral Care, Electoral Roll and Three Churches Together.

In addition to the regular items the PCC discussed the purchase of new Bibles for the pews in the church, the introduction of the new hymn books, a faculty application for the churchyard, toilet twinning, implementation of Churchyard Regulations, safeguarding including the past cases review (PCR 2) and courses, record keeping, the safe opening of the church, worship, the appointment of a new Independent Examiner and charitable giving.

The Standing Committee met on 19th March, 18th June, 13th June and 4th July.

In March they considered the opening of the church for private prayer only, communication during the lockdowns, including the suspension of the magazine and the circulation of reflections and a newsletter. They also discussed setting up a telephone network to keep in touch with people, in addition to pressing matters that needed attention while the PCC were unable to meet.

In June, after a lockdown in which all worship had been suspended and the church building closed, they met to discuss the safe re-opening of the church, how we could implement social distancing, signage, cleaning the church, removal of cushions, kneelers and hymn books, the provision of hand sanitiser etc.

In July the Standing Committee discussed running the services in a Covid- safe way and publicising the re-starting of services.

7. Charity Information

Contact details	All Saints PCC, The Parish Office, The Parish Hall Church Road Thornton Hough, Wirral, CH63 1JW	
	www.allsaintsth.org.uk	0151 336 1654
Church of England Diocese	Chester	
Charity Registration Number	1131417	

Part 2: Reports from the PCC

8. Electoral Roll Report

On 1st January 2020 there were 101 names on the Electoral Roll.

On December 31st 2020 there were 98 names on the Electoral Roll, 53% resident, 47% non-resident.

Elly Macbeath

9. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

The Fabric and Health & Safety (FHS) Committee continues to coordinate works to the church buildings and grounds in terms of maintenance, refurbishment and health & safety issues. Our work is organised into scheduled tasks (regular maintenance and checks on the buildings and grounds); one-off improvement projects; and, very much to the fore this year, regularly reviewing health and safety matters and risk assessments to ensure that our buildings are safe for all users.

With much of 2020 spent coming to terms with the impact of lockdown and coronavirus restrictions, much of our time this year has been focused on undertaking new risk assessments and keeping these under regular review to ensure that our buildings are 'Covid-secure' and adhere to all relevant Government and Church of England regulations and guidelines. This is an on-going task as circumstances change and the restrictions and guidance react to these.

Whilst our buildings have been used less this year, and at times access has been restricted, many of our scheduled maintenance tasks have continued throughout the year, albeit our planned Spring working party to undertake a number of routine maintenance jobs in the church and grounds had to be cancelled as the first lockdown came into force. The FHS Committee wishes to extend our thanks to the many other people who contribute to the on-going running and upkeep of the church, grounds and buildings, by volunteering to undertake some of the routine tasks coordinated by the Committee.

One-off improvement projects are organised into current and pending projects. Current projects are those actively being pursued. Many of these require a good deal of research, planning and organisation in the background before any noticeable works can start. The committee meet regularly throughout the year to discuss these, before making recommendations to the PCC. The Committee has continued to meet, albeit virtually, but progress with most current projects has been slower this year. There are over 20 projects on our current projects list at present, include replacing the tired-looking noticeboard and carrying out repairs and remedial works to the church spire. Some of the others are mentioned below.

Pending projects are those which the FHS committee is not able to pursue at the present time, but are being kept on the radar for when time and resources allow. Pending projects are reviewed regularly to assess whether priorities have changed or additional resources have become available. Once we are able to return to a more 'normal' pattern of meeting and gathering, the Committee will review whether there are any projects that need to move up the priority list as we adapt to the 'new normal', whatever that may be! There are 15 projects on this list at present, some of which are 'nice to have' improvements and others are major maintenance projects that will be required in the medium term, such as a major overhaul of the church roof and

repointing of the stonework to the church. Both of these will need considerable time, effort, and of course financial resources.

Our Quinquennial Inspection was arranged to happen in May 2020, but had to be postponed due to the lockdown restrictions in force at the time, and was eventually undertaken in October 2020. We are still awaiting the report from our church architect and have been notified that this is expected by Easter 2021, due to a backlog caused by the restrictions. When we receive the report, it will provide us with more guidance and advice about the state of repair of our church and churchyard and recommendations for essential and desirable works. The Committee will review this carefully once received and will use it to inform our priorities for 2021.

Should anyone wish to bring any matter to the attention of the Fabric, Health & Safety Committee, we can be contacted by email on buildings@allsaintsth.org.uk

Darren Jones

9A. Church

Further repairs have been carried out this year to the gas boilers which heat the church building. Spare parts are becoming increasingly difficult to source for these boilers and it would be sensible to plan for replacement of these in the next couple of years. Routine maintenance and servicing have been on-going as required.

Minor works have included maintenance of the lighting systems, repairs to the church roof to fix leaks and replace broken and slipped roof tiles and the cleaning of some blocked drains.

Whilst we have yet to receive our Quinquennial Inspection report, initial indications are that the condition of the roof has not deteriorated significantly since the last inspection, and indeed some of the patch repairs we have had done have left it overall in a better state than 5 years ago. The less good news, however, is that the roof is reaching the end of its working life and replacement or major renovation does need to be planned for.

More urgently the gutters, downpipes and other rainwater goods are in need of replacement, some urgently, and this work will incur substantial expense. The Committee is investigating various sources of grants and match-funding that might be able to assist with this.

Darren Jones

9B. Church grounds

Works to the churchyards over the past twelve months has been mainly routine maintenance. We are continuing to monitor the condition and lean of the boundary walls, with measurements being taken so that we can be aware of any movements in the walls.

The handrails have been replaced at the Raby Road steps to the new churchyard and the handrails to the main entrance steps to the church will follow soon. We are also working on plans to replace the noticeboard on Raby Road with a new high quality noticeboard, welcoming visitors and clearly displaying essential information about us and our services.

Darren Jones

9C. Parish Hall and Hirst Cottage

Only routine maintenance works have been carried out this year, including repairs to the roofs. The condition of the old pew outside the Parish Hall is deteriorating and we are looking to get this removed.

Darren Jones

10. Wirral South Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod meeting was held at All Saints' on 5th March.

No meetings have been held since March 2020 when we had the first lockdown due to the Covid pandemic.

Dr. Elly Macbeath

Wirral South Deanery Synod Rep.

The Trustees' report to the Charity Commission was approved by the PCC on 15th March 2021.

Part 3: Reports on activities

11. Worship, Prayer and Pastoral Care

Report of the Vicar

No-one could have envisaged what challenges would face us both nationally and as a parish in 2020.

However, in the midst of the uncertainties, we have been reminded:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

We have begun to see afresh the vital place our church has within the parish: our church is a safe space, a place of joy and support, learning and encouragement, and of deep consolation. It is not just for those who would consider themselves “members” of the church; rather, it remains a beacon and place of welcome for all. Our next steps will be to see where this vision might take us in the future.

Ensuring the church is a safe place has been at the forefront of planning through the year. Our grounds and the church are places of peace and sanctuary for many visitors. I am particularly grateful to our Health and Safety Officer, our Verger Margaret Gamble, and Iain and Sue Stinson for their hard work on preparing the church for Covid-safe reopening and conducting and reviewing Risk Assessments. Thanks too for the support and insights from Churchwardens Patsy Baker, Alice Jones and Pam Machin and the Standing Committee. It was good to discover that people from different places, faiths and none dropped in after we reopened the building for private prayer on 18th June.

Reviewing records dating back well over a century at the start of the year as part of the Diocese’s Past Case Review 2 offered no evidence of past concerns about the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults at All Saints’ but was a salutary reminder of the continuing need to take seriously our responsibilities for the way in which we treat others.

We were able to share the joy of a Harvest service together in which we shared the good things from our larders with Wirral Foodbank and enjoyed the bounty of people’s gardens in beautiful flower displays. The Nativity service in December also offered a chance to share the joy of the Christmas story, and families unable to attend were sent their own special “goody bag” of items.

We supported those around us by learning to adhere to social distancing rules; using hand sanitiser and donning masks have become acts of love for one another. I am very grateful to those who have helped to support people by committing to making regular phone calls and doing shopping. These practical acts run alongside the prayers which have been offered.

We have had to learn many things this year, not least how to be patient; going into lockdown, returning to public worship and then back into lockdown has stretched us all. We have had to learn to be resourceful, adapting to restrictions and developing skills and strategies to manage Zoom meetings, accessing resources online and in printed forms. I am grateful to Iain Stinson for his considerable technical support and Margaret Gamble for printing many packs of support materials. We have all learned more about what sustains us spiritually.

We can all be encouraged by the fact that even when the church was closed physically, the life of the church continued. Whilst we were unable to share Easter Sunday together, the good news of Jesus being risen remains. It was also good to see that many people felt happy to return to public worship. I am also enormously grateful for the personal encouragement which so many have given me this year.

All Saints' Church continues to be a place where we are reminded of the deep consolation of the Christian message. We lament the pain experienced during the last twelve months. Our special afternoon Service for the Faithful Departed enabled us to give voice and space for families who have lost loved ones in 2020. Each person present was given a painted clay heart to remind them of their loved one and of God's love for them. As a church family we were particularly saddened by the deaths of Penny Dodd, Don Cooksley, John McIver, Ken Edwards, John Lewis and June Smith. We pray that all those who have died this year may rest in peace and rise in glory.

Very many thanks to all those who have contributed to building up the life of All Saints' Church in 2020, whether in large or small part. We thank God for his faithfulness, and his love for this wonderful parish of Thornton Hough and its people.

Harvest: Thanks be to God!

Our Harvest Thanksgiving Week was a time of great generosity and joy in 2020. The church was a riot of colour for our service on 20th September, decorated with flowers and foliage largely picked from parishioners' gardens and allotments. The windowsills were laden with tins of food. These generous donations were taken to the Wirral Foodbank, where they would help to provide nutritious food for those on limited incomes.



The tins were put onto pallets at the Foodbank and our contributions weighed in at 168.2 kilogrammes; that's nearly 26 and a half stone!



Harvest Festival



12. Report of the Churchwardens

2020 has been an eventful year, both within the church and without.

The year began uneventfully as news of a new virus began to circulate. We enjoyed a return to worship after the Christmas season, with a gradual introduction of increased interventions to keep our parishioners safe. We celebrated the World Day of Prayer on the 6th of March and then enjoyed a rousing "Sing In" on the 8th of March at which many attendees were able to request their favourite hymns as the Director of Music encouraged us to explore our new hymn books. As Lent began we joined together in a weekly study of the book of Jonah.

As the weeks progressed, and the country went into lockdown, we too locked down and meeting for study and worship were suspended in line with national recommendations. Our Annual Meetings were postponed. With face-to-face meetings suspended communications moved to electronic and paper newsletters, using our website to keep in touch and material including songs, reflections and links to videos created by the Vicar were posted to maintain links within the parish.

As we were able to reopen the church, in a Covid secure manner, Private Prayer and then smaller services were able to be started. We were able to hold our Annual Meetings in a combined in person and Zoom format on the 13th September and began our week of Harvest Thanksgiving. 168.2kg of tinned and dried food was collected which was delivered to Wirral Foodbank by the Vicar with further donations online offered by others. The Churchwardens attended the Archdeacon's Visitation service on Zoom on the 23rd of November to be sworn into office. We would like to thank Patsy Baker who, thanks to the pandemic, had an unexpectedly long final term of office and has worked tirelessly for the church over her six and a half years of service as a churchwarden.

On the 8th October we welcomed the Church Architect to perform the Quinquennial Inspection which had had to be delayed earlier in the year due to lockdown. We are yet to receive the report but this will be shared as usual when we receive it.

Some of our celebration services have had to be held in a modified format due to pandemic regulations. Our All Saints' Day service to remember the departed was a - lovely reflective invitation only service for families at which we remembered 21 individuals. There Advent Carol service was held on the 6th December and we held two Services of Lessons and Carols with prebooking required. These services were well attended and the music and singing were much appreciated. We would like to extend our thanks to the Director of Music and the choir for their hard work and flexibility during these services and throughout this challenging year.

During 2020 our dedicated PCC members have continued to meet in person, in a hybrid face-to-face and Zoom hybrid format or on Zoom as we have been allowed in order to keep the business of the church in working order. Although this has been challenging and required a very flexible way of working, particularly from the PCC Secretary, we have found a way of rising to the challenge. Our Sidesperson and Coffee rotas were suspended as lockdown came in and we hope that these will be able to be started up again as we move forward into 2021. We are currently not permitted to allow congregational singing and we hope that this too is allowed soon and that the new hymn books can come out of storage and back into use.

We would like to thank the Magazine team and all those who have made phenomenal efforts to keep in touch, and keep reaching out, to our parishioners and congregation in

very challenging circumstances. We would also like to thank our Verger who has worked tirelessly to keep our buildings Covid secure. Of course we would also like to thank our Vicar, Revd Barrett, who has met each challenge which the year has posed with grace, poise and an imaginative approach to use new technologies to keep us encouraged.

**Alice Jones and Pam Machin
Churchwardens**

13. Verger's Report

2020 was a strange year for weddings, funerals and interment of ashes in church. There was only one wedding, due to the government restrictions, five funerals and five interments of ashes.

Parish Hall

We went into lockdown in March and since then we have opened and closed a few times.

We have been very lucky to have Gillian Woods (Stepping Out) who, when we were open, has used the hall every evening and every Thursday each week. Weight Watchers have also used the hall on a Friday morning.

Risk assessments were carried out, notices were put up and hand sanitiser was provided to ensure that the hall could be used safely, in line with the government requirements. Both groups filled in Covid safe forms and made sure when using the hall that everyone was safe at each meeting.

We have not heard from any of the other regular users and polling was cancelled in May.

The PCC has held some meetings in the hall, but we have not been able to use the Parish Hall for any other church events. We look forward to a time when we can re-start all these activities again.

**Margaret Gamble
Verger**

14. Safeguarding

We continue to take Safeguarding seriously at All Saints' Thornton Hough, despite the changes to parish activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the previous annual safeguarding audit was completed in the autumn of 2019, it was repeated early in 2020, using the Model Parish Safeguarding Checklist from the Church of England's Parish Safeguarding Handbook, rather than the pro forma that I had "inherited" from the previous Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer. No DBS checks required renewal during the year.

The face-to-face "Raising Awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse" course has been, understandably, suspended in the Diocese of Chester. I shall rebook when this is possible, because my original booking was for autumn 2018. Throughout the pandemic, I have made efforts to encourage as many parishioners as possible to complete the online "Basic Awareness" safeguarding course, but with only limited success.

As part of the Past Cases Review Part Two, linked to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, I was able to confirm to Revd Vicky Barrett that none of the archives passed over to me, as current Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Officer, contained any relevant material, though of course she needed to examine the paperwork for herself. During the year, nothing of concern has been reported.

Looking forward, it has been agreed with the Vicar and PCC that the annual safeguarding audit 2021 should be delayed until activities at All Saints' settle into something approaching routine.

Linda M Arch

15. Families ministries

Children's Sunday School Group

In January the Children's Sunday Group started up again in the Choir Vestry, during the morning service. The sessions followed a similar format to those in 2019, with teaching, reading from the Bible, discussion and craft suitable for children of primary school age. They were delivered by the same small team of 3 leaders and 3 helpers (1 leader and 1 helper per session) and were based on teaching material in the "Click" books published by The Good Book Company. We explored how Jesus is revealed as the Son of God, in Mark's Gospel, through His teaching and healing. The Group remained small with only 4 children.

During March our programme was suspended when the COVID-19 pandemic swept across our nation and for various pandemic-related reasons, the Children's Sunday Group was unable to meet again for the rest of the year.

In May there was an exchange of emails and telephone conversations between the Vicar, leaders and helpers, in place of the planning meeting that would normally have taken place. The uncertainty about progress of the pandemic, with its restrictions and precautions, made planning for the future inadvisable. Once the virus has been tamed and we are able to have some understanding about the "new normal", decisions can be made about how to move the Children's Sunday Group into the future.

Linda M Arch

cots2tots

2020 started well for cots2tots. Each Monday morning in term time from 9:00am to 11:30am we welcomed babies, young children and their carers (including mothers, fathers, grandparents and child minders) to our sessions in the Parish Hall. The morning started with free play for the children. Quality educational toys and activities were set out and varied each week, encouraging the children to interact and develop.

After the free play healthy snacks were served, followed by a craft session (this could get messy!) a story which encouraged the children to listen, but also to interact with and finally singing. The children loved the familiar nursery rhymes and action songs.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Rachel Brothwell for all her hard work and enthusiasm each week in organising the sessions, and to all the helpers that helped to make it such a success.

Sadly, once the lockdowns started, we had to suspend cots2tots. Even when some activities in the Parish Hall were tentatively starting up again it was impossible to resume cots2tots due to the problems of social distancing with young children in the confined space and the vulnerability of some of the helpers.

We hope to review the future of cots2tots once we can see our way out of the lockdowns but for the time being, we think of all the children that used to come. They will be getting bigger and some will have started school. Our best wishes go out to all the children and their carers. God be with them all.

Sue Stinson
cots2tots Secretary

16. Choir and music 2020

2020 began well: the choir sang some special music at Epiphany and at the start of Lent. We were preparing the music for our service of Readings and Music for Passiontide when the first COVID-19 lockdown was introduced and our last service of public worship was the Third Sunday of Lent. During this first lockdown, I provided some videos of hymns (played on the organ with words) on the church website for people to sing along with at home. I also provided music to accompany Revd Vicky's meditations and reflections. This mode of online worship lasted from Mothering Sunday (Lent 4), 22nd March) until the Sixth Sunday after Trinity (July 19th). For nearly four months there was no live music in All Saints' Church; we could only mark and celebrate Passiontide, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity with our simple online hymns.

Although public worship began again on Trinity 6 (July 19th) even with seating in church arranged to be "socially distant", there could be no singing. At our services we had the hymns played on the organ with the congregation following the words in the specially printed service booklets. Some found this a comfort and others frustrating. There had even been some doubt about the use of organs, as they sound by blowing wind through pipes. However, once it was recognised that this "wind" was not produced by human breath and so did not carry the same risks of transmitting the virus as orchestral woodwind or brass instruments, the Church of England decided that organs could be used. We kept the volume of the music down, following recommendations, so that people did not have to raise their voices when speaking.

On August 17th the Church of England allowed choirs to once again sing during public worship. We carried out a risk assessment for the return of the choir. This required the members of the choir to be seated following social distancing guidelines. Fortunately, we were able to take advantage of some members being in the same COVID-19 "bubble" and this made it possible to spread out the choir in the chancel in a COVID-19 safe seating arrangement. The choir did not use the vestry to avoid "congestion" and so sang unrobed. Music was laid out in advance for services and rehearsals and social mingling avoided. We sang our first service since March 15th on August 23rd.

We were able to sing at services through September, October and on November 1st. We sang hymns and anthems at our "shortened" services, though the congregation were still not allowed to join in the singing. We sang at the All Saints' Day Holy Communion Service and in the afternoon of All Saints' Day at the special service to commemorate those who had died during the last twelve months. Some of our services were recorded and posted on YouTube (and are accessible through the church website).

Lockdown 2 was announced and was to take effect on November 5th. The choir met on November 2nd to record some music which we were able to use in the recorded services for Remembrance Sunday and for the feast of Christ the King.

Lockdown 2 ended just after Advent Sunday. On the Second Sunday of Advent we held our Service of Readings and Music for Advent. The choir did a great job in providing a most uplifting service, with very little rehearsal time. This service was recorded and published through the website. We managed to sing appropriate music throughout Advent, again with little rehearsal time – one of the benefits of having an experienced group of singers. The Christmas Carol Service on December 20th became a booked event at 4:30pm and repeated at 6:30pm. We had a good attendance from the congregation (justifying the effort to repeat the service) and it was a wonderful service. The service

was shorter than usual with six readings rather than nine and the readings were read from the Authorised (King James) version of the Bible.

2020 was not the year we had expected or planned. I am particularly grateful to all members of our choir for their forbearance during the year, for their willingness to come and sing at short notice, to come along and sing on days which were also significant family days and birthdays, to deal with a seating arrangement which makes singing harder, for managing the uncertainty of the times. All Saints' is most fortunate to have such a faithful and caring group of choristers, and I am indeed privileged to work with them. I would like to thank all who have helped with the arrangements and administration during this difficult year, in particular, our vicar, Revd Vicky who has had to deal with complex situations which change with almost no notice and my wife Sue, who has been a great support to me in many ways including the production of the material for the website, checking service booklets and helping with the arrangements in church.

Our hope is that as 2021 proceeds, things will improve, and we can all once again enjoy the great privilege of singing hymns and songs as we worship our God.

*Yea, we know that thou rejoicest
o'er each work of thine;
thou didst ears and hands and voices
for thy praise design;
craftsman's art and music's measure
for thy pleasure
all combine.*

Francis Pott (1832–1909)

Iain Stinson
Director of Music

17. Bible Study and Fellowship Groups

a. The Bible Study Group

The Bible Study group meet on the fourth Monday of each month in members' homes. We had been studying Acts from the book by John Stott. When lockdown came, we decided on the day of our meeting to read a passage from the Bible chosen by a member and, by doing this, we could continue to give friendship and support to each other and pray for other people.

We look forward to being able to meet up with each other and to continue with our study of Acts.

Shirley McEvoy

b. Monday Group

The Monday Group meets on the second Monday of each month in members' homes.

During lockdown we wanted to continue to give prayers, friendship and support to each other, so we decided to read a passage from the Bible each month at the time of our meeting; this enabled us to think of each other and pray for people who needed our prayers.

We were greatly saddened by the death of June Smith. She was a faithful member, and we will miss the joy and support she brought to our meetings.

We were able to send our annual donation to the Wirral Women's and Children's Aid.

Shirley McEvoy

c. Chatterbox Club

This is an enjoyable social group who meet in members' homes on the third Tuesday of each month to play mainly dominoes and Scrabble.

June Smith will be very much missed as she was a keen Scrabble player and also helped to provide some lovely cake and scones as our refreshments.

To keep in touch with each other we have been saying the Lord's Prayer at what would have been the start of our meeting.

We are looking forward to being able to meet as a group again.

Shirley McEvoy

18. Events

All events planned for 2020 had to be cancelled or put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place to keep us safe. We are all hoping that during 2021 the restrictions will gradually be eased and that we will be able to celebrate getting together again.

Practical Ministries

19. Parish magazine

The editors, Iain Stinson, Patsy Baker, Revd Vicky Barrett and Brian Morris have tried to produce a magazine which is interesting and informative to its readers and especially to members of the parish. Our solitary meeting in August, restricted by the COVID-19, continued to be humorous, enjoyable and rewarding. For most of the year we have communicated through emails and telephone conversations. We have kept the parishioners informed of what is happening at our church through the events sheet, the diary and articles written on church life. At the same time we have brought everyday stories from individuals about events which have happened in their lifetime and of interest to everybody. Our thanks go to regular and occasional contributors who make the magazine so interesting. We hope that the readers gain comfort from the articles in the magazine in these difficult times especially from the reflections written by Revd Vicky.

During 2020, the February March edition appeared as usual and the April May edition was published a little early so that it was distributed just as the first lockdown began. We published a "one month" edition of The Magazine in September and resumed our normal bimonthly publication with the October-November edition. We published five short newsletters between April 5th – July 11th: these included parish news and some articles of general interest. They were published on the web and those on the church's contact list received email notifications about their publication. For those without Internet access on the contact list, the newsletters were included with the sets of reflections that were sent by post. Some printed copies of the newsletters were left in church to be picked up by those coming for private prayer. Throughout 2020 we have tried to maintain our connections with our readers.

We have continued to receive many complimentary comments from those who have enjoyed not only the content but also the format we have used. The magazine is distributed free to anybody who wishes to have a copy, but we do ask for a donation towards the cost of printing. The printing and co-ordinating the distribution is done by Margaret Gamble and we are indebted to her for continuing with this task as she has

done for many years. Our thanks also go to the Magazine distributors who deliver the magazines.

We feel it is important that the magazine continues to bring to the attention of the parishioners the various articles, events, quizzes and stories in paper form as not everybody has a computer for the online version. 220 copies of the magazine are printed every two months and are distributed to homes in Thornton Hough, Raby Mere, Brimstage and Raby. Magazines are also posted to homes outside the parish: to Heswall, Neston, Oxton, Willaston, Chester, Port Sunlight, and as far afield as Evershot, Hornby (near Lancaster) and Broadstone (in Dorset). The magazine provides a valuable link with friends who no longer live locally. Our editorial team welcomes contributions, so if you have a story or know of an event which you feel might be of interest please send it to us so that we can consider it along with all the other articles.

The Editors

20. 2021 Thornton Hough Calendar

Following the successful 2020 calendar, a 2021 Thornton Hough Calendar was produced and printed with thanks to the support provided by Sue and Iain Stinson. The publication of this calendar was advertised from the pulpit when there were services, and mentioned in the Parish magazine and newsletters during 2020 requesting contributions of photographs of our beautiful village and neighbourhood. After much deliberation twelve photographs were selected by the team consisting of Ruth Whieldon, Alan Smathers and Brian Morris whilst isolating from each other during the pandemic. They were assisted by the Revd Vicky. Once again over 200 copies were printed and sent to many parts of the country and far-off lands.

We were indebted to 11 local businesses and companies who sponsored a month each thus covering the printing costs and to those people who sold the calendars to friends and relatives. Thanks must also go to Margaret Gamble who sold many calendars to friends and family near and far. We are delighted to report that the calendars made a handsome profit of over £1,250 for church funds. We look forward to producing another calendar for 2022 so we hope that many new and old photos will come to light during the Summer of 2021 and be sent to us for consideration for this calendar.

Brian Morris on behalf of the Calendar team

21. Website report 2020

The church website has been an important element of our communications strategy during 2020. When the first lockdown was announced, it was agreed that we should give some priority to keeping in touch with our congregations; the website offered a way of providing information and support to those who could use the Internet, either from their computers, tablets or smart phones. Announcements about the opening and closing of the church, the pausing and restarting of services and other relevant information has been published on the website throughout the year. Where appropriate we have provided links to Diocesan announcements and activities (including the announcement of the new Bishop of Chester, Bishop Mark.)

Revd Vicky has been producing a meditation, reflection or service each week since the first lockdown started around March 20th (in some weeks she has produced more than one). These have been published on the website under the Spiritual Nurture section - this was a new section which we added at the start of the first lockdown. The material produced by Revd Vicky covers the period from Lent 2020 to Christmas 2020 (and is

continuing in 2021). It was felt important that material continued to be provided even when church was open, to support those who felt they did not want to venture out (for medical reasons). We have added some hymns to the website to complement these.

We made use of an email list of contacts which people were able to join (originally during the interregnum) to tell people about important announcements and about the publication of each reflection, meditation or service. Because some of our congregation opted to be contacted by post rather than email, we have periodically sent sets of these reflections to those people (9 batches in 2020). Some 40 people presently have subscribed to receive email messages and 36 messages by post. People can join the email list through the website and we would like to encourage those who can to do so.

During 2020 we have recorded some church services which have been published on YouTube. These have been recorded in church and some have included music sung by the church choir. These are accessible through links in the Spiritual Nurture section of the website.

We made use of an online booking form (accessible from the website) to allow people to book seats at our Christmas Carol Service: this mechanism worked well.

The website continues to be an important communications tool and during 2021 we expect to see this continue. Comments and suggestions about the website are always welcome.

Please look regularly at www.allsaintsth.org.uk – you might be pleasantly surprised by what you find.

Iain Stinson

22. Church Flowers

This year we have not put flowers in church every week, but we did celebrate harvest with flower arrangements and plants in the windows along with the many grocery items which were donated to the Wirral Foodbank.

At Christmas along with the Christmas tree, the candles and the usual decorations we put poinsettias on the reredos

The list of people wishing to do flowers is getting less and less but as there are no church services at the moment we will look again at the list and see what we can do later in the year.

Margaret Gamble

23.ACF Report for 2020

A church fellowship for anyone from anywhere.

At our yearly review in January 2020 Eileen Roberts stood down as Secretary and handed over the reins to me, Helen Tankard. We have 20 members in the ACF, and we often have visitors come as well depending on the subject matter of the meeting; they are always very welcome. Thank you to Eileen for your continued support whilst I settle in.

We continue to follow the five principles of the Diocesan ACF:

Fellowship Worship Service Study Giving

The meeting always starts with a hymn, a Bible reading and prayers: members take it in turns to lead this short service.

The programme of meetings was already prepared and distributed to members so I thought I would have a quiet time settling into my new role. However, we only managed to have three meetings before the pandemic appeared and we were all put into lockdown on Tuesday 23rd March. This started a period of worry and uncertainty for everyone and my role as Secretary became one of cancellations.

I am grateful for the speakers that were able to come and speak to us before our world turned upside down. They were:

- John Oldershaw - "Feathered Verse"
- Dr. Ian Cubbin – Agatha Christie "It wasn't who did it but how they did it"
- James Hennessey – Wirral Youth for Christ

All speakers received a fee, and these were often supplemented with collections on the day.

We also have three chosen charities each year that receive £100 and agree to provide a speaker the following year.

Our three charities for 2019 are listed below and they were due to give talks in 2020:

- Wirral Youth for Christ
- North West Air Ambulance
- Beam Project – Children's Society

We only managed to have the talk from Wirral Youth for Christ in March immediately before lockdown. The other speakers have agreed to come in 2021. As we have been unable to meet for the last ten months, we have been unable to organise our next three charities as these are usually voted for in June.

During the late summer when our life was beginning to open up again, I was hoping to start meetings again in November probably with a different more informal format as we couldn't guarantee that speakers could attend. I spoke to many members on the telephone who were eager to return but a tightening of restrictions meant that this was unable to go ahead.

Our two social events, a "Strawberry Tea" and "Christmas Party" were unable to go ahead.

As we start a new year, I hope that we will be able to meet up again soon, but we may have to change the format depending on regulations at the time. I may be called upon to play some light music or as the weather gets warmer, we could look into arranging our meetings outside.

Helen Tankard

24. Coffee Morning Report 2020

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic we were only able to hold two coffee mornings in January and February: both were well attended. Our next coffee morning was to be our Easter one with hot cross buns.

There is always a sales table and raffle at each coffee morning. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Heather Timms who has kindly continued to sell jams, marmalades and cards throughout the pandemic. I also acknowledge all those ACF members and friends who have continued to purchase items from Heather. All money raised goes to the church.

We look forward to the time when we can meet again, and I think we should celebrate with cake!

Refreshments and organisation in the kitchen ably run by Shirley McEvoy. Thank you.

Helen Tankard

25. Church Partnership

3 Churches Together

2020 started well and 3 Churches Together (All Saints', St George's and St Luke's) had a successful Lent course in which we studied Jonah in *Wot? No Whale?*, a series of meditations led by Revd Vicky Barrett. We met together in person for the first two sessions, but the final reflections were sent out in paper form and put online due to the national lockdown.

Unfortunately, 3 Churches Together hasn't been able to meet since.

In November we heard the very sad news that St George's will be closing in July 2021. Our good wishes go out to the congregation of St George's and Nick Jones. We have valued our links with them over the years and there will always be a welcome for them at All Saints'.

World Day of Prayer

This was a lovely occasion. It was good to welcome people from churches in the area to All Saints.

United services

During 2020 we have had the following united services with St George's:

2nd February, 26th February (Ash Wednesday), 1st March, 6th September, 4th October, 1st November (All Saints' Sunday).

We were unable to hold our usual service at the war memorial followed by a service (it was due to be in All Saints' this year) on Remembrance Sunday. Instead, a service was recorded and made available on YouTube.

Other services had been planned but these had to be cancelled due to the lockdown.