

ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ALL SAINTS THORNTON HOUGH DIOCESE OF CHESTER

Charity Commission Number 1131417



ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2021

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. 2021 Activities, Achievements and Performance

Regular Sunday Worship

2021 started with an 8am Service of Holy Communion and a 10:30am Service of Holy Communion in church on 3rd January but then we locked down and services went online until we returned to church again on Passion Sunday (21st March). Our regular pattern of Sunday worship has been affected by the Covid pandemic; even when we were meeting together in church again some people felt unable to return in person immediately while others preferred to come to the 8am Sunday services or the midweek services.

Towards the end of the year the Omicron variant arrived, and infection rates soared again meaning that some of the more vulnerable members of our congregation returned to self-isolation. Throughout the year we have maintained social distancing, mask wearing and extra hygiene measures. We have continued to update our risk assessments as necessary.

Our regular pattern of worship when meeting in church has been:

- An 8:00 am service of Holy Communion on the first and third Sundays of the month.
- A 10:30am service each Sunday, usually Holy Communion but sometimes Morning Prayer.
- From the latter part of 2021 a 6:30pm service once a month. Some of these services are Holy Communion, and some Choral Evensong.
- A midweek service of Holy Communion at 10:30am each Wednesday of the month, apart from the fourth Wednesday.

We have continued the practice of having new service sheets printed each week for the Sunday services at 10:30am and 6:30pm. 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 continued sharing the Peace using British Sign Language to maintain our social distance, but also to make gesture and eye contact more meaningful.

Part way through the year the congregation, following the Church of England guidance, was able to resume receiving Holy Communion. Using every other row of pews enabled the priest to take the sacrament to the people rather than having everyone moving around the church. The wafers were dipped into the wine by the officiant rather than the congregation sharing the common cup. This practice has continued until the end of the year and into 2022.

Congregational singing was allowed again after the lockdown and this was welcomed by everyone. Very few children have attended the services in 2021 and the Sunday School did not restart due to the vulnerability of our helpers.

Following the sad announcement at the end of 2020, that St. George's URC Church was to close we continued to welcome some members of St George's to our services and events.

It has been a pleasure to welcome some new members of the congregation who joined us during the year. We also value the continuing links with some former members of the St George's congregation.

The mean attendance on a Sunday was 47 and midweek was 8.

We have been very grateful to Tim Allen-Price, Pam Machin, Alan Splitt and the team of welcomers who have ensured that the services have run smoothly, and people have felt safe while in church.

Festivals and Occasional Offices

After the initial lockdown we returned to church for Palm Sunday on 28th March. This meant that our special services for Ash Wednesday and Mothering Sunday were only online. From Palm Sunday to Easter Day the Sunday services were available both online and in church.

35 people attended our Palm Sunday service, 19 attended the Maundy Thursday service in the evening, 23 attended on Good Friday and a total of 53 people attended the services on Easter Day.

Our evening service on Ascension Day, 5th May, was attended by 20 people and at Pentecost, Sunday 23rd May, there were 39 people in church.

Harvest brought a welcome opportunity for celebration in the middle of a challenging year. Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 19th September was attended by 47 people.

It was a joy to welcome the first wedding without severely restricted numbers into the church at the end of August. This was followed by a further three weddings and two wedding blessings.

We were also delighted to see the return of baptisms when two young children were baptised in November.

Our patronal festival was celebrated on Sunday 31st October and 37 people attended.

On the same day, in the afternoon, we held two services to remember the Faithful Departed which were attended by 46 at the first and 57 at the second.

On 14th November we held our church Service of Remembrance at 10:30am. 42 people attended this. Unfortunately, the Civic Service planned for the afternoon was cancelled by the police about 15 minutes before the scheduled start due to a terrorist explosion in Liverpool that morning and fears for people's safety locally.

The Advent Carol Service was held on Sunday 28th November. This was a service of readings and music for Advent led by the choir. 38 people attended.

On Tuesday 30th November the Vicar and the Churchwardens welcomed the Bishop of Birkenhead and the Bishop of Stockport along with other members of the clergy from across the Deanery to All Saints'. 12 people attended a service of Holy Communion.

The Christingle Service on the afternoon of 12th December was an opportunity to welcome visitors to the church; it was attended by 44 people.

The Carol Service was held earlier in the day than usual, at 3pm on 19th December. The effects of the Omicron variant were being felt by this time, but we were pleased to welcome 45 people to the service.

The Christmas Eve service on 24th December was attended by 30 people, the Christmas morning service was attended by 25 people and the service on 26th December was attended by 22 people.

During 2021 we conducted the following occasional offices:

Baptisms	2
Confirmations	0
Weddings	4
Wedding blessings	2
Funerals	15
Committal	1
Burial of ashes	6
Commemoration of the Faithful Departed	2

Regular Midweek Worship and Fellowship

Our Wednesday Holy Communion service became a regular fixture again when it returned on 24th March, after the lockdown at the beginning of the year. Some people preferred the quiet, informal, socially distanced services; the mean number of attendees was 8.

Sadly, the impact of Coronavirus on nursing homes has meant that our regular visits to Westwood Hall and Brimstage Manor have not been able to restart yet. The Vicar was able to join in a special service of carols and say prayers with the residents of Westwood Hall in December.

Children and Families

The Children's Sunday Group was unable to meet in 2021.

Visits by Revd Vicky to Thornton Hough Primary School were put on hold during the lockdown but she managed to stay in touch via Zoom and took special Easter assemblies with Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. In the summer term she went into the school for two afternoon sessions to teach Year 4 pupils about The Bible. She took assemblies in the autumn term on the theme of Resilience and introducing the season of Advent.

She continues to liaise with the school through her role as Governor.

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 but resumed later in the year.

Lent Course

During Lent a group met via Zoom to explore and discuss 'The Bible's Back Roads'.

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 (2020). The PCC at All Saints' consists of: the incumbent (our Vicar), the Churchwardens, elected representatives to the Deanery Synod and elected lay representatives.

In 2021 the PCC membership and Standing Committee membership was as follows

Elected Members of the Laity		Other Members	
Mr P Arch	Until November 2021	Rev. V Barrett*	Vicar (Chairman)
Mrs R Brothwell	Until September 2021	Mrs A Jones*	Churchwarden until May 2021
Mr S Deakin	Until May 2021	Dr P Machin*	Churchwarden
Mrs M Gamble		Mr A Splitt*	Churchwarden From May 2021
Mrs D Hughes*		Dr E Macbeath	Deanery Synod representative
Mr D Jones	Until May 2021	Mr G Allan Price	Deanery Synod representative
Mrs L Russell		Mrs S Stinson* (PCC Secretary)	Deanery Synod representative
Mr I Stinson* (PCC Treasurer)			
Mrs Helen Tankard	From May 2021	<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 2021 PCC meetings were held on 8th February, 15th March, 13th April, 20th April, 23rd May, 15th June, 13th July, 14th September, 12th October, 9th November and 7th December.

The Standing Committee met on 25th February, 1st March, 8th March and 10th September in 2021.

The Annual Meeting was held on 23rd May 2021.

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 2021

2021 was another 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, March and April were held entirely on Zoom. From May the meetings were held in person with an option to use Zoom if requested for those who were still shielding.

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

In addition to the regular items the PCC discussed Worship while we were locked down, the Lent Course, cots2tots (the toddler group) which had been paused due to the pandemic, applications for faculties, 'The Way Ahead', looking at the direction the church was going as we returned to regular patterns of meeting, the collapse of the boundary wall and how we could rebuild it, keeping people safe in church during the pandemic, clergy wellbeing, Harvest Thanksgiving, church activities, social activities and fundraising, offering the use of the Small Hall to the Hope Programme, the closing of St George's United Reformed Church in Thornton Hough, Charitable Giving, the visit of the Bishop of Birkenhead and the Bishop of Stockport to the Deanery and Thornton Hough.

In 2021 the PCC approved gifts of £200 to each of the following charities

Local charities

- Claire House, the local children's hospice. Details can be found at <https://www.clairehouse.org.uk/>.
- Ferries Families Groups. This is a local charity which supports families in crisis, provides peer support, helps to strengthen families etc. More information can be found at: <https://ferriesfamilygroups.org.uk/about-us/>

Overseas Aid

- Mary's Meals. This charity provides life-changing meals to some of the world's poorest children every day they attend school. They use local resources and monitor the provision to ensure that the food gets to the children. More information can be found at <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/what-we-do/>
- The Barnabas Fund. They work to provide hope and aid for the persecuted church, from Christians, to Christians, through Christians. They support Christians in Afghanistan. More information can be found here: <https://barnabasfund.org>

Parish Support

- Simeon's Trustees. They are our patrons and support parishes during vacancies and the clergy.

The Standing Committee

On 25th February the Standing Committee met to discuss the return to church and took the decision to resume services on Passion Sunday, 21st March, with 8:00am Holy Communion and 10:30am Morning Prayer. They also discussed the Annual Meetings and the collapsed wall in Church Road.

On 1st March they convened a meeting to discuss the boundary wall which had collapsed, next to the holm oak stump, and what we should do next. Decisions were taken to enable the project to move forward. A further meeting on 8th March discussed the insurance claim, options for dealing with the wall and the holm oak stump and engaging the church architect to oversee the work. The meeting in September was also called to discuss the wall project.

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 245 4986
Church of England Diocese	Chester	
Charity Registration Number	1131417	

Part 2: Reports from the PCC

8. Electoral Roll Report

On 1st January 2021 there were 95 names on the Electoral Roll.

On December 31st 2021 there were 93 names on the Electoral Roll, 53% resident, 47% non-resident.

Dr Elly Macbeath

9. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

The Fabric, Health and Safety (FHS) Committee co-ordinates works to the church buildings and grounds, focusing on maintenance, refurbishment and Health and Safety concerns. Keeping the church buildings and grounds warm and safe were the Committee's priorities during the year. With the ongoing restrictions due to Coronavirus affecting church activities throughout the year, much of the Committee's energies were spent on ensuring that risk assessments covering the buildings and activities taking place were kept under constant review.

Negotiations to repair the collapsed section of the wall on Church Road in February took up a considerable amount of time and energy throughout the rest of the year.

The Quinquennial Inspection report based on the Church Architect's visit in October 2020 and also including a section on the collapsed wall was finally received in a revised form in May 2021. The summary noted that "the cast iron rainwater goods are now in exceedingly poor condition and are now causing water saturation of the masonry. Their repair / renewal is now essential." Concerns were also raised about the use of red mastic mortar pointing around the church, which has caused damage to the stonework. These two matters will require attention and planning for the considerable costs attached to remedying them.

Some meetings were held via Zoom, whilst others were managed by careful walks round the site and email. The FHS Committee is grateful for the contributions over many years of Darren Jones, who stepped down as Chair of the Fabric Committee in May, Peter Arch, and Derek Machin, who was co-opted to assist with the repairs to the wall. We welcomed Graham Tongue to the Committee. There are also several individuals who have continued to contribute quietly to maintenance tasks helping us to keep the church warm and safe.

Revd Vicky Barrett

9A. Church

The trio of gas boilers which heat the building have required further repairs as well as routine maintenance. Recommendations to seek ways to improve our energy efficiency were made in the Quinquennial Inspection report, however there appear to be few sustainable solutions available at present. Repairs have been undertaken to some of the lights both inside and outside the church and thanks are due to Scirard Lancelyn-Green for his assistance in this matter. Roof tiles have been replaced where they have slipped. Members of the Committee worked to clear some of the drains and vents.

Revd Vicky Barrett

9B. Church grounds

The collapse of the wall on Church Road in February was due to a number of factors, not least the roots of the holm oak tree pressing on the stones and poor weather.

Quotations at considerable cost were received from three companies for repairs, however negotiations with a local contractor offered an alternative. The Vicar applied successfully for financial assistance from the Leverhulme Charitable Trust and the family of a local resident also contributed to the works. We are extremely grateful for their generosity. The existing tree stump was cut down to four inches above ground before Christmas, allowing better access to the remains of the wall. The wall project has been carried out under the supervision of the Church architect, as required by the Diocese.

The maintenance of the churchyard grass, smaller trees and shrubs and the Raby Road graveyard continue to be maintained by contractors. They have removed some shrubs which were blocking drains as part of this process.

Revd Vicky Barrett

9C. Parish Hall and Hirst Cottage

Routine servicing of boilers and safety checks have been undertaken.

Revd Vicky Barrett

10. Wirral South Deanery Synod Report

A service was held at St Mary's Church, Eastham on Wednesday 6th October at 7:30pm. Representatives from the thirteen churches in the Deanery gave reports on activities undertaken and plans for 2021.

Dr. Elly Macbeath
Wirral South Deanery Synod Rep

The Trustees' report to the Charity Commission was approved by the PCC on 15th March 2022.

Part 3: Reports on activities

11. Worship, Prayer and Pastoral Care

Report of the Vicar

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

Psalm 136:1

2021 was a year of lament, change and of many joys. As you read this report, you may find it helpful to read the refrain from Psalm 136 after each paragraph. God's goodness and enduring love embraces all the different seasons through which we have passed through the year.

The continuing impact of Covid marked our lives as a church and individuals. Recorded services remained in place until 21st March. Restrictions on choral and congregational singing and our brief services were difficult to bear, but I am deeply grateful to all who continued to attend and contribute faithfully to the life of our church through this lean time. It has been heartening to see people showing their consideration and care for one another by adhering to the regulations concerning wearing masks, distancing and using hand sanitiser. The way in which everyone coming to Holy Communion services has adopted (and in some cases adapted!) the British Sign Language method of sharing the peace, concentrating on deliberate actions and eye contact is very moving.

There were many funerals through the year. Each one, whether the service is in church or at the crematorium, marks the special nature of the person who has died, and our two well-attended services to remember the Faithful Departed in October offered a reflective space for families to gather. Each person received a plaited set of ribbons to take away as a reminder of the way in which their lives and love were bound together with their loved one and also with the love of God. We remember especially Christine Cade, Colin Thompson, Edith Shepherd, David Woodhouse, Freda Jenkins and Bill Brennan who all passed away in the course of this year.

Our sense of bereavement was compounded by the closure of St George's Church at the end of July. We continue to await further developments as the URC plan their next steps for the building, and welcome all who have made All Saints' their place to worship, whether occasionally or regularly.

The sudden collapse of a section of the boundary wall in Church Road on 23rd February proved to be a particular challenge. We discovered that there are all kinds of labyrinths in church law and insurance, not to mention costs, when trying to tackle what might appear to be a simple repair at first sight. I am grateful to Peter Arch and Derek Machin for their work in handling the repair project, and to the Fabric Team and Standing Committee for their careful scrutiny of details. The Leverhulme Charitable Trust and the family of the late Bill Gault have been most generous in their assistance with the project. We have learned much about teamwork as we care for our church precinct.

Despite all these things, there has been much joy shared. Information Technology has its place: emails continue to enable the prayer team to share concerns and rejoice about answered prayer; Zoom enabled us to gather for committee meetings as well as to explore and discuss 'The Bible's Back Roads' during Lent. Recorded services on YouTube, resources on our church website and mailshots of reflections enabled people to stay connected. It was, however, a great joy to have a full choir and then congregational singing again, and to begin monthly evening services in addition to those in the morning.

Thank you to the choir and our Director of Music for their contribution to our worship and faith journeys.

Church social events have returned in smaller, cautious measures, but with much happiness. Our Harvest celebrations were memorable for the generosity of donations for the Wirral Foodbank, the riot of colour and scent from produce largely gathered from gardens and allotments, and for the wonderful Harvest Lunch, organised with great efficiency and good cheer by Do Mosedale, Margaret Gamble and Pam Machin. Our Coffee and Carols morning in December was a great “warm-up” to Christmas. It has also been good to see ACF resume its activities.

It has been wonderful to return to the joys of celebrating weddings, wedding blessings and baptisms. It is a privilege to share in the happiness of these life events. In addition, it is a privilege to take Holy Communion to those who are housebound, emphasising that if people cannot come to church, the church can come to the people.

Building links with children and young people in the parish remains a priority. I was able to stay in contact with Thornton Hough Village Primary School through Zoom for the first few months of the year, taking special Easter assemblies with Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. Their questions were profound; probably the most memorable being: “If God loves us so much, how come he created slugs and wasps?” I went into school for two afternoon sessions to teach Year 4 pupils about The Bible in the summer term. I have also kept in contact with our local Brownie and Guide groups who meet in the Village Hall. Whilst our plans for the Civic Remembrance Service were dashed at the last minute, we continue to look forward to further shared events in the future. The girls’ creative poppy displays by the West Window and in the Parish Hall were very impressive.

Thank you all for your love, support and forbearance this year. I would like to extend my particular gratitude to Churchwardens Pam Machin and Alan Splitt, to Margaret Gamble and Iain and Sue Stinson; your quiet, faithful hard work and care is much appreciated.

Revd Vicky Barrett

Harvest

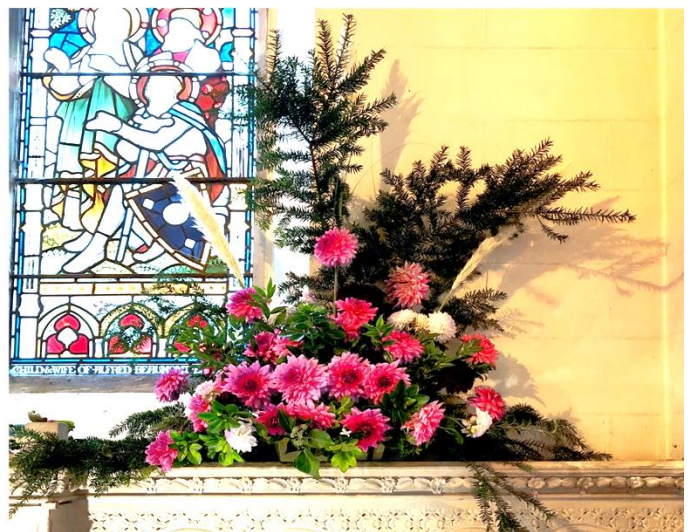
A week of harvest thanksgiving was held between 16th and 25th September. We accepted goods donated for the Wirral Foodbank as part of our thanksgiving. Items were left in the church porch or in the baskets at the back of church. These included specific items requested by the Foodbank such as donations of tinned fish, tinned potatoes, squash, sugar, UHT milk, instant mash, coffee (small jars), jam, cereals, shampoo, deodorant etc. Many thanks to everyone who donated so generously.

Our sincere thanks also go to Margaret Gamble, Caroline Lancelyn Green and their helpers for the wonderful flower arrangements and for making the church look so spectacular.

The donations were delivered to the Foodbank on Monday 27th September by Revd Vicky and were very gratefully received.



Harvest Thanksgiving



12. Report of the Churchwardens

Our year started with Alice Jones and Pamela Machin in post as churchwardens.

Our Annual Meeting of Parishioners and our Annual Parochial Church Meeting were delayed until 23rd May 2021 and at this time Alice Jones stepped down as a churchwarden. We wish to thank her wholeheartedly for her four years of service, a year of which was during interregnum with its extra challenges.

Pamela Machin and Alan Splitt were elected as churchwardens for 2021-22 and sworn into office by our vicar under a special dispensation from Bishop Mark; this was given due to the ongoing pandemic preventing the normal Archdeacon's Visitation Services from going ahead.

Pamela attended the on-line "Training for New Churchwardens" session held on 20th July 2021 and has completed the on-line C of E Safeguarding Training – Basic Awareness and Safeguarding Foundations.

The churchwardens meet with our vicar every three weeks to discuss matters of importance to the church and church family.

Our first church service of 2021 celebrated Epiphany on 3rd January 2021 and was also our last for the next eleven weeks as the church was closed to communal worship due to the pandemic. The church family stayed in touch and supported one another via regular phone calls and on-line services.

The Lenten Reflections went ahead on Zoom and PCC meetings continued, initially on Zoom and later as a hybrid of Zoom plus in-person masked and socially distanced attendances.

Services in church resumed on 21st March 2021 with social distancing, mask wearing by all adults and Holy Communion by simultaneous administration. Track and Trace forms were completed at all services.

Serving of coffee and tea in the Parish Hall after the 10.30am Sunday services resumed on 5th September and a Harvest Lunch with wine was held after the morning service on 19th September. This proved most enjoyable with a good attendance and thanks go to Do Mosedale and Margaret Gamble for helping to make it so successful.

A generous donation of tinned and dried foodstuffs collected in church was delivered by our vicar to the Wirral Foodbank later that week.

A rota of members of the congregation willing to help with serving coffee and tea after the 10.30am Sunday services was re-established on 26th September- many thanks to those who volunteered to be part of this! New volunteers are always welcomed!

On 12th October our PCC addressed the "Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing" – an Act of Synod expressing the view of the Church of England on issues relating to clergy care and wellbeing. We had a thoughtful and wide ranging discussion, initially without our vicar present and then with her participation and hopefully this has raised our awareness of problems that can arise and of our responsibility to recognise and address them.

On 23rd October 2021 members of our congregation who had expressed their willingness to act as sidespersons met in church for a question and answer session relating to their specific duties and responsibilities.

We are planning training sessions on Safeguarding and on First Aid and Using a Defibrillator. The "Guide for Sidespersons" booklet has been extensively updated and a small library of useful information is now available in the Vicar's Vestry.

After our meeting there was a light-hearted "Church Knowledge Quiz", a tour of the Church building and a sumptuous Afternoon Tea in the Parish Hall. Thank you to Margaret Gamble for the delicious roulade!

We are always looking for new recruits, training is readily available and you will not be left on your own to cope!

Following the meeting a sidesperson rota has now been re-established and we are most grateful to those who have agreed to serve.

On Sunday 31st October we commemorated the Faithful Departed in 2 well attended services at 2.30pm and 4pm. This was arranged in order to be able to maintain Covid-safe social distancing.

Remembrance Sunday on 14th November was commemorated in church by the customary 2 minutes silence at 11am. Unfortunately, the usual afternoon service at the Thornton Hough War Memorial followed by its continuation in our church had to be cancelled at short notice due to concerns following an explosion in Liverpool suspected to be linked to terrorism.

We were delighted to welcome our Diocese's two relatively new Bishops, Bishop Julie of Birkenhead and Bishop Sam of Stockport to All Saints' on 30th November along with other clergy in our deanery. Bishop Sam presided over a short service of Holy Communion which was followed by lunch in the Parish Hall. After lunch Revd Vicky took the Bishops to meet the Headmaster of our local Primary School and some of the pupils and following that the Churchwardens and Vicky took Bishop Julie and Bishop Sam on a guided tour of our Parish.

Our Christmas services began on 28th November with a wonderful rendering of Advent Carols by our Choir and our Director of Music Iain Stinson.

On Saturday 4th December Iain and the Choir again delighted us with their "Christmas Coffee and Carols" event held in the Parish Hall. This included Carol singing by all, a most amusing reading by Di Hughes of an alternative interpretation of the "12 Days of Christmas", a quiz, a raffle and of course coffee and mince pies. It was well attended and hugely enjoyable.

Christmas services also included our Christingle Service on 12th December, our Service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas on 19th December, "Midnight Holy Communion on 24th December, Holy Communion on Christmas Morning and Morning Prayer on the first Sunday of Christmas.

Many thanks to our Vicar, Director of Music and Choir for all their hard work.

Thanks also to all who help out in ways large and small to keep our church a warm and welcoming gathering place to meet each other and to meet with God.

**Pamela Machin and Alan Splitt
Churchwardens**

13. Verger's Report

The verger was in attendance at 15 funerals and 6 weddings/blessings during 2021.

It was a strange time as we had to ask congregations to sanitise their hands and to wear a mask. Numbers were reduced in the earlier part of the year but the weddings we had in December were attended by large numbers of guests.

Parish Hall

We were very lucky to have Gill Woods (Stepping Out) who, when allowed, used the hall for her dance class making sure she stuck to Covid guidelines. In November other groups started up: Birkenhead North Cycle Club, Thornton Hough Fishing Club, Weight Watchers and church activities. We were able to have coffee after church, ACF, Coffee Mornings, even Christmas 'Coffee and Carols' with the choir getting us into the Christmas spirit.

The PCC very kindly allowed the Hope Charity to use the hall for their meetings. This group helps people who have had cancer and need to meet to talk about how they are getting on; this has been very much appreciated.

**Margaret Gamble
Verger**

14. Safeguarding

We continue giving high priority to Safeguarding at All Saints' Thornton Hough. Posters are on display in Church and the Parish Hall, giving local safeguarding contact details and safeguarding information can be easily found on our website. The Model Safeguarding Checklist provided by the House of Bishops, prompts ongoing reviews to ensure that information is currently correct, and this has been carried out.

No new DBS checks have been required during the year, but two renewals have been submitted. From January 2022, the DBS renewal period recommended by the Diocese will be shortened from 5 to 3 years. This means that as we move away from the pandemic situation, with its restrictions on some church activities, more DBS checks will be needed.

There is renewed emphasis on Safeguarding Training in the Diocese and this training should be repeated at 3 yearly intervals. Therefore I am repeating and extending my own training. This has been online, with Zoom courses booked for 2022. I, along with Revd Vicky Barrett, have been in discussion with the Diocese about the delivery of training for parishioners who have a strong preference for "face to face" training.

Linda M Arch

15. Families ministries

Children's Sunday School Group

There have been no meetings of the Group since March 2020.

Linda M Arch

16. Choir and music 2021

2021 began with the celebration of The Epiphany; we sang Harold Darke's beautiful setting of "In the bleak midwinter". A great start to 2021. However, immediately after Epiphany, with the infection rate from Covid-19 again increasing rapidly, services at All Saints' were again paused.

Working with the Vicar, with some individual sing

ers from the choir, and using some recordings (from St. Martin's Singers), we produced recorded services (and meditations) which were made available via YouTube on Sunday mornings. Links to the services were added to our website and members of the church's contact list were notified by email when they were published. These services took us from the first Sunday of Epiphany through to Easter Day. They were watched by around 40 or so people each week giving continuity to our worshipping community.

When government restrictions were eased once more, it was with great joy that we were able to return to "In person" worship on the Palm Sunday. Initially only the choir was allowed to sing, and it was not really until later that the congregation could also join in with the singing. There was one point during this period when, because of poorly drafted regulations, the number of choristers taking part each week had to be constrained to six. But by September, musically things were returning to a more "normal" state, though face coverings were worn in church when not singing throughout the remainder of 2021.

The choir has continued to lead the worship at All Saints' whenever it has been possible throughout the year. Our numbers are now reduced; Maureen Thompson moved away, Judi Cooke (and Ciara and Ruby) have not been able to return to us, Kerry Hughes has found that with now working fulltime she is unable to join us, and Brian Jenkins has retired from the choir. We are very grateful to all of these choristers who have given so much to support the worship at All Saints' over a number of years. We wish them every blessing. We have been encouraged that Helen Tankard has joined the choir again, having been a chorister at All Saints' in her teens. We are always keen to welcome new and indeed returning members to the choir. If you know anyone who would enjoy joining us, please let me know.

To reduce the risk of infection, the length of our services has been shortened and only a few evening services took place in 2021; this has made it more difficult to maintain our repertoire. However, the choir has provided an anthem (or special item) at most services. In addition to the normal weekly 10:30am service, we sang two choral evensong services and provided the music for the services commemorating the faithful departed. On Advent Sunday the choir led a service of Readings and Music for Advent and on December 23rd led our Service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas. Our repertoire covers a wide range of different types and styles of church music; in 2021 we sang works by Byrd, Tallis, Mozart, Schubert, Attwood, Stanford, Elgar, How, Rutter, Kendrick, Bell, Chilcott etc.

I would like to thank all the members of the choir (including the Vicar) for their support and commitment to providing the best music we can at All Saints'. I would particularly like to thank Val Splitt, ably assisted by Alan, for the work she carries out as our music librarian.

The last two years have been particularly challenging. We look forward with the hope that 2022 might not be disrupted by measures to limit the impact of the pandemic, and that we may continue to "make a joyful song to the Lord!"

Iain Stinson
Director of Music



The Harvest Lunch



17. Bible Study Group

The Bible Study group managed to meet for some of the year on the fourth Monday of each month in members' homes. Unfortunately, the group had to stop due to the lockdown and high Covid rates.

We were 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 again in March 2022 and to continue with our study of Acts.

Shirley McEvoy

18. Events

Covid restrictions made it challenging to organise events this year but we were able to meet together for a Harvest lunch after our service for Harvest Thanksgiving in September.

In December we held a light-hearted "Coffee and Carols" with music led by the choir, a quiz and a raffle which gave us an opportunity to come together and enjoy ourselves in a socially distanced way.

Practical Ministries

19. Parish magazine

The editors Patsy Baker, Revd Vicky Barrett, Brian Morris and Iain Stinson have tried to produce a magazine which is interesting and informative to its readers and especially to members of the parish. We have kept the parishioners informed of what is happening at our church through the events page, 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 are of interest to a wider audience. Our thanks go to regular and occasional contributors who make the magazine so varied. We hope that readers gain comfort from the articles in the magazine in these difficult times.

During 2021 six editions of the magazine were printed and circulated as in previous years and a copy placed on the website.

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. We are very grateful for these donations and for the contributions from the advertisers. Printing and the co-ordination of 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 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, Oxtun, Willaston, Chester, Port Sunlight, and as far afield as Evershot, Hornby (near Lancaster) and Broadstone (in Dorset). 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 for consideration with all the other articles.

The Editors

20. 2022 Thornton Hough Calendar

Following the successful 2020 and 2021 calendars, a 2022 Thornton Hough Calendar was produced and printed with thanks to the support provided by Sue and Iain Stinson. Contributions of photographs of our beautiful village and neighbourhood were requested via the pulpit and through the bi-monthly magazine. After much deliberation, Revd Vicky and I selected twelve photographs from a large group depicting views of our beautiful parish at different times in the year. Once again over 200 copies were printed and sent to many parts of the country and far-off lands.

We were indebted to 10 local businesses and companies who each sponsored a month 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 once again sold many calendars to friends and family. 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 2023 so we hope that many new and old photos will come to light during the Spring and Summer of 2022 and sent to us for consideration.

Brian Morris on behalf of the Calendar team

21. Website report 2021

The church website continues to be an important element of our communications strategy. It provides information about our church, contact details and includes a calendar of services and events taking place at All Saints'. We announce any last-minute changes to planned events and services on our home page. We publish copies of The Magazine on the website for those who prefer to read online; this also provides a growing record of our activities over recent years.

During 2021, when we paused "In person services" because of the pandemic (from the Sunday after Epiphany to Easter Sunday), we used the website to keep in touch with those of our congregation who use the Internet. As we did in 2020, we provided spiritual resources for people to use at home. These included recorded services and meditations (written by our Vicar) and were a way of trying to keep our worshipping community together (albeit virtually). These resources, along with those published in 2020, are still available on the website (look at Spiritual Resources on the home page).

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. If you are not on that list, please consider subscribing (from the link on the home page of the website). Because some of our congregation opted to be contacted by post rather than email, as in 2020, we sent printed copies of the meditations written by Vicky to those individuals.

We made use of an online booking form (accessible from the website) to allow people to book seats at our services commemorating the faithful departed and for the Christmas Carol Service.

The website continues to be an important communications tool. 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, due to Covid, we didn't have a flower rota, but we were very grateful to the members of the congregation who volunteered to have a go at arranging flowers for the altar. Flowers for Christmas, Easter and harvest were donated.

We are very sorry that Jane Wilson hasn't been able to help this year and we would like to thank her for all her help over the last few years.

Margaret Gamble

23. ACF Report for 2021

During 2021 our meetings were once again affected by the covid pandemic. However, I am pleased to say that we were able to resume in September and achieved our last four meetings of the year. We regularly had fifteen members join us each month and also welcomed visitors depending on the speaker and the subject. All speakers receive a fee and we also had generous donations from individuals on the day of the talk.

We continue to follow the five principles of:

Fellowship Worship Service Study Giving

Before our talks we hold a short service with a hymn, Bible reading and prayers.

I would like to thank all those members who help out each month with these, and also those who look after refreshments.

In September we had Ann Barlow from the Children's Society who gave us a detailed history of the Charity from when it was formed in 1881 up until the present day. Ann also gave us an update about the BEAM project which was set up in the Midlands to provide a drop-in service for young people. She also gave us some statistics for Wirral of children living in poverty and with mental health issues.

One of our ACF members Elly Macbeath took us on a 5772-mile train journey at our October Meeting on the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to Vladivostok. We were shown pictures of wonderful scenery and had our appetites whetted with photographs of local food.

In November we were treated to a journey through the history of Christmas music from our Musical Director Iain Stinson. We listened to music of contrasting styles from the earliest times up until present day.

Our final meeting of the year in December was a social event with hearty singing of our favourite Christmas Carols. This was followed by festive refreshments with mince pies and homemade cake.

The talks were varied in content, but we all came away having learnt something new.

Helen Tankard

24. Coffee Morning Report 2021

These were also able to resume in September and were well attended. We were able to hold a raffle each month as well as a well-stocked sales table selling cards, jams, marmalades, home-made cake and cottage pies. These events raised a goodly sum each month which will be used to support charities in 2022.

Helen Tankard