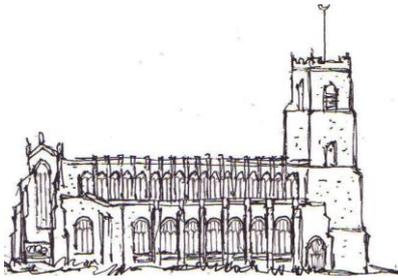


+

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich



**SOLE ⊕ BAY
CHURCHES**

BLYTHBURGH • REYDON • SOUTH COVE
SOTHERTON • SOUTHWOLD • UGGESHALL
WALBERSWICK • WANGFORD CUM HENHAM



**Annual Report and Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council of
Holy Trinity Church
Blythburgh, Suffolk
for the year ended 31 December 2019**

Front cover photograph:

Revd Malcolm Doney leads morning worship in the ruins of Blythburgh Priory on 'Blythburgh Day', 4 August 2019

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Holy Trinity Blythburgh has the responsibility of cooperating with the Team Rector and Team Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to share in worship and parish life at Holy Trinity. Our services and worship try to put faith into practice through prayer, sacrament, scripture and music.

In line with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion, we try to help people to live out their faith through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Missionary and outreach work, including a very important ministry to visitors to the church (estimated at 12-15,000 per year)

We are part of the Sole Bay Team Ministry, a group of 8 parishes sharing two full time clergy, and so we work with our friends across these parishes to pursue these objectives.

Our magnificent Grade I listed church building has a vital role to play in our ministry, being generally acknowledged as an exceptional holy space, and a beacon to those travelling through the village on the A12. It is therefore important that we maintain its fabric in a responsible and sensitive way, acknowledging its history while ensuring its continued relevance in the 21st century.

We take safeguarding seriously and the Parochial Church Council has adopted the Church of England's national policy 'Promoting a Safer Church'. There were no safeguarding incidents reported during 2019.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

In 2015, our Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich adopted a vision for growth, 'Growing in God'. This has four elements:

- **Growing in Depth** – responding to the call of Christ in every part of our lives
- **Growing in Number** – drawing contacts we have into the life of God's kingdom
- **Growing in Influence** – reaching beyond ourselves in our impact on the wider world
- **Growing Younger** – building churches whose age range reflects our communities

Since 2017 our Annual Reports have been structured according to the four 'Growing in God' headings and the same headings are used in this report.

Growing in depth

Our church is open every day between 9am and 6pm for private prayer, and we know from the many contributions to our prayer board and our visitor book that this opportunity is much appreciated.

Our pattern of Sunday services remained the same as in the last four years. The Blythburgh and Walberswick congregations join together for Holy Communion on the morning of the first Sunday of the month at Walberswick and on the second Sunday at Blythburgh. Choral evensong, led by the Blythburgh Singers, takes place on the first Sunday of the month. On the third Sunday of the month we have continued with lay-led Morning Prayer, sometimes using Book of Common Prayer, sometimes Common Worship, and on the fourth Sunday we

have a service of Holy Communion using the Book of Common Prayer. As well as these regular services, we hold a service in the ruins of Blythburgh Priory each year as part of 'Blythburgh Day', and an annual service for the Blessing of Animals. Thus, within our limited resources, we offer a range of worship styles that we hope will appeal to as many as possible of the community we serve.

In a new departure, in place of choral evensong in May the Blythburgh Singers sang the Schubert Mass in G accompanied by strings and organ in the context of a Book of Common Prayer communion service. This was a great success, and we are hoping to do something similar again in the future.

Our thanks to all who make sure that the cycle of worship in Holy Trinity is maintained: lay people who greet the congregation, those who read the lessons, lead intercessions and morning prayer, and administer the chalice, those who lead our music, particularly Patsy Murray and Alison Evans our organists and the Blythburgh Singers with their director Ellis Bell and organist Jonathan Palman, our teams of bell ringers drawn for special occasions from across Suffolk and most of all our hard-working clergy. In particular we are indebted to Revd Malcolm Doney, who describes himself as 'retired' but without whose willingness to conduct the lion's share of services at Blythburgh we would probably only be able to offer half the number of services that we currently hold.

Growing in Number

At the 2019 APCM, there were 39 people on the church electoral roll, of whom 28 were resident in the parish. This was an increase of 7 compared with the previous year. This very pleasing increase has been reflected in increased attendance at 'normal' morning services which has risen from an average of 14 to nearer 20. Congregations are much larger at major festivals, when we are joined by occasional worshippers from the village and a large number of holiday-makers. For example, we estimate that around 500 people came to one or more of our services during Advent and Christmas – Advent carol service, lessons and carols, crib service, Midnight Communion and Christmas Day Family Service. We are only able to offer this range of services thanks to the willingness of Revd Malcolm Doney and lay people to lead them. Representatives of village organisations read the lessons at our service of Lessons and Carols, making this more of a community event, and once again this year the church was packed.

Holy Trinity is one of the best known churches in Suffolk, and indeed in England, and is therefore much visited, being in all the standard guidebooks. Thus our ministry to visitors is an important part of our mission. We do this through ensuring that Christian literature etc is available on our bookstall, and taking opportunities to provide interpretation of the church as a place of 21st century worship as well as historically significant. Since autumn 2018, Colin Huggins, a neighbour of the church, has acted as a voluntary guide to the church building. He makes himself available each Thursday morning for anyone who turns up. Over 250 appreciative 'customers' took up this offer in 2019.

Growing in Influence

Holy Trinity is an outward looking congregation. The collections from all the additional services over Christmas were divided between the Salvation Army and the NSPCC, £685 being sent to each. We also made special collections for Four Paws at our Blessing of Animals service, and for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust at our Harvest Festival service. Our Traidcraft stall continues to enjoy a steady turnover of foodstuffs amounting to £1,565 for the year.

In 2018 the PCC decided not only to make special collections for named charities but also to donate 10 per cent of our general income to charity. From our income in 2019, donations were made to the Amos Trust and The Loft youth project in Southwold for the third year running, and also to our link Diocese of Kagera, Tanzania, and to Talitha Koum, a charity based in Ipswich which provides housing and other support for vulnerable women.

The PCC charges only a nominal fee when the church is hired for events whose purpose is to raise funds for charities whose objectives are aligned with those of the Church of England. During 2019, the profits from a concert given by Anam Cora, a group of meditative singers, were donated to Combat Stress (£350).

We have a strong presence and established connections with our wider community. Our café and mini-market continued to take place on the last Friday of each month from March through to October, providing a welcome meeting place both for village residents and visitors. Its popularity grew during the year, with all available stalls being booked most months. The Christmas Market took place in the church for the sixth time at the end of November and is also now an established feature of the run-up to Christmas within the local area. The Blythburgh Horticultural Society uses the church for their events, holding their Summer Show at the end of July.

People come together within the walls of Holy Trinity not just on joyful occasions but on sad ones too. Notable funerals held in 2019 were for the Chair of our Parish Council, David Tytler, who had done much to develop the village's community spirit, and also of Professor John Allen, the village's oldest resident. We were also privileged to be chosen by Ian Morgan, late Archdeacon of Suffolk, for his memorial service held in November.

A variety of concerts took place in the church, ranging from the experimental 'We are Sound' in which the audience were blindfolded in order to have a greater appreciation of the sound, to performances by Tenebrae and the cellist Alisa Wielerstein as part of the Aldeburgh Festival. From within the local community, the church was used for concerts by St Felix School, and the 'Love to Sing' Community Choir.

For the first time, the Inspired by Becker Art Society held its annual exhibition in the church in August 2019, having used Wenhaston Church in the past. The Society is dedicated to the life and work of local artist Harry Becker (1865 - 1928) who, with his daughter Janet, is buried in the churchyard, so in many ways this was a homecoming. In another 'first', the church hosted 'Blythburgh's got talent', an eclectic exhibition of artwork produced by Blythburgh residents, from stage sets to ceramics and from quilts to woodcuts. The village amazed itself by the wealth of talent on display!

Growing Younger

Although the age profile of our congregation favours the over 60s rather than the under 40s, to a large extent this reflects the demographic profile of the area. Our activities for children are relatively limited, focussed mainly on the major festivals of the church. We hold a crib service each year on Christmas Eve, which in 2019 was attended by 10 children, and we welcomed around 20 children to our Easter Garden activity and Easter Egg hunt, held on Good Friday.

We also welcome young couples to marry in our church, and to bring their children for baptism. These are often families who do not live in the area but have close connections with it. Six weddings and one baptism took place in 2019.

Ecumenical activities

The Sole Bay Team Ministry collectively is a member of Christians Together in Southwold, Reydon and District. Brenda Motley, a member of our congregation, is on the Christians Together committee. Events during 2019 followed the usual pattern of keeping the Gospel message heard in the Sole Bay area from the Methodist, URC, Anglican and Catholic churches, and sometimes the Salvation Army. Lent lunches, Lent lectures, Lent house groups and the Good Friday Walk of Witness organised by Christians Together were all well supported.

The Advent Festival held in the URC went well and raised £400 for Crisis, though unfortunately it is held on the same day as the Blythburgh Christmas Market. Carol singing

took place in the High Street in a biting easterly wind accompanied by the Salvation Army band.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in early 2020 was marked by a service at the Sacred Heart Catholic church conducted by their new priest, Father Richard Ireson, followed by a soup lunch.

Christians Together also support the local foodbanks, and stocks were low during most of the year.

Church building and fabric

In recognition of the substantial time that the PCC was spending on issues connected with the church building, the churchyard and the church car park, in January 2019 it decided to set up a Fabric sub-committee. Chaired by the Fabric Officer, the committee's remit is to take forward detailed discussion of fabric issues to put together proposals to the PCC and to take responsibility for minor works, to allow the PCC to concentrate on strategic fabric issues.

A Quinquennial Inspection of the fabric of the church took place in May 2018. No major issues were identified, but a programme of minor repair work was agreed by the PCC. It proved difficult to find a builder willing to tender for this rather mixed bag of work, but a contract was signed with Cooper and Denny in autumn 2019, and the work began in early 2020.

During 2019, as in 2018, the main activity was the conservation, repair and reglazing of a further aisle window on the south side. The reglazing work was funded by an individual donor. It remains the PCC's long term aim to replace opaque with clear glazing in all windows in the church. Discussions began about the possible clear-glazing of the East window above the high altar, which would be a major project but which the Friends of Holy Trinity have indicated that they would be willing to grant fund.

Other activity in 2019 included a large number of relatively small projects. A new contractor was found to carry out routine clearance of gutters and drainpipes. Work was carried out to lop and prune trees around the churchyard perimeter. The church's floodlights were re-cabled which, we hope, will improve the resilience of the system, and the bollard light was replaced in the car park. Various other improvements were made to the car park, including concreting the entrance and lopping etc of trees and clearance of bushes and undergrowth around the perimeter in order to make best use of the space. Plans to improve access to the churchyard from the carpark were drawn up. A faculty was obtained for an additional noticeboard in the church porch, which was installed in early 2020.

During the year, a faculty was obtained for upgrading the church's lightning protection, with the work likely to take place in 2020.

Remedial work on the pipe organ by Bishop and Sons, which began in 2017 and continued throughout 2018, was finally completed in summer 2019 and the final payment made at the end of the year. We hope that the instrument will now more nearly match the quality of the music at our monthly choral evensong.

Our grateful thanks go to our teams of volunteer church cleaners who come together once a month to dust, polish and sweep, to Margaret Nichols for ensuring that the toilets are kept clean and stocked, and to Sue Ireland-Cutting and her helpers Claire Orr-Ewing and Diana Shaw Cotterill who decorated Holy Trinity with flowers during the year and on special festivals. We are also very grateful to Terry Goss who as usual provided a huge Christmas tree and, with help from Sue, decorated it superbly.

Church Bells

Although Holy Trinity does not have a permanent band of ringers, nevertheless ringing took place on **30 occasions** during 2019. We are very grateful to Peggy Meredith, our Tower Correspondent, for coordinating requests for and from ringers that ensure that our bells continue to ring out across the village.

The tower hosted 5 visiting bands (Isle of Man ringers, Newton Abbot ringers, Norfolk ringers (3 bands), Southwold ringers and Ringing & cycling ringers). Thanks to the willingness of local towers to assist, all requests for ringing at wedding services were met (7 in total). Eight quarter peals were rung, including on 23 August rung as part of the IBBAS exhibition (see above); one timed as wedding ringing; and one unsuccessful.

Ringing took place on four special occasions: on Maundy Thursday in response to the request from the Prime Minister and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to ring in solidarity with Notre Dame following the devastating fire in Paris on 15 April; for the Sole Bay Team Ascension Day service; for the memorial service for Archdeacon Ian; and for the annual candlelit Carol Service

The North East District of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers continued to ring the bells regularly, alternating monthly practices with quarter peals.

The Bells Fund exists to pay for essential maintenance work such as the replacement of bellropes and sallies. It benefits from tower fees of £40 paid as part of the fee paid by wedding couples, and from donations made by visiting ringers. Until 2019, this fund was held in a separate building society account, but during the year this was closed and the monies are now held within the main church bank account. £1,464 was transferred and income of £411 was received during the year, resulting in an end-year balance of £1,875. No expenditure was necessary, thanks to the willingness of a local member of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers and formerly on their Maintenance Committee who has kindly carried out minor maintenance for us at no charge. Peggy Meredith also initiated the clearing out of accumulated rubbish from the upper levels of the tower, no mean feat.

Financial Review

The 2019 accounts remain on an Accruals basis. We are most grateful to Ensors for examining them and reducing their charges for doing so. The Treasurer would also like to thank Margaret Nichols for her continued help with the preparation of the bank paying-in.

General Fund

Receipts totalled £33,881 compared with £37,406 the previous year. The 2018 figures were inflated by a legacy of £1,500, and a higher than usual level of donations (mainly donations in memory of Tom and Gill Lond-Caulk). Also, income from concert and exhibition fees was nearly 50 per cent lower than in 2018, with fewer Aldeburgh Festival concerts and only one as part of the Alwyn Festival compared with seven in 2018. Income from church fees and from the Church Farm House endowment fund also fell compared with 2018. More positively, gift aided planned giving rose by over 25 per cent and tax recoverable through gift aid rose accordingly, as a result of the PCC's request to members of the congregation to review their giving. Income from the café and mini market and the Christmas Market also rose substantially, by nearly 50 per cent.

Total expenditure in 2019 rose to £36,874 compared with £33,728 the previous year. Parish Share, which we paid in full, was the largest single item at £12,000, the same as in 2018. Donations to charities (£3,200) were less than in 2018, because 2018 donations included tithes in relation to 2017 as well as 2018 income (£3,350 and £3,950 respectively). However, substantially more was spent on churchyard upkeep, with major work being carried out on

the trees around its perimeter, and also on fixtures and fittings – for example new floor covering for the ringing chamber, new altar linen and more folding tables.

The overall result was a deficit of £2,992, the first recorded for seven years, but one which was planned by the PCC and considered to be manageable considering the funds accumulated over the last few years. Despite this deficit the General Fund ended the year with a balance of £24,660.

Reserves Policy

The PCC's reserves policy is to maintain a reserve of 50 per cent of annual expenditure in the General Fund, in line with Charity Commission guidelines. This policy is more than fulfilled taking into account unrestricted and designated fund balances. However, the PCC considers it to be prudent to carry this level of reserves knowing that in due course it will become necessary to re-lead the north aisle roof, which is likely to cost in the order of £200k.

Restricted, Designated and Endowment Funds

Our main restricted fund is Fabric I. The main expenditure from this fund in 2019 was for the repair, reglazing and stained glass conservation of another south aisle window (SAS4). Most of these costs were covered by an individual gift aided donation. The fund also benefited from a grant from the Friends of Holy Trinity to cover the costs of stonework repairs and stained glass conservation associated with the reglazing of window SAS5 in the previous year. The main regular item of expenditure from this fund was the insurance premium of £3,419.

The Fabric I Fund benefits from the proceeds from the bookstall and other donations through the wall box, which in 2019 totalled £7,991, a fall of around £500 compared with 2018 and a continuation of a fairly steep downward trend over the last few years. At the end of the year, the PCC purchased a contactless donation terminal which, it is hoped, will reverse this trend. The closing balance on the fund was £15,875.

Our scheme for sponsorship of the church floodlights continued to be popular, with sponsorship now in place for 24 weeks of the year. The scheme raised £531 (including gift aid) compared with £431 the previous year: this restricted fund is then used to offset the cost of electricity.

A new restricted fund was set up in 2019 to contribute to the costs of maintaining the bells, as described above. The fund stood at £1,875 at the end of the year.

The majority of the designated Fabric II Fund continued to be invested in a Hargreaves-Lansdown managed portfolio. In 2019 it generated income of £6,717, up by 15 per cent compared with 2018. However, it also recorded a loss in value of £1,724, though this was much less than the loss of £14,227 in 2018.

This fund was used to pay for cost of the pipe organ remedial work (£4,018), the recabling of the floodlights (£5,935) and improvements to the car park entrance (£1,031). The closing balance of the fund was £200,878.

The main movement in our endowment funds was a fall of 1.0 per cent in the capital value of the Church Farm House Fund, compared with a fall of 6.8 per cent during 2018 and increases of 3.8 and 3.2 per cent during 2017 and 2016 respectively.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The PCC met six times during the course of the year with an average attendance level of 85 per cent. Discussions concerned the planning and implementation of the life of the Church, finance, and the maintenance of the fabric of the church building.

Committees of the Parochial Church Council:

Standing Committee: The only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

Membership: PCC Chairman, Wardens, Secretary and Treasurer.

Meeting of the Standing Committee: The committee did not need to meet during the year.

Fabric Committee: This committee was set up in January 2019 with a remit:

- To develop proposals to bring to the PCC for repair and enhancement
- To ensure that PCC decisions for repair and enhancement are carried out efficiently and effectively
- To have delegated authority from the PCC to commission minor maintenance works required (below the value of £1,000 including VAT)
- To review relevant risk assessments and to draw the attention of the PCC to any issues

In respect of the church building, churchyard, church car park and the associated fixed facilities (eg lighting, toilets, organ).

Membership: Fabric Officer (chair), Churchwarden, Treasurer, 2 additional members of PCC

Meeting of the Standing Committee: The committee met 5 times during the year, each time reporting back to the PCC.

Deanery Synod and Team Council

Charles Morris is our representative on both Deanery Synod and the Sole Bay Team Council and Jenny Allen is also on the Team Council *ex officio* as Team Treasurer. These provide the PCC with important links to the wider structures of the church.

Administrative information

Holy Trinity Church is situated in Church Lane, Blythburgh (IP19 9LL). It is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and a member of the Sole Bay Team Ministry. The address for correspondence is The Vicarage, Gardner Road, Southwold, IP18 6HJ. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission. PCC members who served during 2019 were:

Ex Officio members:

- Revd Canon Simon Pitcher (Team Rector and Chair)
- Churchwarden: Mrs Meryl Doney
- Deanery Synod Representative: Mr Charles Morris

Elected members:

- Mrs Roselyn Crane
- Mr Peter Coghill (Lay vice chair)
- Mr Arthur Pooley
- Dr Paul Simmons (Fabric Officer)
- Dr Susan Powell
- Mrs Sally East

Co-opted members

- Revd Malcolm Doney
- Mrs Jenny Allen (Treasurer and Secretary)

Approved by the PCC on 23 March 2020



Chairman