

ALL SAINTS, STRANTON CHURCH HARTLEPOOL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2018



Rooted in God's love,
Growing together with Jesus,
Branching out in the power of the Spirit.

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Norman Shave (Vicar and chair of PCC)

*'Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures for ever' Ps 106 verse 1*

As I reflect on 2018 my first instinct is to echo the words of the psalmist and bring thanksgiving and praise to God. Yes, first and foremost, we give thanksgiving and praise to God for his eternal loving faithfulness. Yet alongside this we give thanks for how he has been at work amongst us over the past year.

Early in 2018 we had very few children attending our 10.30am morning service. But as the year has gone on a number of families have joined this congregation and we have seen a significant increase in the number of children attending. This is not without its challenges, but God loves each every person no matter what their age and we need to continue to invest in this ministry. I would like to thank the Sunday club leaders for their contribution to this ministry. Another ministry that has seen increasing numbers is Messy Church, thank you again to the team. The 8.30am congregation has continued to flourish with a few new folk joining this congregation too. Visitors often comment on the warm welcome they receive when they come to this congregation. The actual numbers here are stable. Some of the elderly members are now unable to attend regularly because of health reasons. At least 5 long term church members have died during the calendar year. While such events are tinged with sadness we also give thanks for the faith and loving service we have seen in these individuals over many years.

Another priority over the year has been to 'Bless Burbank'. This has been expressed in a number of ways with a commitment to the Burbank community, Ward Jackson Primary School and Burbank Community Church. In June our link missionaries Festo and Grace Kanunga spent a day in school and then in July the Nassau bay mission team were involved in an 'America Day' on 4 July and the following day we held a barbeque for over 100 folk linked with the school. This year has been a very encouraging year for Ward Jackson Primary School with some very positive results. The school is now awaiting the next Ofsted when we anticipate it will receive a 'Good' judgement. Clive and Angela continue to serve with faith and love in all aspects of this work. The summer also saw the ordinations of both Clive Hall and Michelle Delves, again we give thanks for their respective ministries amongst us.

Our ministry to asylum seekers, often from an Iranian background, has continued over the year. It seems that this comes in waves. A group of 7 asylum seekers joined us early in the year and then a further group of 6 arrived in the autumn. The great majority of those who worship with us are converts to Christianity from Islam and as such they are given permission to remain as refugees. This work is time consuming and also at times demanding. However the joy of seeing those who request it baptised and also the joy of being granted asylum are immense. I personally find it frustrating that so many of our friends choose to relocate when they can but I think this is entirely understandable. Do pray that God will give us the resources we need to continue this ministry. I would also like to pay tribute to Jean Waller for amazing work amongst a much larger group of asylum seekers in the town and also Roger who continues to offer English practice in Church and the Peoples Centre for those who wish to attend. As a church we continue to support Roger by paying the rent for the people's centre.

Another key aspect of our work is in and through St Matthew's Community Centre. The hall remains a well-used facility by both the Church and the wider community. During the last year the plans to build a kitchen and accessible toilet extension have come to fruition. The Hall Committee received a two grants (£80,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation Anniversary Fund and £20,000 from Impetus) and an anonymous gift which mean we are moving forward with the extension as planned improving our facilities significantly. Our thanks go to all the members of the committee who have enabled this to happen.

Our Church fellowship is also enriched by 3 home groups, the Iranian bible study group, and the Mother's Union. Thank you to all who host groups, arrange meetings and prepare studies. The pastoral group also continues to enrich our fellowship through administering home communion and visiting the Housebound. Thank you.

Reports on the Church finances and fabric will be written in detail elsewhere, but I would like to thank all involved in PCC over the last year and in particular the our Church wardens Angela and Peter as well as all involved in our finances, including those who count and bank the money alongside Maureen and David. I give thanks that all our financial needs were met during the year and additionally the gift day means that £4000 is available for the first part of accessibility work later this year. Towards the end of the year PCC took the difficult decision to reduce our budget largely by reducing Parish Share. We remain committed to investing in all aspects of our mission and ministry. This meant despite the reductions and economies we set a deficit budget for 2019. This has subsequently been communicated to the wider congregation in March 2019. Safeguarding is another key priority. Our thanks goes to Barbara Butcher who stood down from coordinating our DBS applications in the autumn to be replaced by Heather Jennett. Barbara has done a careful and detailed piece of work in this area for many years, thank you.

The Hartlepool Deanery plan was agreed late in 2017. During 2018 we therefore spent a considerable amount of time in consultation with St Luke's and St Aidan's with St Columba's. Towards the end of the year the proposal emerged to form a group between the three parishes. The hard work in the consultation phase meant that the next part of the process passed really quickly and the group came into being on 1 February 2019 with Bishop Paul leading a celebration and Licensing at St Aidan's Church on 17 February this year. Rev Andrew Craig continues to play a key role in the group through his continued ministry at St Luke's. He has now indicated his intention to retire in August 2019. Andrew has been part of the parish for many years and has worked as a non-stipendiary ordained minister for 15 years. We will celebrate Andrew's ministry amongst us later in the year but for now we would like to say thank you.

Looking forward I am sure the coming year will bring its share of joys and sorrows. As a parish and part of the central Hartlepool group we have committed to become a resourcing Church for mission. The application process has started and if successful will involve considerable investment in mission from July 2020. Within the group we have also embarked on a process of reviewing our service times seeking to ensure good quality worship on Sunday mornings across all three parishes. If agreed the proposed changes will come in on 1 September 2019. But whatever happens in the coming year we worship the living God whose 'love endures for ever'. In our parish life together may we continue to give thanks to God and bring glory to his name.

Norman

March 2019

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

All Saints, Stranton Church is situated in Church Row, Hartlepool TS24 7QT. It is part of the Diocese of Durham within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Stranton Church Office, St Matthew's Community Centre, Arncliffe Gardens Entrance, Hartlepool TS26 9JF.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2018 until the date this report was approved are:

Priest in Charge: The Rev'd Norman Shave Chairman

Wardens: Mr Peter Anderson
 Mrs Angela Craig

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Miss Pamela Harkness
Mr Andrew Rogers
Mrs Sylvia Shepherd

Elected members:

Mrs Maureen Anderson Secretary
Mrs Ann Courtenay
Mr David Craig Treasurer
Mrs Azam Chaichi (co-opted for 1 year 15th April 2018)
Mr Frank Endean (to 15th April 2018)
Mrs Diane Greenwood
Mr David House
Mrs H Jennett
Mrs Cheryl Mills
Mrs Lynda Parvin
Miss Mary Robinson
Mrs Jacqui Rogers
Mrs Mary Tones

Ex-officio members:

Rev'd Andrew Craig
Rev'd Michelle Delves (from July 2018)

Co-opted members:

Mr Clive Hall

The full PCC met seven times during the year with an average level of attendance of 64%. Committees met between meetings and minutes of their deliberations were received by the full PCC and discussed where necessary.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

During 2018 we reviewed the Constitution of the PCC, reviewed and reapproved the Terms of Reference for the St Matthew’s Community Hall Committee and revised and approved the scheme of delegation. Work in 2019 will include formalising terms of reference for subcommittees and looking at means for developing good working relationships with the PCC’s and Officers of St Luke’s and St Aidan’s for effective three parish working.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Every six years the Electoral Roll has to be renewed, 2019 means that a new electoral roll is prepared and the replaces the previous roll.

The total No applied to be on the new roll is 110.

Following the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), additions to the electoral roll are accepted.

Ken Shepherd
Electoral Roll Officer

FINANCE REPORT

The overall financial out-turn for Stranton Church in the year to 31 December 2018 was a small deficit of £36, (2017 deficit – £3,157) but with a continuing underlying deficit in the Church General fund, as shown below.

Financial	Church	St Matthews	Overall
Year	General fund	Community hall	Per accounts
	Deficits	Supluses	net deficit
2017	-8957	5800	-3157
2018	-3451	3415	-36

It should be noted that St Matthews Community Hall surpluses are agreed as available for the upkeep and development of the Hall, not as a source of funding for general Church activities.

The main reason for the deficit was a fall of 11% in overall income, mainly in total giving by regular members: analysis of the reasons for this were discussed at the PCC in October, at which we identified the underlying reason as significant change in the make-up of our congregations: we have become too dependent over the last ten years or so on a small number of generous donors, who have contributed a disproportionate share of general income: of those members, a significant number have recently died, moved away, or experienced significant change in circumstances leading to a large, permanent reduction in our annual Church income of about £27,000: over £500 per week.

Unfortunately despite some regular and generous individual revisions, for which we are most grateful, individual giving by members of the congregation has not uniformly kept pace with inflation – a common problem for Churches where bank standing orders are a main method of giving but not subject to regular uplift and review by their originators. Accordingly the PCC agreed to Join a new national “Parish Giving Scheme” based on Direct Debit mandates which can allow and prompt for annual inflationary uplifts, and the Church is encouraging personal recommitment to resourcing our ministry in Stranton through that scheme, or by members revising their existing arrangements. The new scheme will speed up cash flow especially of Gift Aid tax recovery, and reduce the local administration, whilst also keeping the records completely confidential.

We are also facing inflationary increases in our parish lay staffing costs which now constitute about one third of our budget: Our budget for 2019 has therefore been set by reducing our parish share contribution to Diocesan costs (which is used to meet clergy housing and stipend costs) from £57,000 to £30,000, which would still leave a “faith gap” deficit of around £5,000, of which we seek at least £3,000 to be met by new and updated commitments.

I am immensely grateful, as ever, to those members of the Church who give so generously of their time to help with the day to financial administration, and make my job as treasurer possible, especially to Maureen Anderson (Assistant Treasurer), Barbara Butcher (St Matthews treasurer) and Ken Shepherd and his volunteers who organise and supervises cash counting and banking.

A copy of our budget for 2019 is set out below: this shows that to meet the projected deficit we will need increase regular giving by 9% from new or existing members, or from other sources

	Revised budget	
	Church only excl hall	
Regular giving	56,000	63.8%
Tax Claims	12,000	13.7%
Other collections and net fees	14,750	16.8%
Legacy/donations	5,000	5.7%
Hall revenues	0	
total income	£87,750	
Parish Share	30,000	32.3%
Mission: home/o'seas	5,500	5.9%
Ministry costs (families youth & Burban	7,000	7.5%
Church running costs	9,500	10.2%
Church maintenance	750	0.8%
Hall costs	0	
Staff salaries and oncosts	33,000	35.6%
Staff housing	2,000	2.2%
Staff expenses	5,000	5.4%
total expenditure	£92,750	
Surplus/(Deficit)	-£5,000	

Our financial plans for 2019 include some important investments for improvements in amenities and accessibility in our premises: St Matthew Community Centre has been very successful in attracting grant funding for a new kitchen and accessible toilets, £90,000 of which is shown as received and carried forward in 2018 accounts and these building works should be completed around Easter 2019. The PCC has also approved accessibility alterations in the main Church building, and has started the faculty legal process to carry out various internal works, including door and handrail changes at the front of Church and an accessible toilet and hot drinks facility in what is now the Vicar’s vestry, which along with any significant expenditure to be met following our Electrical Safety Review we expect to fund from a combination of Trust Fund monies held on our behalf by the Diocese and grant applications.

David Craig MA ACA
Hon Treasurer

BUILDING AND FABRIC OF THE CHURCH

Following the quinquennial inspection problem areas have been addressed.

- The slight damp problem in the north aisle/tower corner and the slight shifting of stonework have been investigated and remedied by the stonemasons, Mason and Forster.
- The east corner wall of the church porch had a crack due to movement and the west a broken stone; these have been repaired and replaced.
- Potential wood worm in the rafters has been treated.
- Further repointing needs to be carried out once the risk of frosts has passed.

An electrical inspection has been carried out and it has identified several potential and actual deficiencies. Some of the issues remain to be dealt with.

Lightfoots have remedied problems associated with their installation of LED lighting.

The clock has been serviced and work to its electrics are essential as found in the electrical inspection.

The PAT testing and other electrical work will be carried out in 2019.

The church alarm, fire extinguishers and boiler have been serviced.

Daniel Cook has carried out some repairs to the organ and next year we may need to replace or augment the bellow. He has acquired replacement solenoids for the organ stops from York cathedral, which he will fit in the coming year. We are waiting on a report from Daniel. Thanks go to Daniel for his ongoing care of the organ which save us a considerable amount of money.

The requests for improved accessibility to chancel, kitchen and Fulthorpe areas as well as forming an accessible toilet in the current vicars vestry goes before the diocesan advisory council on 2nd April. If advised the next step is to submit a faculty.

The vicar's vestry will be moved into what is currently the choir vestry.

A log book is kept, and all alterations and repairs to the church are entered.

An inspection of articles belonging to the church has been satisfactorily completed.

Clarkson Court has had cavity wall insulation carried out.

Our thanks go to the many volunteers who have faithfully assisted in all the areas mentioned above and looked after the Church, including Sidespersons, Vergers for Weddings/Funerals, and others who do cleaning tidying and gardening.

Also to the assisting church wardens Rohan Wanduragala and David House.

*Angela Craig, Peter Anderson
Churchwardens*

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

A health and safety audit has been carried out by Rob Butler and Angela Craig on 14th March. No areas of particular concern were identified. Ongoing maintenance of pathways, step marking, checking wires under carpets etc are in hand.

Rob Butler

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

This report will be rather brief, as I wasn't able to attend all the Deanery Synod meetings. However, the focus this year had been about the working of the Deanery Development Plan, so lengthily discussed in last year's report. So far to date the most obvious outcome has been the successful (up to now) patiently incorporation of the 3 Parishes.

Rachel Phillips from the Diocese spoke to us about "giving", explaining how confusing the offertory can be to a new Christian or a visitor to a church. She certainly gave us food for thought.

Our Area Dean, Janet, continues to strive to make the Synod meetings interesting and varied and thanks should be proffered for all her hard work and enthusiasm. Historically, Deaneries have always struggled to generate interest in their activities, so it behoves us all to support deanery initiatives and events. Personally, I enjoy attending deanery events, happy to mingle (often socially) with other local Christians.

Andrew Rogers

SAFEGUARDING - CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION

This year has seen Clive work diligently to ensure everyone has had up-to-date diocesan Safeguarding, or is booked onto a course. With Clive and Maureen, we have begun the process of updating our safeguarding policy to reflect the new Diocesan policy. We are required to adopt the Diocesan Policy and will do this in due course.

We have recently considered how we report incidents and accidents, and have set into a practice a new procedure whereby I will receive a report of whenever the incident/accident books have a new entry to make it easier to spot patterns of issues (the incident/accident books will still be completed as required).

Over the last few months we have also been considering the parish safeguarding checklist (a list of documents we need to have in place or actions we should take to ensure we have not overlooked the anything affecting the safety of children and young people in our care). We are already compliant with the majority of the areas, but we will continue to meet to ensure we're compliant in all areas over the coming months.

There have been no major safeguarding incidents reported this year.

Peter Hart

GATHERED WORSHIP IN STRANTON PARISH

There is a regular pattern of worship services across the parish, both weekly and monthly. The services are held in Church, St Matthew's Hall and in Ward Jackson Church of England Primary School. Each service has its own characteristics. We hope and pray that there is something for those who have been part of a worshipping community for a long time and those attending for the first time. The pattern is summarised as follows –

Stranton Church

Sundays

8:30

Holy Communion

A quiet said service using traditional liturgy

10:30	Morning Worship (provision for all ages)	Each Sunday has a different characteristic. Generally the services are relaxed and welcoming including a mix of contemporary music and hymns. 1 st and 3 rd Sundays include communion 4 th Sunday, Lighthouse is a good service to try if you are new to church, it includes welcomes for families wanting baptism.
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Ward Jackson Church of England Primary School

11:00	Morning Worship	Burbank Community Church is relaxed and informal, includes all ages. The services seek to include members of the Burbank Community.
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St Matthew's Community Centre

4:00 third Sunday only	Messy Church	A service for families based around craft, story and sharing tea together
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Wednesdays

10:00	Holy Communion	A said midweek communion in a more accessible venue.
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WORSHIP TEAM

It has been a joy to be a part of the worship team over the last few years, both practising together on a Thursday evening and leading sung worship in our morning service at 10.30. I have always found that singing hymns and worship songs draws me closer to God and this is our prayer for the congregation, that together we will become more aware of his presence as we worship him.

Our team is smaller now than in recent years, but I am grateful to each member for their commitment and prayerful support.

Julie Shave

BURBANK COMMUNITY CHURCH and YOUTH, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The numbers have dropped since last year and our services only have 10-18 people each week, yet we still enjoy the fellowship and presence of God in our services. So the people who attend do feel like they want to continue to do so.

We did feel God encourage us with various scriptures, the main one being:-

⁶ Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" ⁸ He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and

put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”

Luke 13: 6-9

When we put the Christmas cards into all the homes on the estate. I included a piece of paper which introduced myself as the Reverend Clive Hall to the estate. I wanted them to know that I was available to them. Since I did that, I have taken two funerals for people from the estate. I am now at the stage of my training where I can take funerals on my own.

We have also started a new ‘Family Outreach’ within Ward Jackson School called Create. For the first one there were 24 adults and 40 children PLUS 9 afterschool children, not including staff and volunteers. So 73 at the club and a total of about 85 people. The afternoon went well but we knew we could improve on it. The second Create saw a lower number but the quality of the event went up. The number of good conversation went up also.

These events could be seen as fruitful but it has not brought new numbers into the church. As a leadership team we felt we would give church a year to see if numbers would improve the year will end in June 2019, we will then need to make some decision about the future of Burbank Church.

Overseer for Youth, Children and Family work

We have had more leaders stand down this year from their roles as leaders at YF and Bridge Builders. This made us appeal for new leaders. I am happy to say that a mum from the Burbank Estate has joined us at Bridge Builders. I too am now a full time leader at Bridge Builders to help support this group. We also have had two more leaders for YF. I again have taken on a major role in leading this group. It is good that these groups have been able to continue but if anyone would consider helping at YF on a Sunday evening then do please speak to me.

A reminder here that I also am in charge of the Volunteer recruitment process. If anyone would like to join any of the church groups or Sunday school clubs there are a few volunteer forms that need to be signed along with DBS checks. Do please send me the names of anyone who would like to volunteer in Stranton Church.

I would also add that the Inspire New Wine weekend was also very good. It was great teaching and worship and great fellowship with all the other church members that attended. The weekend has now been replaced with a full week’s church conference at Peterborough. Stranton church has a number of people going along on 4-10th August this year myself included. Do speak to Norman or myself if you’re interested in attending.

Bridge Builders

This year there are about 10-18 children attending. I have already mentioned a mum from the estate helping we also have two students from the YFC outreach team coming along weekly, Angela and myself are the main leaders. So this group continues to meet each Wednesday.

Ward Jackson School

Here is a clip from the Hartlepool Mail.

Ward Jackson Primary School, in Clark Street, was buzzing after receiving the letter in the post this week from Education Secretary Damian Hinds and Nick Gibb, the Minister for State School Standards. They praised staff and pupils after they were among only the top 3% of schools in England for their results in last year’s Key Stage 2 tests. And Ward Jackson had the greatest progress in reading of any school in the country.

This shows how the new Head David Akers is getting on at Ward Jackson. It was also very good to hear from David himself when he attended a Stranton Service.

Angela continues to work at Ward Jackson School she is being trained as a Thrive Practitioner which is developing her skills when working with the children. She, along with Lee the assistant head will be able to facilitate training for all staff so that it can become a Thrive school.

Personal News

On the 1st July 2018 I was ordained a Deacon at Durham Cathedral. A very special service for me, I was told I never stopped smiling all day. Coming back to Stranton church and sharing the time with family and friends made it even more special. Thank-you for all your support and a big thank you for those people who planned and prepared all the catering for that day. The 29th June 2019 will see me becoming a Priest. I am really looking forward to presiding at my first Eucharist service on the 30th June with my Stranton family. I will of course still be fulfilling my contractual work of running Burbank Community Church and Community work and Overseeing the Adults and Children work.

Foodbank

I would say this has been a hard year for foodbank a number of organisations turned us down for grants this year. But the Council stepped up and provided further financial support. We also have had an increase in the number of people coming through the door, so donations go out as quickly as they come in. There is a lady called Penny Thompson who works for the council. We have just taken her on as an Advisor to the trust. We know she will be a valuable asset to us.

Reverend Clive Hall

STRANTON TODDLER GROUP

The Toddler group continues to thrive in St Matthews Hall. I run the group on Tuesdays and Clare and Lynn run it on Fridays both from 9-11 am. It's been great to have Michelle with us too when time allows. Over recent months we have had an influx of new families, many with young babies. It's wonderful to see the children grow and develop week by week through their early lives. The children enjoy toys, puzzles and crafts in the small hall and we have a baby area for mums with tiny ones. The children love the space in the large hall where they have fun on bikes, scooters, slides and see-saws etc.

The group is a good place for those caring for small children to meet one another, play with their children and encourage them to share and to learn new skills. There is also plenty of opportunity for Christian adults to share God's love and care.

A big "thank you" goes to Ann who has prepared snacks week by week over the last 15 years and has decided to step down from this role. Pam is now "in charge" and has been working alongside Sarah, Sajad and Maria. Also, Peter and Norman's help in setting up week by week (with Rohan covering when needed) makes the task manageable. It would be an overwhelming job without this amazing support.

Julie Shave

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church continues meets monthly on the third Sunday from 4-5.30 pm in St Matthew's Hall. Baptism families are always invited and others are drawn in through other contacts: Toddlers etc. We have had a lot of new families coming in recent months

Mary and I meet together each month to plan our activities. Our sessions begin with table top games and colouring, and once everyone has arrived, we have a bible story, song and prayer. This is followed by a time for crafts and games linked to the story.

Then we enjoy tea together where there is more time to chat with each other. It's great to see whole families learning, worshipping, playing and eating together. Several of our families have been coming for a few years now and it is great to see some of them coming to the Lighthouse service and others to Christmas / Easter services.

We are thankful for everyone in the team and their commitment to this important work. We would welcome extra folks to help at a craft table or with washing up / clearing away. It only involves a couple of hours once a month. Do have a word with Julie or Mary if you would be happy to be involved. It is a privilege to share the love of God and our prayer is that many, both adults and children, will come to faith.

Julie Shave

SUNDAY CLUB

Sunday Club takes place during the Sunday morning 10.30am service every Sunday, except the fourth Sunday of the month which is The Lighthouse Service. Numbers of children vary from 4 or 5 to 14 or 15 plus, with an age range from 1 to 10 or 11 years!

The Sunday Club leaders and helpers (all DBS checked) are on a rota and are usually involved once a month. Kate Lawson has improved our organisation by e-mailing the rota to us all to complete, well in advance.

The leaders have decided to follow the lectionary readings as the basis for each week's session and have used their own imagination and resources to create appropriate activities for the children. Judging by the stampede for the Fulthorpe Chapel when it's time for Sunday Club, the children appear to enjoy their time there.

Many thanks to Kate, Pam, Gill, Cat, Michelle, Steph, and all our fantastic young people for making Sunday Club such a happy, fun time!

Mary Tones



YF is a space for fellowship, prayer, Bible study, fun, and silly games. Each term we have had a main theme or focus interspersed with other one-off themes. The group has changed with BeFree members moving up. We have a good core group who attend weekly and are enthusiastic.

The Christmas term was focused on God and science and celebrating the birth of Jesus and a baby shower for Chloe and Jordan and a study on 1 Peter This term we have asked the youth what they were interested in studying so we featured a lot of different things from the bible such as Jonah and what does the bible say about Harry Potter and an overview of the gospels it has been great to get a "God's-eye view" on these topics through the Bible.

It has been good that the members from BeFree and elsewhere, are settled.

We are grateful for the support of the wider church community in prayer, and other ways. It has been good to have an enthusiastic team and we are thankful for the leaders who have been helping. We give thanks for those who decided it was time to teach in other area Chloe, Jordan and Luke. We are happy to have a great team on a rota basis to continue YF.

Please continue to pray for wisdom and good fellowship that builds up our youth into the people God is calling them to be!

The YF Leadership Team



We continue to be a full, happy unit. We have 18 mostly 5 year olds who attend every week. Our leadership team is gradually increasing with 2 young adults working towards qualified leader status and a new young leader.

We had been disappointed to attend a campfire without a fire but this year the girls got the opportunity to cook over an open fire 3 times (well we actually melted marshmallows over a fire pit but the girls were really thrilled). We went to 3 town wide events with Brownies and Guides, Thinking Day, a campfire and a day to celebrate the Trefoil Guilds 75th Birthday where we made hobby horses using pool noodles. We enjoyed an evening at the forest school with our Brownies and Guides and had great fun at Pets at home where we were joined by Norman on his Clergy visit.

We are slowly introducing the New Girlguiding UK programme which is more structured than we are used to and taking some time to get to grips with but as long as we continue to have fun and enjoy ourselves we will adapt to it.

The Rainbow Team
Christine Robinson



In the normal weekly meeting the Brownies and Guides meet independently following their own programme doing the normal activities.

In addition to the normal activities we do during the year, we have again visited Go Climb which is very popular activity; as are the summer evenings when we go the Headland looking in rock pools and Seaton to build sandcastles, when we invite other units to join us, in these activities.

We attended the production of Aladdin on ice at Billingham Forum and for the last meeting of the year, had a fun PJ evening playing Christmas Beetle with hot chocolate/marshmallows.

We have had visits from Clive, Norman and Andrew which the girls and Leaders really appreciate happening. It gives the girls opportunity to meet and chat with members of the ministry team and we

have attended Harvest and Palm Sunday (although the numbers that have attended have been low). The Brownies also attended the excellent 'Eggheads'.

Nina Ash (leader) and Grace Allan (guide) went to represent the north East/UK at an international camp at Gdansk, Poland at the start of the schools summer holidays. They had a marvellous experience which they have shared with the units.

September saw the launch of the new programme for all sections. A full revamp, needing new books, badges, how the programme is followed. To access it the girls required new resources; the PCC very kindly gave us a donation towards these items, we had a number of individual donations and the girls have fundraised to help pay towards the new materials. We launched the start for us in January 2019!

Any young lady from the age of 5 is welcome to join us, to become a member of Girlguiding. Either go online, using Girlguidinguk as the search or contact me.

Cheryl Mills

(Leader with Brownies & Guides)



4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade

Founded 1930

Headquarters - St Matthew's Community Centre

Anchor Boys

We have 10 names on our list at the moment and expect two more members at Easter time. We hope to get up to 15 plus by the end of the session.

Highlights include crafts with Trish, a Battalion Fun Night, a visit from the Police and trips to the Wacky Warehouse, Stranton church and Seaton beach.

Juniors

We have 20 members but hope to aim for 25 as we have the staff and experience for this number.

Highlights include, 5 a side and hockey tournaments (at St. Matthews), police visits, trips to Crimdon Dene, Blue Lagoon, swimming pool and Stranton Church.

Company

We have eight Lads, we are hoping to retain them and grow the numbers by transferring Junior Boys as they reach the end of school year 6.

Highlights include trips to Castle Eden Dene, Crimdon Dene, Blue Lagoon, Pool Hall, swimming pool, Hartlepool Rifle Club and tennis at Seaton

This year we are camping at Melton Scout Centre near Hull

In General

We appreciated the regular visits of the clergy team at each Section.

We are looking forward to the St. Matthew's extension being built so we can re-stack all our equipment and have a spending splurge!!! (on new games) Plus we can collect bric-a-brac again!!!

The bacon butty service and Harvest Festival service was well attended.

We have Leaders and Lads involved in Bell Ringing.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who has supported our fayres throughout the year.

George Bainbridge

Leader in Charge, 4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade

PASTORAL GROUP

The group has continued to meet at regular intervals at St Matthew's Community Centre, for prayer and pastoral discussion.

It has been a mixed year for the team, on the plus side our new members have fitted in very well and have been a great asset to the team, on the down side a number of our long term housebound members of the congregation have passed away and we feel their loss very keenly.

We have not moved forward with the request from Charlotte Grange for a monthly communion service at the moment because we feel that with such a small team of volunteers we would not be able to sustain it. We are open to any suggestions on this matter, maybe a worship team specifically for Charlotte Grange, perhaps this is something we would like to do?

I would like to thank Ian, Pam, Rohan and Diana for their hard work and commitment to this essential part of church work, without them we would not be able to offer these services.

The group has continued to meet at regular intervals to uphold each other and the members of the church we visit.

Patricia Vaughan

MOTHERS' UNION REPORT

Mothers' Union Theme for 2019 is M.U.L.O.A. - "Mothers' Union, Listen, Observe, Act - In Step with God".

What we do - we meet together, have activities sometimes such as planting bulbs for Christmas. We have discussions, reflections, quiet days at other venues, speakers, bring and share items that have a special meaning for us. Occasionally we have an outing and we enjoy our New Years Party and "playing beetle".

At our meetings we pray for other M.U. members around the world. Many people don't realise that M.U. is a truly global organisation. In fact we now have our first Worldwide President Sheran Harper who was elected as the first person from outside the British Isles to attain that position. We have fundraising events quite often for M.U. work overseas and in this country. Sometimes campaigns here and abroad. M.U. meets within prisons and Cathedrals as well as in peoples homes or church halls. We pray for our Church here and many of our members do participate within our church fellowship.

We hope this year to build even stronger links with St Luke's M.U. and to begin to know more about St Aidan's.

We lost a valued member last year, Frances London - sadly missed at our meetings. M.U. has recently changed the time of our monthly meetings from 2:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. This move was made to enable any member who collects children from school to join with us and to enable members to get home before dark in the winter.

Do drop in on the second Monday of the month, you'll be very welcome. We meet in the ASDA room at St Matthew's Community Centre in Elwick Road.

God Bless

Ann Courtenay

Branch Leader

BELLRINGING REPORT

2018 saw continued ringing at Stranton including quarter peals. We also had visiting teams of ringers including one team that rang a full peal.

We continued to ring as a part of the D&N Association "Ringing to Remember" activity whereby towers ring their bells on the 100th anniversary of the death of a ringer from their tower who was killed during World War One. It was also pleasing that all ringable bells in Hartlepool were rung on 11th November as part of the Armistice celebrations.

It was the turn of Stranton to host the D&N 8 bell striking competition in March. We entered a team and beat the other two entrants to win both the cup and the plate.

Practice nights at Stranton have been very busy at times and this may have hampered progress. During the year we were asked to ring for a number of funeral services and we did this by tolling a single bell before each service and then ringing open rounds and call changes following the service. We also rang for a number of weddings and for other special services in addition to our Sunday service ringing.

Progress has been made in terms of method ringing both on practice night and on Sundays. The support and patience of experienced ringers during this process has been truly appreciated.

Particular thanks go to Barbara and Stephen Busby who have organised and run a number of training sessions for learners and improvers and which have been very popular.

I am looking forward to maintaining good standards of striking, adding to the range of methods rung during the year and to seeing our newest learners develop further.

Andrew Kaye

Tower Captain

ST MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY CENTRE ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

2018 began brightly at St Matthew's Community Centre with the planned redecoration of the small hall and kitchen and subsequently the resurfacing of the small hall floor. New blinds were installed and the hall once again became a light and welcoming environment for its many users. This work was supported in part by a donation from one of our local ward councillors. The building continues to be used by a large number of groups on a regular long term basis and this year we have welcomed new groups, particularly with interests in the area of health and wellbeing. This stability allows the committee to plan ahead and realise the full potential of the facilities we can offer to the local community as well as the rest of the town.

The main focus of the committee throughout 2018 was our agreed strategy to seek funding to increase the level of provision we could offer to new as well as existing users through the building of a new larger kitchen together with improved storage and disabled facilities and access. Working towards this end, we commissioned the preparation of a professional scheme of works specification and building works plan which was used to obtain quotes from prospective contractors and suppliers, to submit with grant applications for the project. In view of the disappointing response to our grant application to The Tudor Trust last year we took advice on which grant giving bodies own aims and objectives most closely matched those of St Matthew's Community Centre and on that basis we chose two that we felt were a "good match". The two charities were The Garfield Weston 60th Anniversary Fund and Impetus Environmental Trust. During the summer months grant applications were prepared and submitted to both organisations. Since St Matthew's is not a registered charity, Stranton Church PCC agreed the application to Garfield Weston could be made in their name on behalf of the centre. They also reaffirmed their commitment that St Matthew's should be run as a separate financial entity and acknowledged the written constitution which governs the aims and objectives of St Matthew's Community Centre.

In September 2018 discussions took place between Garfield Weston and some committee members when more information was supplied to the grant givers, and in October we received notice that our application had been successful and we had been awarded £80,000 from the fund. In October there was more good news from Impetus Environmental Trust who informed us we had been granted £20,000 towards the project. In December members of the committee met with the chosen contractor and agreed work would start at end of January or beginning of February 2019.

The work is anticipated to take 12 to 16 weeks and there will be minimal disruption to hall users during this period, since any major work affecting users will be scheduled to take place during holiday periods.

In September 2018 a building inspection was undertaken by Ecclesiastical Insurance and the results of this highlighted a number of areas within the building where updating and improvements were required in order to comply with current regulations and requirements. These concern, primarily, issues of power supply, wiring and alarm systems. A programme of work is now underway to ensure all aspects will conform to current standards. When all the updates and the new building work is complete the committee will review our current strategy, particularly the pricing policy for rental of the new improved facilities. Currently the rental rates for the building are some of the least expensive throughout Hartlepool.

During the year we said goodbye to one long standing committee member and welcomed two new ones. As a committee we aim to ensure members represent the diverse nature of the user groups as well as the interests and activities they undertake. If anyone reading this is interested in the work the committee undertake please contact any member for more information.

We continue to maintain good relationships with Hartlepool Borough Council and other external agencies as well as support from the local ward councillors and community groups and these will be essential during the coming year in assisting to raise awareness and help us to reach the full potential of the new and improved facilities and service we can offer both existing and new users.

Carol Laud

St Matthew's Community Centre Management