

ALL SAINTS, STRANTON CHURCH HARTLEPOOL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021



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

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Vicar's Report for Stranton Church 2021 Written on Easter Day 2022

¹⁰ This is what the Lord says: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' From Jeremiah 29

In the time I have thought and prayed about this year's APCM, the above verses have kept coming back as a theme for the Church Community at Stranton. 2021 was the year of continued pandemic and significant transition. Thankfully we have not experienced 70 years exile but we have all been through a tough time. None the less God is with us and I do believe his promise is for his work to continue to prosper in our midst. So then may we press forward in faith.

Many of you reading this will be aware that Julie and I have experienced some very difficult circumstances recently. As I write I am still positive for Covid. I am therefore simply going to put a few bullet points together trusting that this will suffice as my report:

- Teamwork and ministry: Firstly my thanks goes to all who minister here, lay and ordained. The team here is amazing. Increasingly we have seen that we can step away and Church continues to happen. Thank you in particular to Peter Anderson who is stepping down as Church warden after 6 years, I am sure we all recognise Peter works incredibly hard with little or no fuss. Thank you.
- During the year both Clive Hall and Michelle Delves finished their training for ministry and are now recommended to seek a post of significant responsibility. Rachel Price continued as our contextual ordinand while Lizelke Klindt finished early as an MEV to concentrate on her PhD and return to South Africa. In November we were joined on placement by Anita Burke a final year ordinand from Lindisfarne RTP. Mary Tones (reader), Rev Andrew Craig and Rev Kevin Tones also continue to offer authorised ministry within the parish. In the summer Mother Gemma left St Aidan's so the above clergy are now working as a team across three parishes. In July I announced my plans to retire in the summer of 2022 allowing the commencement of a recruitment process which hopefully will culminate in a clergy appointment in June 2022. Thankyou to all those who committed to working with Sheila Bamber in the prioritisation process.
- Pandemic: Early in the year some of the services were streamed from church, but in person services continued throughout the year despite the Delta Wave in November and December. In the summer we restarted singing in person, alleluia! Communion continues to be offered in two kinds through intinction. We have continued to stream both 9am and 11am, more recently in a simpler way. We returned to offering refreshments in the autumn using the new facilities at the back of Church. We celebrated Christmas in person including hosting the Group Carol service and a Christingle where we were joined by Stranton School. Morning prayer continues daily through the week on zoom.
- The decisions regarding Burbank Community Church were implemented during 2021. Clive Hall led a service of thanksgiving for Burbank Community Church later in the year.
- Bereavement: Sadly a number of long standing key members during the year and others have experienced significant long term health problems. The pastoral care group continues to support the housebound and lonely. Funerals continued through the year with a gradual move

back to services in Church. Both weddings and baptisms returned with a bang as the restrictions lifted with really significant numbers of services in the summer. As part of the process towards baptism we restarted 'welcome services' as part of Lighthouse monthly.

- Sunday Club, Messy Church, Toddlers and cake and Coffee all restarted in the autumn with surprisingly good numbers. Folk really wanted to get out and meet each other. Thank again to all who make these things happen.
- The St Matthew's Community Centre worked hard to provide a safe place for community use. As the year went on we were able to open up with really good footfall including several new groups. There was a health and safety incident on 15 September 2021 reported elsewhere.
- Schools work has continued either on line or in person depending on the prevailing conditions. Ward Jackson remains a priority for our Church (worship, school visits, governors and chaplaincy) but the clergy team and communities of hope team have worked with our regular school contacts: Stranton, Eldon Grove and Kingsley as well across the town St Aidan's, Throston and Eskdale.
- Michelle has maintained our links with Elwick Grange nursing home where monthly communions have now restarted.
- Norman continued as Civic chaplain for another year. We hosted two civic services in the autumn and Norman led the Remembrance Day service at the cenotaph in Victory Square.
- Throughout 2021 we continued to work with asylum seekers. Numbers are lower than previously experienced but alongside a continuing Iranian group we established a small group consisting of Iraqis and Eritreans, this latter group again supported by Jo from Communities of Hope. Thankfully after some very long delays these folk are beginning to get their home office interviews allowing things to progress with several of the Iranians being given leave to remain. In the summer we stopped offering in service translation into Farsi because of a lack of translators. More generally as a Church with the Afghan crisis PCC decided to sign up as a Welcome Church. We also support through a grant 2 weekly English classes for asylum seekers at the People's centre.
- Communities of Hope established a number of ongoing projects including Syd's Kitchen, The Sewing Bee and a weekly drop in. However we have seen significant staffing changes with Jess leaving to train for ordination and Emma reducing her hours and stepping down as project lead. We appointed Aneta Bradley as the new Project Leader late in the year and pray for more stability, the recruiting of a new team and continued effective outreach in 2022.
- PCC reviewed the support we offer to Missionary Societies. During the year we agreed to adopt two new missionaries supported by CMS and also to offer support to the Kilimatinde Trust, maintaining our link with Tanzania rather than Festo and Grace who are now based in England.
- The screens project was completed. There were on going repairs following a leak in the central heating system in the Fulthorpe Chapel near the kitchen. A significant faculty was submitted for work to the Bells which we anticipate will happen in 2022.

There is probably much more to say but hopefully this gives a flavour of the year just passed. Amidst all the struggles, both individual and corporate, God is good. May we together discover a place of wellbeing and community growing in love, peace hope and joy. May we know God given abundant life that ripples out into our town and may God indeed prosper his work.

Every blessing.

Norman

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 2021 until the date this report was approved are:

Priest in Charge: The Rev'd Norman Shave Chairman

Wardens: Mr Peter Anderson
 Mr Rohan Wanduragala

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:
 Mr Andrew Rogers
 Mrs Sylvia Shepherd

Elected members:
 Mrs Maureen Anderson Secretary
 Mrs Azam Chaichi
 Mrs Angela Craig
 Mr David Craig Treasurer
 Mrs Diane Greenwood
 Mr David House
 Mrs Cheryl Mills
 Mrs Lynda Parvin
 Mrs Jacqui Rogers
 Mrs Mary Tones

Ex-officio members:
 Rev'd Michelle Delves

Co-opted members:
 Mr Clive Hall

The full PCC met eight times during the year with an average level of attendance of 70%. 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.

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are 93 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, parish. Six names were removed and one name added during the year.

Ken Shepherd
Electoral Roll Officer

FINANCE REPORT

Once again God has been faithful to us in our finances for 2021. The Church had an overall net surplus of **£1,814** in 2021 (2020 - £5,689): This small net surplus for the year is a however combination of a deficit of **£6,085** on the church General fund - after charging half the cost of the Audio visual equipment as depreciation (2020 - £9,762 surplus on General Fund) offset by a surplus of £7,899 on St Matthews Community Centre account (reversing the 2020 Community Centre deficit of £4,073).

As reported last year the bequest of the late Margaret Lumley, received in the 2020 financial year, substantially enabled us to fund the “accessible” capital works and new servery in the previous year and to generate £9,500 of the surplus brought forward for 2021 to offset the expected deficit for that year. The out-turn for 2021 was in fact slightly better than expected, taking into consideration the large increase in depreciation arising from the investment in Audio Visual equipment.

The Covid – 19 pandemic continues to affect some aspects of our revenues. St Matthews Community Centre recovered very substantially but not yet fully, mainly because the Centre Management were able to secure some public sector contracts as part of the pandemic response. These contracts are not being renewed and the Centre management are aware of the financial need to attract new and returning users. In the church General fund, net Fees and Occasional Services income continue to be depressed and the Burbank Community Church has ceased meeting. Again we have lost some of our regular faithful members who have died, and not been replaced in our giving and loyalty schemes, leading to some concerns over the future of regular giving. We have for the time being continued to benefit through some generous “one-off” donations, a large part of which was earmarked to meet the costs of employment of our lay staff.

In our expenditures, we met our agreed Parish share to the Diocese in full at £34,033: we were asked for a further 10% increase for 2022 but have in fact committed to a lower but achievable £35,250: this is still a challenge at nearly £3,000 a month but as we seek the appointment of a new incumbent and continue to benefit in many ways from Diocesan services and support, we must recognise the need to “pay our way” in meeting the costs of stipends pensions and ministry support. We will have to be super-efficient and exercise careful stewardship of our resources in the light of rapidly rising costs especially in the areas of energy and office supplies.

The Hartlepool Communities of Hope team, which Stranton PCC “Hosts” on behalf of the Central Hartlepool Group in the largest of our restricted funds, which creates neither deficit nor surplus as it passes through our accounts as “Ring fenced” resources. We will shortly be required to consider its longer term sustainability as one of the main project outcomes. The other major restricted effort of the year was in the direct fundraising of over £51,000 with gift aid and grant income promised for the refurbishment of our bells, which have not had a major overhaul for 70 years. We were supported financially by Grant funding in other ways too – for the Olive Branch allotment, for the living costs of our Ministry Experience Volunteer Lizelke Klindt (who will be returning to the UK in September 2022 to undertake Theological training), for costs of repairs, and for many small but necessary items of Kit to complete our Audio visual project and enable video mixing and live streaming of services and other events.

I would particularly like to thank those who have continued to give in a planned and prayerful manner through Bank Standing orders and the Parish Giving scheme (PGS) and to those who continue to use their weekly envelopes too. I encourage all who are not already members to consider joining the PGS – it can be done entirely confidentially and online!

To close my report I would like to thank you for all your generosity, especially for the wise support and encouragement of Maureen Anderson as Assistant Treasurer, the Churchwardens Peter and Rohan and to Ken Shepherd and the counting team for their unseen but unstinting support.

David Craig
Hon Treasurer, April 2022

BUILDING AND FABRIC OF THE CHURCH

We would like to thank the many in the congregation who have helped and continue to help with all the work that goes to make the church a house of prayer, a place for worship and welcome (the readers, intercessors, cleaners, those decorating the church for services, greeting people, making tea and coffee etc). A big 'Thank you' from the Churchwardens.

Just as importantly, we would like to thank Norman and Julie on behalf of the congregation for their service in Stranton over the past 10 years. Likewise we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Clive and Michelle and all of the ministry team for all their work.

Thanks to Angela Craig and David House as assistant churchwardens for their help and guidance.

1. Buildings

Quinquennial Inspection: The inspection was carried out on 15th November 2021. It was due in 2022 but was brought forward as the architect was involved in surveys associated with the bell project and it was felt that combining the two inspections/surveys would be of benefit to us. We are awaiting his report. This should be with us soon.

Heating: Annual boiler service completed on 1st October 2021. Repair of leaking pipe in Fulthorpe Chapel has been completed after a few attempts; the steps will be re-instated shortly.

Routine Inspections/service:

- Fire: Inspection of the fire extinguishers completed - 18th March 2021 and 31st March 2022
- Asbestos: Survey carried out as part of the requirement for the bell project (tower) and extended to cover the whole church. Church building is clear of asbestos. Church Organ's sealed blower unit may contain asbestos; any maintenance of this unit will need to take this into consideration. Compliant warning signage has been attached.
- ADT Alarm - routine inspection and service 9th July 2021
- Lightning Protection System - inspected and tested on 31st August 2021
- Clock - annual service - 25th November 2021
- Archdeacons visit: This was completed on 19th August 2021 - no issues.
- An inspection of articles belonging to the church (terrier) was satisfactorily completed in March 2022.
- other minor maintenance tasks are scheduled and monitored by the Churchwardens who maintain a record in the Church log book

Visual & Sound System: Paul Anderson and Mark Rattigan have done a great deal of work and spent a lot of time overseeing the installation and ensuring the system works. Thanks to them for their hard work and commitment.

Gardening Thanks to Pam Stockton for doing the flower beds which look lovely. Also the Council have been very helpful in maintaining the church yard. *Hartlepool Borough Council has accepted responsibility for dealing with this .*

Brewery Parking - Working well / good relationship with the brewery. Regular checks made to ensure sufficient parking places are available.

2. Church Bell refurbishment

We are immensely grateful to Andy Kaye and Andrew Frost for their work in overseeing the whole project; obtaining quotes, organising meetings with contractors etc, and most importantly in raising funds. Thanks also to Maureen Anderson for the considerable amount of administrative work connected with this project, not least in 'chasing up' the Faculty application. The progress of this project is reported by the bellringers.

Vicar appointment

The advertisement has been placed with the interview date set for 1st June 2022.

Two reps from each of the 3 churches making up the CHGC (Central Hartlepool Group of Churches) will be on the interview panel, which will also include Bishop Sarah (Bishop of Jarrow) and Archdeacon Rick Simpson, a total of 8.

The two reps from Stranton are Andrew Rogers (Lay Chair PCC) and Rohan Wanduragala (Churchwarden) with Mary Tones as a standby in case either Andrew or Rohan are unable to attend.

The first appointment is for a 'Priest –in- charge' to replace Norman. This will be followed by a second appointment, maybe in two years' time.

The Clergy Role Description and Parish profiles can be viewed on the diocesan web site under vacancies. Please do have a look. [VACANCY: PRIEST-IN-CHARGE WITHIN THE CENTRAL HARTLEPOOL GROUP MINISTRY \(CHGM\) - Diocese of Durham \(durhamdiocese.org\)](https://www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancy/priest-in-charge-within-the-central-hartlepool-group-ministry-chgm)

Rohan Wanduragala, Peter Anderson

Churchwardens

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

1. Health and Safety Incident

On 15th September 2021 an incident occurred at St Matthew's Community involving a chemical fogging machine while an employee was in the building. The employee needed to be taken for emergency medical care and has experienced on going symptoms. The incident was reported to our insurers, internally the next PCC and externally to both the Health and Safety Executive and the Charity Commission. We subsequently received a letter from the Local Authority. All appropriate steps were taken to review procedures, prevent this happening again and ensure the safety of all meeting in St Matthew's Community Centre. We have also sought to provide support and care for the individuals involved.

Norman Shave

19 March 2022

2. Health and Safety Audit of the church was carried out by Angela Craig and Peter Anderson in March 2022.

The following matters are noted from that inspection

- The carpet in church is wearing in high use areas and we are increasingly using tape to secure joins. The carpet is safe but will need to be replaced in part or in full. The audio visual project eliminated the need to run cables across or under carpets, a big safety improvement.
- The Fulthorpe chapel kitchen vinyl needs patching by the sink, and the temporary steps removed as the permanent repair is completed.
- Lighting to the rear path to church should be improved as the brewery lighting has not been repaired and is reduced.
- Due to pandemic circumstances, we have not yet managed to carryout fire and emergency response training with the sides-persons, vergers and various group leaders who all need to act as fire wardens along with the Churchwardens. We wish to carry out this "emergency response" training as soon as possible
- Annual PAT testing has been maintained by Paul Anderson
- Emergency lighting was checked last year. Fixed wire testing is not yet due.
- See church buildings report (page 6-7) for other maintenance items

Angela Craig, Peter Anderson

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Like most groups, during the year the Deanery Synod meetings were seriously affected by covid restrictions, so there's not a huge amount of detail to report. However, a number of events took place that are also ongoing and which will impact on the Deanery.

Communities of Hope: C of H continues to work across, and is supported by, the 3 parishes of the Central Group. The latest recruitment process is almost complete. The many worthwhile projects (e.g. St Aidan's Kitchen, Sid's Café, meeting with ex-offenders, Forest Church etc.) maintain momentum and increase in participants.

Deanery Planning: Fr Graeme Buttery left St Oswald's earlier in the year. He will be greatly missed, not only by the Christian community, but also by Brougham School. Fr Richard of St Paul's has taken oversight and leadership, as anticipated in the Deanery Plan. Our Central Group vacancy is currently being advertised.

Living in Love and Faith: many resources are available for parishes wishing to explore this thought provoking topic. Videos can be downloaded along with a range of publications, from single page leaflets through to a 400 page book.

Tall Ships 2023: The Deanery hope to co-ordinate a Christian presence in the Tall Ships "village". However, Hartlepool Borough Council has yet to establish a formal steering group, but contact is ongoing.

Andrew Rogers

SAFEGUARDING - CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION

This year has seen significant changes to the safe recruitment of volunteers and staff that work with children. Clive has lead on ensuring that we are compliant with diocesan policies, which now include more formalised procedures around applying for voluntary youth and children's work positions. Every year we submit a parish safeguarding checklist via the PCC. We comply with the list from the diocese in almost every area, except for some new areas around training in and monitoring of social media. We have committed to getting up to date with policies and training within the next six months.

A key change in DBS policy also took place this year, with the renewal date moving from five years to three years. We have a rolling programme to ensure we observe this over the next two years – the timeframe provided by the diocese.

Most safeguarding training now occurs online. Five people have undergone the 'Safer Recruitment' training over the last 12 months, which is a requirement for making appointments to any youth and children's work. Seven people undergoing the Basic and/or Foundation training. Clive maintains a register of dates church leaders and volunteers have undergone training. This diocese now expect anyone in positions where safeguarding training is required, to undergo it within 6 months of the past certificate expiring.

There have been no major safeguarding incidents reported this year.

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

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 and St Matthew's Hall. 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

9:00	Holy Communion	A quiet said service using traditional liturgy
11:00	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.

St Matthew's Community Centre

4:00 second 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

We were so pleased when congregational singing was re-introduced last Easter (albeit with face masks). Singing our praises to God is such an integral part of our Church services.

We have continued to meet before the Sunday services to practise. It's been great to have Stella as part of our team in recent months too.

My thanks go to Angela and Seth who also lead our worship allowing me time away or a chance to be in the congregation.

Please pray for those who will continue to choose, co-ordinate and lead our music and help with preparing PowerPoints in the coming months.

Julie Shave

COMMUNITY WORKER

Chaplain of Ward Jackson School.

I have seen an increase to the amount of times I have been asked to go into the school and take an RE lesson. I have subjects like, how does the Holy Spirit help Christians? Plus 'What type of world

did Jesus want? Even, what does a priest do during the week? On top of that I have taken two Baptism services in two different classes, just pretending of course.

I have also taken worship within school some of them were on Zoom when Covid rules applied. I have hosted a class in church, which had a special moment when all 23 children were kneeling at the high altar and we listen for the voice of God. Plus whole school came in for Harvest and Christmas services.

I have been making myself available for parents in the playground each week.

Norman, Julie and I have also been into Eldon Grove Primary school to take their assemblies.

Overseer for Youth, Children and Family work

There is a process to go through when you want to become a volunteer in church. There is always a DBS check made and there is compulsory training on safeguarding. This year there has been an additional increase to this process. Safer Recruitment policy made by the Durham Diocese has been adopted by our PCC. This does add more work and policies that volunteers have to be made aware of and more interviews and increase to the overseeing of a volunteer.

This is all put in place to make sure all youth and children and vulnerable people are being well protected by the church.

I am a leader for YF and we have 6 youths coming along from 11-18 years old. We would like to increase that number so if you know anybody who would like to come along let me know. We are also looking for new leaders to come forward, let me know if you're interested.

Home group

We meet every other week and it has been good to welcome back someone who had left for a little while. We have a social time together and a spiritual thought for the day.

Alpha Course

We knew of a number of people that were interested in starting an Alpha course so we set one up and we have now done 6 sessions. There are 9 people attending the course along with Angela and I. The course is going very well we do have some good questions and good discussions together.

Priest Role

With Mother Gemma leaving we did expect an increase to the Priestly duties for the remaining clergy. This definitely has happened and caused us all to be taking different services across our group of churches. We greatly appreciate all the lay people who help in putting these services together also.

Once Covid restriction opened there was a rush of baptisms which sometime meant all three clergy were taking three baptisms on the same Sunday. This has now slowed down.

Angela and I also led some of the Wedding Preparation day for the first time, we enjoyed working has a team and a good day was had, we finished with a great Buffet meal which went down well, thanks for all who helped in making the day a success.

Personal News

It was about this time last year I was awaiting to hear if I had been fully signed off as a Priest. I did get the positive letter through and I made an appointment to see our Archdeacon Rick Simpson. This was to discuss the future and to be told about the process of applying for clergy vacancies that came up. I was told at this meeting that there would be no advertisement of job for 4 months, and then the jobs would come out about one a month. In reality there as only been three clergy jobs advertised in 10 months!

While waiting and watching I have realised that some jobs I can't apply for because they ask for experienced ministers and then the jobs a curate can apply for as lots of curates applying and so it is hard to be short listed for an interview. I have informed you of that because this leaves me feeling a little frustrated that I am so unsure to what the future holds or its time table. But I do need to close with a big thank-you for Stranton church in all their support to myself and my family while we go through this process, it is much appreciated indeed.

Reverend Clive Hall

STRANTON TODDLER GROUP

It was very encouraging to re-open the group in St Matthews Hall in September. I run the group on Tuesdays and Clare and Lynn run the Friday sessions. As the covid risk reduced significantly we restarted tentatively keeping our activities well-spaced and sharing very simple snacks to minimise infection risks.

Families were very pleased to return and quickly everything seemed "normal" again – so good to see the children playing together and parents / carers chatting and supporting one another. It's been great to have help in the kitchen from Emma (CoH) each week and Mary, Joyce and Angela helping when available.

I shall miss the many friends I have made there when we move in the summer and pray God will provide someone to keep the Tuesday session running.

Julie

MESSY CHURCH

What a joy to be able to meet again. We have changed our week to the 2nd Sunday in each month. It's also been great to welcome back all the helpers from before the pandemic and to have Rachel, Stella and Aneta boosting our team.

We've been able to re-engage with many of the families who were coming pre-pandemic and to welcome new families (several from toddlers).

We have changed our use of the two halls – mainly to keep people spaced out. Having our worship time with bible story, song and prayer in the small hall had worked really well as the acoustics are so much better. We've been spacing out our crafts and games in the big hall.

Thankyou to Mary who helps planning our sessions and to all the helpers with both crafts and food – special thanks to Maureen and Peter who prepare a wonderful tea for us all to share at the end.

We are looking forward to Messy Easter on Good Friday morning.

Mary has kindly offered to take on leading Messy Church from July...do hold her in your prayers as she takes on this valuable ministry.

Julie Shave

SUNDAY CLUB

Due to Covid it has been a challenge at times to ensure that Sunday Club was able to occur. At Christmas the Sunday Club took part in a Nativity and all of the children received a small present. Sunday Club took a short break during January to February, as the numbers of Covid cases rose, but has since returned and is being well attended.

The numbers range from 3 – 12 children and the age range is 5 – 14. Thank you to all of our leaders and helpers including Mary, Rachel, Gill, Pam and Helen for volunteering this year. Unfortunately, as Rachel leaves us we will be in need of an additional leader so volunteers are very welcome.

Kate Lawson Sunday Club Leader



YF continued by using Skype during Covid so we were very grateful to be able to be together in person and do games and talking about God where it is easier to communicate.

YF continues to grow and changes this year to our team we have added Rachel to Clive, Michaela and Peter and have been blessed by her contributions to the running of YF and pray for her as she moves on in her ministry. Beth has become our junior leader and is taking responsibility for games and offering a youth perspective to our discussions.

We have been to Pulse the Durham Diocese Youth Meetings at Durham Cathedral and have enjoyed our trips there to worship with other young Christian people.

We have been using material which combines talking points with games around the themes such as Easter or self-image to talk about our faith. The young people vocalise well what they feel and have safe space to do so. We have created a cosy area in the vestry for when we do our God talks and we find this works well for getting into the right space to talk about God.

Thank you for your continued prayers

YF Leadership Team



The Rainbows Group no longer meet at St Matthews. They have merged with the Seaton Group, the reason given - *not enough leaders*.



2021, another strange year!

We continued using Zoom until mid-June when we had 3 meetings outdoors up at West Rugby Club but had one on zoom as we kept getting updates of girls testing positive the next day!

One of the strange positive outcomes of the zoom meetings, has been that we have had one Brownie achieve GOLD the highest award in any section. We had the award ceremony in outside the family home in Wansbeck Gardens, a few Brownies and Guides were able to attend, we had cakes and juice, presenting The Gold Award badge and Certificate to Lara. A lovely event during very difficult times.

Many of the girls struggled with Zoom as did the leaders having to weekly modify the programme (which is organised with social interaction) to work on Zoom (each girl isolated). We have had fun sessions but the girls find it difficult to communicate with us or each other. On a positive note, we have had some girls' return, after such a long break who didn't join on zoom or drifted away from the zoom meetings, it has been wonderful to be guiding again with them. Also, during the time on zoom we have had new members join in both Brownies and Guides, they are a credit to themselves,

achieving a lot and managing to join fully into the face-to-face meetings. Some of the in Brownies are now some of our oldest Brownies

September arrived, but we had made the decision to meet on zoom for two weeks, then return face to face at the hall but using the car park for the meetings. We managed this for Brownies up to half term and played the first game outside until the middle of November. Unfortunately, some parents found this difficult to understand – so we lost girls.

We found meeting inside strange and a little stressful but as time has passed, the Brownies have started to settle in, as most have never met in the hall. The Guides took it in their stride, all following the protocol set down by Girlguiding and the hall. We are looking forward, in the future, to going back to the original times for the meetings.

The Spring term 2022 things are more social for the girls, group activities fun games, crafts all starting up again Hurrah!!!!!!

At the start of the year, we had two new leaders but in October both said they were struggling, so at the moment, they are not with us and are not sure if they will return, they were a huge positive to the meetings so are very much missed.

If there is anyone that would be interested in becoming a helper and/or Leader please contact me

Cheryl Mills

(Leader with Brownies & Guides)



4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade
Founded 1930
HQ - St. Matthews Community Centre

Find us on Facebook



It's good to report that we are still a fully functional Boys Brigade Company coming out the pandemic

We re-started fully on April 12th 2021 in all Sections

Our Numbers are Anchor Boys 13 Juniors 16 Company 14 and have maintained our leaders

We took part in the Harvest Festival, Mother's day Service and our Company will be playing our part in Easter Eggheads

We have held a Christmas Fayre since the pandemic rules were relaxed and are planning a Summer Fayre and Open Night

We are also holding our first camp near Pickering and so far 10 lads have booked their places

We have been visited by the Community Police and Territorial Army and clergy visits are re-starting

We have followed the story of Jonah (inspired by Michelle) and the Lord's Prayer - all backed up with activities

Our general programme has involved various games, challenges, marching, drill and competitions, all of which you can see on our Facebook page

Finally although we have a good leadership team - we could do with a female leader to help with the Anchor Boys on a Friday Night

George Bainbridge

Leader in Charge, 4th Hartlepool Boys Brigade

PASTORAL GROUP

We are currently a team of 6 – Mary Tones, Ian Walker, Rohan Wanduragala, Diana Wanduragala (associate member) and myself, led by Michelle. Since coming out of the various lockdowns, and as things have settled into a more normal pattern, the pastoral team have been able to return to visiting those who feel confident enough for us to do so, with telephone contact still being used where this has not been possible or as an addition to face-to-face contact. Sometimes pastoral care comes in the form of going for a walk together or meeting for coffee and home communion is still provided for those who want it – we are very flexible!

Unfortunately, during this last year several of our pastoral contacts have passed away – Prebekha Aпти, Evelyn Hartley, Carol Moore and most recently Pam Thompson. We feel their loss, but we are grateful to have been able to be there for them and remember with gratitude the time we spent together.

Many of the people we were contacting during the various stages of the pandemic have now returned to church, but we have repeated our delivery of Christmas and Easter cards to those who are still unable to attend services. They also receive copies of the weekly notice sheet, Signpost and in some cases bible notes, which all helps to keep them in the loop with what is going on in our church life.

Last year, Michelle re-introduced the opening up of the church building for two hours on Saturday mornings as a pastoral outreach strategy, giving people the opportunity to come in for a look round, to sit and reflect in a quiet and peaceful space or to have someone to talk to (all with the additional option of tea/coffee and a biscuit). Sometimes our visitors have just been walking past, seen the door open and wandered in. We have had people visit who attended services or celebrated weddings years ago or have a family connection with Stranton, whilst others have come to satisfy an interest in the history of the church (David House is usually on hand to help with this). These sessions have been suspended over the winter months, but are re-starting on 16 April and Michelle would love to hear from anyone who would be willing to volunteer for an occasional Saturday morning.

Michelle has also joined the Stranton lunch club which meets regularly for Sunday lunch and has been attending the coffee, cake and company afternoons at St Matthews, which she sees as a way of keeping in touch with people, as well as spending time with newer, younger members of the congregation. The excellent Lent course at St Luke's has also been instrumental in developing pastoral relationships across the three parishes and Michelle is currently planning a prayer and healing service to be held in May. All these activities are ways of reaching out and caring for each other.

There are now cards at the back of church which can be used (for themselves or others) by anyone wanting to request to be contacted by Michelle or a member of the pastoral team.

Pam Stockton

MOTHERS` UNION REPORT

Due to Covid we were unable to hold our meetings until September 2021. It was a Blessing to be able to meet again with our fellow members and catch up with what news that had filtered through our leaders in Durham and London.

Rev'd Micelle Delves is a member and spoke to us about how she was let to train as a Priest. We have been praying for her and all our clergy, churchwardens and for our church during these difficult times of lockdowns and injections.

In December we had an outing to the Marine Hotel in Seaton Carew for a Christmas Lunch which was enjoyed by all.

We recently renewed our M.U. vows led by our Deanery Leader Pamela Harding. We had hoped to enrol a new member who was unable to attend and will be enrolled in future.

Unfortunately we were unable to restart after Christmas due to further outbreaks of Covid in Hartlepool, but are now back in St Matthew's Community Centre.

Membership dropped slightly in 2021, two members resigned after illness. We now have fourteen faithful members.

I would like to thank Joan Herbert for serving many years as Treasurer. Joan kept our accounts in excellent order and was, and still is a great help to me. Also, I would like to thank Julie Shave for providing musical accompanying as we sing during our meetings. We will miss you Julie.

God Bless

Ann Courtenay

Branch Leader

BELLRINGING REPORT

Stranton's Tower Captain, Andy Kaye continues to suffer from bad health and, very reluctantly, has had to stand down from both ringing and his position. Andy's deputy, Joseph Wilson has stepped in as Tower Captain and he is well liked and supported by all the Hartlepool ringers.

Bell ringing at Stranton and the other two church towers has resumed as normal after lifting of government COVID restrictions. However, we continue to exercise precautions although some of us have been taken ill with COVID in recent months; all are now recovered.

Numbers of active ringers remain good but we have recently lost three of our regulars. Brian Telfer, sadly, passed away after a short illness, Olwyn Buttery has moved to Australia and Elle Buttery (no relative) has moved with her family to Lancashire. We will be looking for recruits.

The church kindly offered its facilities for the Thanksgiving Service, on Saturday 2nd April for Brian Telfer. Brian learned to ring at Stranton in his teens, joined the Army but on his return to Hartlepool he took it up again with renewed enthusiasm and was a respected and loyal member of the ringers. Our grateful thanks go to Peter Anderson as Churchwarden and to Paul Anderson who streamed the service for many friends of Brian to view including in Germany where he spent many years on military duty.

The faculty for refurbishment of Stranton's bells has taken a long time to be processed. Sufficient funds have been raised, the prime contractor, Taylor's of Loughborough and their subcontractors have been waiting patiently to start work. The Diocesan Clock Advisor has visited and has advised how the clock can be protected during the project. There is a slight possibility that bats may be using the belfry as a summer roost and a bat survey will be carried out during May. The Church Buildings Council advised the Diocese that in their opinion No 6 bell should not be retuned as it is a listed bell c1599.

The PCC appealed against this.

After considering the representations and evidence the Chancellor's judgement is - *Accordingly, a faculty will be granted for the full scope of the proposed works, including the retuning of bell no.6.*

We hope the work on the bells will start before the end of June.

Andrew Frost and Joseph Wilson Tower Captain

ST MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY CENTRE ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

The hall has been open now since April 12th 2021 since when groups have slowly returned as confidence has grown on how to manage Covid19.

Very much start and stop throughout 2021 with many changes in guidelines and regulations which were finally all lifted in July. By the end of September most groups had returned to the hall along with a number of new users. All of whom have grown in confidence in managing Covid19.

At the beginning of the year the new emergency lighting system installation was finally completed. This project was, in part, funded by a donation from the Communities of Hope capital buildings budget. In July we received a donation of £1,000 from the Probation Service towards kitchen equipment.

Social events such as Christmas Fairs have been held plus an Open Day for all hall users to display their activities was held together with JRF, CoH and BVNRA to allow residents hosted to see the facilities St Matthews has to offer and an opportunity for residents to give feedback on their expectations from their local community.

Working with BVNRA and the D543 campaign, in November we launched a fundraising appeal to finance the installation of a defibrillator at St Matthews. Within weeks we had raised the funds with matched funding from BVNRA and SMCC as well as generous donations from committee members and great support from many user groups in SMCC. The Defib was installed outside the small hall at the end of November.

During the Autumn we were able to accommodate the Regional Health Authority as a safe venue for vaccination clinics.

The car park was marked with a running track and was well used by Boys Brigade plus Guides and Brownies have used it as a safe way of meeting.

Going forward we will have to look at hiring rates as fuel costs will inevitably go up and decide what improvements we would like to make for the future.

The problem of litter is still there - even storm Arwen could not blow it all away.

Many thanks go to all those who have helped to keep the hall going through a difficult time, especially to Carol who inspired and helped a lot of hall users to develop Covid safety procedures to work to, and to Maureen for looking after the accounts.

George Bainbridge