



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

Earl Stonham with Stonham Parva

Parochial Church Council

Annual General Report
2022



**EARL STONHAM WITH STONHAM PARVA PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

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**EARL STONHAM WITH STONHAM PARVA
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the above presents the Annual Report for the year 2022. The report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act of 1993.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

St Mary's Church, Earl Stonham with Stonham Parva.

Correspondence address: The Rectory, The Street, Stonham Aspal, Stowmarket IP14 6AQ

Telephone: (01449) 711684

email address: revphilippayne@btinternet.com

The PCC is a charity exempt from registration with the Charity Commission.

The Sunday School Trust administers funds originating from the sale of the village school, which are used for the purposes of Christian Education within the parish of Earl Stonham. It is separate from the PCC with the Rector and the Churchwardens as trustees.

Bank: Santander UK plc.

Independent Examiner: Mike Cherry

Address: Weylands Farmhouse, Forward Green, Stowmarket, IP14 5EW

PCC OFFICERS AND MEMBERS AS OF APRIL 2022

Revd Philip Payne (Rector)*

Mr Henry Stanford (Reader)*

Mrs Jane Poch (Elder and Churchwarden)*

Mr Mark Parry (Churchwarden)*

Mrs Maggie Podd (Deanery Synod rep)*

Mrs Frankie Wicks *

Mr John Jones (Treasurer)

Mrs Caroline Shield (Secretary)

Mr Mike Dawe

**ex officio*

Mrs Anne Stanford

COMMITTEES

The PCC has the following sub-committees:

Fabric Committee: John Jones, Mike Dawe, Mark Parry

Standing Committee: Revd Philip Payne, Jane Poch, Mark Parry, John Jones, Caroline Shield

Social Committee: Frankie Wicks, Caroline Shield

THE PARISH TEAM

Priest in Charge: Revd Philip Payne

(01449) 711684

Reader: Mr Henry Stanford

(01449) 711742

Churchwarden and Elder: Mrs Jane Porch

(01449) 710809

Churchwarden: Mr Mark Parry

(01449) 711816

Secretary: Mrs Caroline Shield

(01449) 711584

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The PCC has 9 members (ex officio and elected) and the electoral roll had 47 names on it for 2022. The PCC held 5 meetings during the year, in addition to the Annual Vestry Meeting and the Annual Parochial Meeting, which was held on Wednesday 30th March 2022.

Discussions at PCC Meetings included: Quinquennial, legacy, Eco-church questionnaire, GRAVE talk, Stonham Parva church. ***Caroline Shield - PCC Secretary***

RECTOR'S REPORT – NORTH BOSMERE BENEFICE

As the disruptive impact of COVID slowly receded, and it finally looked as if we were returning to something like a pre-pandemic normality, war broke out in Eastern Europe. On 24 February 2022, Russian forces entered Ukraine en masse initiating a full-scale war which is still ongoing. The impact of this invasion is being felt globally; contributing to (inter alia): a rapid rise in energy costs; food shortages (price rises); political instability. Locally, the largest and most noticeable impact has been a significant 'cost of living' increase/crisis together with fears for the ability of many to heat homes during the winter. Fortunately, within the villages of this benefice, we have seen little evidence of fuel problems. Take-up of warm-room and related initiatives appeared to be more related to a need for social contact (a COVID Isolation hangover?) than inability to heat homes.

In the report which follows I have sought to identify key features of church/parish life over the last year. There are just too many names deserving of thanks so I have refrained from naming anyone. My thanks to all who contribute so much to our community life.

Royal Occasions

At Pentecost, the nation celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 11. Acts of worship were held across the benefice with many integrated into other community activities. Then in September we mourned her passing.

Worship & Fellowship

By January 2022 we had settled into a pattern of regular worship which sought to hold one service of holy Communion and one non-eucharistic service in each parish per month. On-line services continued, jointly with the Claydon/Henley benefice; at one service per Sunday and one on Tuesday. A mid-week Holy Communion service is held, once per month, in the Earl Stonham parish room. Advent, Lent, Easter and Holy Week, Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas and other special occasions all added to a richer pattern than had been possible for some time. Coffee after services is back on the agenda.

Following extensive (and expensive) work by Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), we were able to celebrate Harvest with a Choral Evensong in St Mary, Stonham Parva (followed by Carols by candlelight in December). Our thanks to CCT for all their hard work and their permission for us to use the building.

Study Groups et al

A number of study groups met throughout the year. Material covered included Acts, Mark, Themes in the Old Testament and 'Hope Explored', a 3 session course held in Earl Stonham village Hall and attended by some 20 people from across the benefice.

Occasional Offices

Weddings A total of 7 weddings were conducted; 1 each at Earl Stonham and Stonham Aspal, 2 at Crowfield and 3 at Coddenham.

Funerals A total of 34 funerals and/or interments were conducted across the 8 parishes (Includes Crematorium only for parishioners).

Baptisms 10 Services of Holy Baptism were conducted.

Social Welfare

In all 10 villages, church members continue to play an active part in village social and welfare life. The weekly email-shot and hard-copy mailing continued.

Service & Soup (formerly Haysel House). Now firmly established in it's new home at Gosbeck, the twice-monthly Service and Soup continues to serve a varied community. Providing much appreciated social time as well as food and reflection. Coffee Morning/Fellowship. 2022 has finally seen the return of regular coffee mornings in Crowfield, Coddenham, Creting St Peter, Earl Stonham and Stonham Aspal.

Social Welfare Individual parish charities and worshippers continue to provide financial support to individuals and community projects (including school support, FIND and the Stowmarket food bank), frequently 'in confidence'. Less tangibly, it is clear that our church buildings are providing space. Away from public worship and other events, individuals come and go; finding peace, sanctuary, a place of quiet and, we pray, the presence of God. This is why we work to keep the doors open; to offer a place of welcome.

Schools

Stonham Aspal CEVAP As previously reported (2021), following the resignation of Mrs Waldron (to take up a new role with Her Majesty's Inspectors (OFSTED) at the end of 2021, Mr Ben Hemmings took up the appointment of Head Teacher at Stonham Aspal School after Easter 2022.

Creting St Mary CEVAP On 9th February 2022, Creting St Mary School received an HMI Section 8 Inspection (OFSTED). The outcome was 'Creting St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.' Well done to Mrs Friar and her team for all their hard work.

In addition to various site visits, each school held 4 services in their respective parish churches (1 per term plus Harvest); Creting St May also observed a minute's silence, prayer and reading of the role of honour at the village War Memorial (in the churchyard). In addition, Stonham Aspal Year 1 attended church for a teaching session on baptism, with enactment.

Conclusion

Another busy year. Much continues to happen across the benefice, with the church and its people contributing widely to community life. However, it is important to note that attendance at regular services is slowly dropping and the number of people available to lead and enable this breadth of engagement is also falling.

Rev'd Philip Payne - Rector

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding continues to be important in our parish. During 2022 we had one incident which made us think but the diocesan office was very helpful in answering questions and there was no cause for concern.

Safeguarding continues to be on the PCC Agenda for every meeting with prominent notices with contact details displayed in the Church and the Parish Room.

During the year all the members of the PCC have updated their training and been given reminders by the Safeguarding Officer, Frankie Wicks. She has continued as Safeguarding Officer and keeps a record of training done.

The diocese changed its system of Safeguarding Training in October 2019. There are now 3 levels

- Basic Awareness
- Foundation Course
- Leadership Course

Both the Basic Awareness and the Foundation Course are easily available online at the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich website. The recent editions of these courses online are easier to use and more informative than previous versions. PCC members are expected to do both the Basic and the Foundation Courses. The Leadership Course is for clergy, ministry team members. As our Open the Book team expands these people will need new DBS checks.

Safeguarding in your parish – who's who?

The Incumbent/priest in charge Rev Philip Payne 01449 711684

The churchwardens Mark Parry 01449 711816 Jane Porch 01449 710809

The Parish Safeguarding Officers Mrs Frankie Wicks 01449 711222

The team of licensed/accredited ministers Mr Henry Stanford 01449 711742 Mrs Frankie Wicks 01449 711222 Mrs Jane Porch 01449 710809 Mr Mark Parry 01449 711816

Hall managers and bookers Mrs Frankie Wicks 01449 711222

Who will you talk to if you observe or are told about Safeguarding concerns?

Any of the above

In case of emergency where harm may come 999

Concerns of harm

Suffolk County Council Customer First 0808 8004005

Suffolk Police 101/ 01473 613500

If against a member of the clergy, to the Diocesan Bishop Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor 01638 718939

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Childline 0800 1111

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre 0808 1000 900 <http://ceop.police.uk/>

Women's Aid and Refuge Crisis National Helpline 0808 2000 247

Frankie Wicks - Safeguarding officer

FABRIC REPORT

2022 was a much more positive though still challenging year for the community and St. Mary's remained a beacon for all the community. It was lovely to once again have the full range of services in the church for all to take part in.

There have been no major structural issues. The plaster of Damocles was brought back to earth on the expert advice of the architect by your Churchwarden and a long stick, restoring full seating capacity for the first time in a while. We were able to have a new Quinquennial and whilst there are no urgent structural items there are a number worthy of further action and these can now be assessed. We are fortunate to be in receipt of a recent legacy that can hopefully be used in part as seed money towards grant funding for these and other, wider church needs. A new contractor needs to be found for guttering maintenance. There have been ongoing running repairs including to the heating and plumbing, in the church and Parish Room. Thanks in particular to Tony Turner and Barbara and Brian Heard for their contributions.

Regular church cleaning, flower arranging, sidesman duty and readers and intercession takers are now exactly that once more – our thanks to all those who both do and arrange these activities, which are a much appreciated part of church life. The churchyard has once more been kept tidy particularly by John Bull, ably assisted by John Jones and others, all of whom have given kindly of their time for which we are in turn grateful.

The annual inventory check will be carried out and the inventory updated.

I have continued to update and expand the content of our A Church Near You page, and that of the Benefice. Despite technical limitations it contains details of all Benefice services, Philip's weekly reflection and Liz Ince's pew sheet, a reminder of physical and Zoom services and other, seasonal pages. We have a link for general donations to the church. The latest stats suggest show continued growth to over 10,000 views this year. I also provide monthly and other information to the Earl Stonham village web site, and we "own" and I maintain the St Mary's Earl Stonham web domain which mainly contains a link to our ACNY page.

Stonham Parva was at last repaired, thanks to a significant Heritage Recovery Fund grant. We were and are able to once more hold services in the church, although there has since been a further issue that means the chancel is closed pending investigation by the CCT. Thanks once more to Mary Hamilton for liaising so effectively with the Churches Conservation Trust field officer. The village has become much more involved and is holding regular coffees mornings and has taken over cleaning the church, all of which is great news for the church and its community.

It remains an enormous privilege to serve as Churchwarden and fabric person and I would like to thank everyone in the Parish, Benefice and beyond who continue to be such a great support.

Mark Parry - Churchwarden

THE CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

As we gradually came out of Covid restrictions a new pattern of services developed with Earl Stonham having 11am Holy Communion on the 2nd Sunday each month and Morning Worship on the 4th Sunday. All 8 parishes in the benefice worshiped together on 5th Sundays going round the different churches in turn.

A Zoom service continues each Sunday morning shared with the Claydon parishes. There is also a short Morning Prayer on Zoom at 9am each Tuesday and a service of Holy Communion at 10am on

one Wednesday/month in the Parish Room. Of course this all changes when special times occur during the Church year or the Nation's year.

Frankie Wicks retired from official Lay Ministry and leading services in February although she is still involved in the community.

There were big celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in early June. A Special Beacon raised and lit on Forward Green with singing led by a Jubilee choir. The church and much of the Village was decorated and bunting was sold out. A 1950's Supper was held in the Village Hall, also festooned with streamers and with even a model aircraft flying over all. Then on the Sunday there was a Thanksgiving service in church and a shared village picnic with a centrepiece of a Union Jack made from red/white/blue iced cupcakes by the WI.

The news that the Queen had died in early September shook the whole community. The church had a black covered table with her photograph and a Book of Condolence for anyone who wished to have a quiet time in our beautiful peaceful space.

Building work was completed on Stonham Parva Church and at last we could use it again. Many thanks go to the Churches Conservation Trust who had funded this huge project. A celebration service of thanksgiving produced a large congregation as did the Carols by Candlelight later in the year. Roy Tricker gave a talk and tour of the church which was well supported especially by people from Stonham Parva. Their Parish Council hopes to be more involved and organise events in the church so we look forward to 2023.

Frankie Wicks

ST MARY'S BELLS REPORT

Ringling at Earl Stonham continues with monthly service ringling, with the help of ringers from nearby towers. We were very pleased to be able to ring for HM Queen Elizabeth second's Platinum Jubilee in June and were able to ring at many other towers on that day.

September 19th, State funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth second a bell was tolled for five minutes prior to the funeral. Ringling took place for the Harvest Festival, Remembrance Service and the Annual Carol Service on Christmas Eve in 2022. Debenham Ringers continue to ring a quarter peal once a month. No ringling for weddings during the past year.

Ringling for the King is now the next big ringling event and many towers have been able to recruit new ringers anxious to be able to take part in Ringling for the King over the weekend of May 6th.

We are always ever hopeful of being able to recruit new ringers to Earl Stonham. It is an ancient art and long may it continue.

Margaret Cherry

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

We continued to be represented by Maggie Podd and Rev'd Philip Payne. John Jones was serving as Deanery Organiser for the northern (Bosmere) part of the Deanery.

The Deanery Synod met three times during 2022 in St Peter's Church Hall, Stowmarket and Earl Stonham Village Hall.

At the March meeting Rev'd Stuart Batten and Rev'd Phil Dykes made a presentation on the Diocese Vocations Roadshow. Rev'd Canon Mark Howarth, Diocese Environment Officer, spoke on the need for a Deanery Eco Champion in the Deanery. It was highlighted that there was an environment section on the Diocese website and two full time eco officers at Church House. Churches were encouraged to consider Eco Church Awards. For outreach projects Parishes were requested to ask for advice and support from the Lightwave Team. Thanks were expressed to the Rural Dean, Rev'd Canon Diane Williams, her last meeting before retirement. She served as Rural Dean for over 13 years.

At the June meeting Father Philip Gray, Vicar of Mendlesham, talked on Healing Ministry. Rev'd Canon Mark Haworth gave an update on Our Churches in the Environment and the need for Deanery Eco Champions. Benefices were asked to look at ways they could meet the eco challenges faced including completing the eco survey and considering an A ROCHA assessment. There was also an update on measures proposed as part of the Deanery Plan. At the October meeting there was a Safeguarding update from Lisa Hicks (Deanery Synod and Diocese Safeguarding Trainer for the area). She asked for benefices to volunteer to host her to lead training sessions: one training session for each of the three safeguarding courses in the Deanery each year. Online training and face to face would be available.

As Deanery Organiser for Bosmere, John continued to report on Parish Share issues.

There were updates from the Diocesan and General Synods, including discussions on the Living in Love and Faith initiative.

Maggie Podd

TREASURER'S REPORT

In 2022 we resumed a more normal pattern of church activities, following the lifting of most Covid restrictions, albeit with a reduced frequency of Sunday services. As a result, collections have increased, as has the cost of heating. The bulk of our income, however, continues to come from the Parish Giving scheme and from monthly standing orders, which were unaffected by the Covid restrictions. .

Expenses in total came to £29,000, a slight increase on last year, and we ended the year with a small deficit, of £810.

The Designated Fund, of £2,300 from the Atherton Bequest, was created to be used for enhancements to the church fabric or furnishings. So far none of this has been spent.

An unexpected event in 2021 was the receipt of a legacy of £70,663 from the late Peggy Badger, of Kesgrave, who had grown up at Red House Farm and is remembered by some long-standing residents as a Sunday School teacher here. We have placed the legacy in a Designated Fund, pending a decision on how to spend the money. So far, we have used just £2,846, to repair and redecorate the exterior of the Parish Room.

Collections for charities amounted to £6,105, double the 2021 total and above the level in recent pre-Covid years, helped in particular by £1,372 raised for the Ukraine appeal.

Our Balance Sheet shows a sum of £96,850 held on our CBF deposit account, mostly because of the legacy received.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has been so generous in supporting both our charity collections and the church's running costs.

John Jones - Treasurer