

THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR OF 2025
ST MARY THE VIRGIN, HUNTINGFIELD PARISH IN THE
DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH

Aims and Purposes

St Mary's PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the Rev'd Dominic Doble incumbent in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through;

Worship and prayer, growing in faith and experience

Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish

Missionary and outreach work

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church.

Achievements and Performance

These are the activities undertaken over the last year with the intention that in five years time we will involve the majority of the village population of 150 in one or more of our 'inclusive' activities and worship.

Electoral Roll

At present there are 27 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 8 of whom are not resident within the parish. 10 names were added during the year and 1 was removed through death.

The PCC has operated with 6 members over the last twelve months. An aim for the PCC was to endeavour to recruit new members. In April 2025 the PCC were delighted to welcome Tony Howe aboard with all his skills and knowledge on the environment. We look forward to working with him. The PCC will continue to actively recruit new members.

Communicative

The PCC continues to communicate with their Parish and beyond by using various means of communication. The parish notice board is kept up to date, publicising Services and events. The notice boards in the porch are refreshed throughout the year. There is an 'Upcoming Events' board inside the church. The PCC and Church warden write bi-monthly for the village magazine. A parish column is submitted most months for the Blyth Valley Times.

Monthly services are advertised on the Huntingfield Community page on Facebook.

The PCC ensures that their stock of postcards, notelets, guide books and Local Honey are always available to purchase from the church. All merchandise continues to prove popular and brings in a steady income either by cash donations or by Contactless payments.

The addition of St Mary the Virgin Podcast continues to be a great success. Produced by Tony Morelli and narrated by Catriona Chase from Cookley. Since its introduction in July 2024 it has had in excess of 150 downloads.

Environmental

The upkeep of the churchyard is maintained by a small band of volunteers. The grass is maintained as suggested by The Blyth Valley Team Joint Council.

A new petrol trimmer was purchased to aid in the upkeep of the churchyard, cost £849 and has proved an excellent purchase. By maintaining 'long and short' areas of grass there has been a marked increase in the number of Grass snakes and Slow worms sighted.

In March we were awarded a 'Bronze Eco Award', a lovely recognition of everyone's efforts.

Two events have been held to promote the environment this year; firstly An Early Morning Bird walk of approx 2 miles taking in the sights and sounds and using the expert knowledge of Tony Howe and hosting our second Moth survey which once again proved popular and also attracted some rare species of moths.

The new Oak gate posts bought the previous year have now been installed and the original gates are hanging perfectly once again.

Due to a bumper harvest of Bramley Apples this year, bucket fulls were left in the porch for people to take, either free or for a small donation. This proved popular and cash donations were slightly increased during this time and pleasingly very few apples went to waste.

Growing in influence with community engagement

The PCC works hard to engage members of the parish with a variety of events.

At the last APCM the Baptismal and Burial book were out for people to peruse. This was successful as it swelled the number of people attending and all reported on how they enjoyed it. The Birdwalk and Moth Survey bring different members of the community together as well as familiar faces and so they will be repeated.

Unfortunately we didn't have anyone representing us this year for the Annual Ride and stride but more effort will be made earlier in the coming year to promote and enlist riders for this event. Successful events have been the Commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the ending of WW11 The church bells rang out, fizz and canapes served.

A Macmillan Afternoon Tea was held in the Churchyard raising £350 for Macmillan's cancer care fund. A big thank you to all who baked delicious cakes.

Harvest Supper was once again a great success with over 50 people from 3 parishes attending. Dominic gave an interesting talk on the different types of drums he has and expertly demonstrated the playing of them much to everyone's delight. The raffle raised £117 which was donated to Halesworth Community Larder after the Harvest festival

In June we welcomed the Lowestoft Longshore Men to give a Sea Shanty concert in the church. The acoustics of the church are excellent so along with an appreciative audience the Shanty Men were equally delighted to hear themselves' sounding so good'

A new initiative this year has been the launch of the 'Community Debate' This is open to all within the Blyth Valley. At the first debate in November held in the Hub, we were delighted to welcome an audience from; Huntingfield, Cookley, Halesworth, Holton and Ubbeston. Veronica Mower a Lay Reader with the BVTeam kindly stepped in as Chair and did a sterling job chairing a difficult topic "Assisted Dying" The next debate will take place at the beginning of March.

Advent and Lent

The Carol and Easter services were both beautiful services but unfortunately numbers attending were down. This year we welcomed Rev'd Adrian Daffern to lead our Carol Service and we look forward to seeing him at Huntingfield more, especially as he is an accomplished organ player. In April the Benefice welcomed Assistant Curate Edmund Smith to the fold. Edmund has proved a great addition to the Team. Throughout Advent he led Compline services at the church which were much appreciated by those in attendance. Dominic legally became our Rector in August after a lovely service at Cookley Church.

The PCC and volunteers together continue to fund raise in order to maintain the fabric of the church. Our thanks to Emma and Jo for a fantastic effort in raising over £1000 for church funds in the summer by putting on a Dinner and Dance.

The Organ and Fire Extinguishes have both had their annual service.

This year the PCC has made donations to following;

£395 Mercy Ships

£20 Suffolk Historic Churches

£117 Halesworth Community Larder

£250 St Mary's Halesworth Youth Work

£250 Halesworth Museum

St Mary's continues to attract many visitors on a daily basis. We are most grateful for the donations made which help in the upkeep of the building. We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church and churchyard the place it is today.