

Parish Review of the Year 2023

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

Over the last year the PCC has met 5 times. We would also like to mention all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is. Whether they open the church, tighten the bells, keep the church clean or maintain the churchyard we are thankful.

Over the last year up until 31st Jan we have had;

1 Baptism

2 Weddings

6 Funerals

Church maintenance is ongoing as you would expect with any Grade 1 listed Building. We have had a leaking roof repaired. A large crack underneath the East Window filled. The church bells oiled & all the lightbulbs replaced.

A variety of events have taken place in and around the church including fundraising and social events. The PCC agreed that 10% of our unrestricted income would be donated to charity.

Over the last year we have been able to distribute this money between; Huntingfield Kids Club, Halesworth Community Larder, Halesworth Dementia Carers Fund and Kegara Hospital appeal in Rwanda.

We were delighted to welcome Revd Alison Alder to help with our Bug Safari in April. 24 young people spent a very lively morning in and around the church looking for and identifying bugs and their habitats. A 'nest building' exercise rounded off the morning and it only went to prove ; small birds are better nest builders than small children.

Three months later it was the turn of the older members of the community to participate in a 'Moth Survey' This proved to be a very popular event with over 40 people attending (young and old) despite the early start to catch and count the moths. Our grateful thanks to Tony Howe for organising the event and to Matthew Deans, Suffolks very own Moth expert for advising us on the species of moths found that morning.

To celebrate St George's day we held a Bring and Buy sale in the church raising £120 towards church funds. We have extended our merchandise on offer by adding a full colour greetings card of the aisle and nave. Two prints by the renowned local artist David Gentleman have been produced as notelets, sold as a pack of 6 within a presentation wallet. Both notelets and cards are for sale from the church. All proceeds to the church maintenance fund.

There have been three notable occasions this year when the church has been filled with people and the sound of their wonderful singing.

Firstly, we were delighted when Archdeacon Rich Henderson chose St Mary the Virgin for his Visitation service to admit his Churchwardens for another year and The Revd Joshua Bailey was licensed as rural Dean of Waveney and Blyth.

Secondly; Pop Chorus entertained us in their very own 'rock and roll style ' whilst raising money for Halesworth Dementia carers fund.

Finally, our Carol Service was held the Friday before Christmas. The church looked beautiful lit by dozens of candles and the pews filled up quickly. Carols were sung, lessons were read and 'Smoking Bishop' was drunk. A big thank you to the 75 people who attended.

The PCC are grateful to the Bellringing team who regularly come along and ring the bells. It was great to hear their ¼ peal for the King's Coronation.

September brings with it the annual Ride and Stride event. This year St Mary's had 3 riders who on one of the hottest days of the year managed to cycle to 12 churches but were rewarded at each church with cool refreshments and tasty bakes whilst raising money for Suffolk Historic Churches.

At times we hold church/community events in the village Hub. This year four such events have been held; A Coffee Morning raising a magnificent £935 for the Turkish Earthquake appeal. Macmillan Coffee Morning raising £250

A Souper Saturday event where locals were invited to a soup lunch for a small donation to the Halesworth Community Larder.

Our ever popular Harvest Supper where this year over forty people enjoyed a two course home cooked supper.

In November we gathered around the War Memorial for the annual Service of Remembrance. It was well attended and once again we thank Rose Thompson a teenager of the village who read out the names of the fallen.

As we move into the New Year we will endeavour to continue our efforts in engaging the community into the life of the church through social and themed events. Consideration will also be given to 'fundraising'

People expressing an interest in the church as a building or place of worship should be encouraged to join the Electoral roll or become a member of the PCC.