

St Margaret's

Hemingford Abbots

Year in Review 2019 - 2020

St Margaret's Church Hemingford Abbots



Introduction

The church year has been extended by Bishop's Instrument and the Annual Meeting and elections will take place later in the year. However, it seemed right to produce our 'Year in Review' at a time when we can look back over the blessings of the last year and not have our minds dominated by what will undoubtedly be a time of great sadness for many. By God's grace when we come to write our next 'Year in Review' we will have moved again to a time when we witness the parish and our nation beginning to flourish again.

The past year has been one in which we have enjoyed a larger congregation once a month on the third Sunday, and a growing sense of fellowship. 2019 saw a most wonderful Flower Festival, through which the village contributes significantly to the maintenance of our twelfth century church under the ever-active eye of our churchwarden David Wordsworth. I mention David, as he has been a tireless servant to us all.

I'd like to thank my colleagues for stepping in to preach and preside at Eucharist, especially Judith Bolton – now taking a more 'retired' commitment, and Brian Atling who continues to take the

lion's share of our 8.30 services. It has also been good to have Mike Booker and Sid Bridges preach and preside.

Jan Smith ventured to the dizzy heights of our pulpit as part of her ordination training with ERMCC. We look forward to her being ordained as deacon this year to serve as my curate and develop her ministry with the Deaf Church.

I commend this report to your reading, so make a cuppa and sit down.

Rev Peter Cunliffe

Churchwardens

We could have never imagined that we would write our churchwardens' report in such sad and hard times as the current pandemic. Everything is different: people are in lockdown, the church doors stay locked, there is heaps of bad news all around and a lot of anxiety. But then there is hope and faith and love. No matter how different and how technically hard it might be for some of us, we now meet online, to worship and to pray together, but also to just chat and stay in touch! We meet for Sunday service, Morning Prayer, Night Prayer, afternoon tea, coffee morning and Sunday coffee. That's

quite a generous offer from the organisers. Thank you, Peter, Judith, Jan, Janine, Brian, Mike and all those behind the scenes, in both congregations.

Our churchwardens and deputies team: David, Daniela, John and Sheila work well together, complementing each other with our special skills but all having the same desire to serve God and the congregation and be a solid support to Peter and the ministry team. And we couldn't do our work without the help of many selfless souls in our congregation. A big "thank you" to them all!

How fortunate we are to have such a beautiful, clean, bright, warm and welcoming church, where we can freely worship. We are spoilt with the many types of services we can attend at St. Margaret's or St. James' on a regular basis. We are grateful to Peter and his ministry team for leading all these services.

Apart from the regular services, we also had a few special ones. The Harvest Festival brought us together for celebrating the harvest and giving thanks for our farmers and all the fruit of the earth. Our gifts were shared between St Ives Food Bank and Kings Ripton Court. The Harvest

lunch was well attended by members of both congregations. We had good food, some harvest crackers, Richard Wallis's talk and a joyful spirit; the collection went to Mission Possible.

On Remembrance Sunday the church seemed too small for all the Scouts, Cubs and Brownies and their families. The children baked and raised funds for *Help the Heroes*. The magical, well attended Advent and Christmas Carol Service (the latter with mince pies and mulled wine) and the Christingle, all helped us to get into the true spirit of Christmas which we then celebrated at the Christmas Eve midnight Eucharist followed by a Carol Service on Christmas morning.

We are grateful for our beautiful choir, who led by Charles, delights us with hymns, psalms, anthems and carols at regular or special services during the year. The services wouldn't be the same without their voices.

We have to mention with gratitude, the group of readers, intercessions leaders and sides persons. They bring their personal touch to our services, by presenting to us God's word, by putting their heart in the prayers they lead or by welcoming

everybody with warmth and a smile. For the beautiful flower arrangements that bring colour, scent and elegance to the church a big “thank you” to the Flower Guild, led by Bridget.

We also have to say “thank you” to the bell ringers, led by Sharon and Martin, for their professionalism and dedication in putting out the call to worship, in the most traditional way. The coffee and biscuits (and the occasional cake) after the Sunday services, give us the opportunity to share with each other the latest news in our lives, to debate or just chat about current topics. We are grateful for this special time to Sheila, her “official” team and all the ad-hoc helpers. Last but not least, our gratitude goes to Carol and David’s team, who labour for keeping our church beautifully clean.

We are forever grateful to Rachel and Joanne, in the Parish Office, for their administrative support, vital for our church, especially for their help with the magazine. The PCC feels that the magazine is an important connection point for the church with everybody in the village and continues to support it, despite being costly to produce.

Karen and John are diligently

managing our finances, which we appreciate and we thank them.

Last summer saw again our church and gardens in the village wearing their best Sunday bests, to the delight of more than a thousand visitors. The Flower Festival has been always a proud moment in the village’s life, bringing everybody together: to work and to celebrate at the end. Our gratitude goes to the Festival organisers and to the Friends of St. Margaret’s. The funds raised are, wisely, both managed by the Friends and used by the PCC for maintaining the church building.

It is here that we have to mention the huge effort that the Fabric Committee - led by David and faithfully supported by John - have made for repairing and improving the church building and its interior. Read their report and you will be impressed. Our profound gratitude for all their work!

We are very proud to mention the publishing of our new Service Books and grateful to Peter and the group of devoted reviewers who worked hard producing them. May it be that many, many people attending our services in years to come will use the books!

On a sadder note: we had several

break-in incidents to the vestries – nothing stolen but locks were damaged and needed replacing; we had two incidents of theft from individuals in church and regular thefts from the candle moneybox. The police were involved but the cases were not solved. The PCC was investigating the possibility of installing some extra security measures. At least the lead roof is well protected with a professional alarm, as lead theft has been an increasing epidemic recently. We hope and we pray that the perpetrators, whoever they were, will find other decent and legal income sources and turn their interest away from St. Margaret's.

It has been a bit over a year since St. Margaret's joined the Parish Giving Scheme. Experience has shown the increase of income in parishes that have joined the scheme. We are yet to assess the changes. We need to mention again that our income is in deficit to our outgoings and encourage those who have not joined yet to do so. Please help us to keep St. Margaret's open and functional, as we have always known her.

We pray and eagerly wait for the day when we will be all back in church, to worship together, able to sit next to each other and share a handshake or a hug.

*Daniela Spilca and David
Wordsworth, Churchwardens*

Family Service

The Family Service held on the second Sunday of the month has a good attendance of at least 3 families and much of the whole church family. Janine Hamilton leads these 'Services of the Word' with music on keyboard from Pete Allen and the youngsters help with readings and some musical accompaniment.

Traditional hymns are mixed with more modern songs and talks are sometimes accompanied with crafts for everyone. Remembrance service in November included the local Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Brownie groups and in December the Christingle service.

We sponsor a child, Boramungu, through Compassion and Amy Holt from Compassion came to talk to us in March.

Everyone is welcome to join us at this service.

Janine Hamilton

Lay Ministry

As part of the 'ministry team', the Lay Ministers meet monthly to eat, talk and pray together.

LLM's have had to undergo more advanced and detailed Safeguarding courses this year that we have all completed.

Gerald Barrett has continued to lead services and preach at both St James' and St Margaret's. As ever, he is particularly grateful to both Judith Hall and Charles Beresford for their support and encouragement.

He has continued as a Day Chaplain at Ely Cathedral and has attended 'Living Word' sessions at Field Lodge under the leadership of Judith Hall. He has continued his responsibility for organising the rota of speakers for the 'Thought for the Day' at the monthly Parish Lunch and expresses his thanks to all who have contributed throughout the year.

He writes that, "opportunities for ministerial development began with a stimulating School of Theology day at Oak Hill Theological College during the summer. Amongst other opportunities for learning were a series of seminars providing a Christian perspective on the

influence of technology on the various stages of life which was fascinating and frightening in equal measure and, by way of contrast, two lectures on the distorted view of Christ held by some female African theologians."

Trish Latimer led and preached a few times at Matins during the year but has now retired from her role as an LLM. We thank her for her service to us over a number of years.

Tim Wetherfield has been broadening his experience this year by leading and preaching at the various services at St Margaret's and has really valued these opportunities.

Liz Pinnock only preached at the Carol service this year but has had a full year. She completed her final year as Chair of Ely Diocesan Board of Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers) in May. She continues as a Selection Advisor for those coming forward for selection to train as LLMs. Numbers exploring this vocation continue to rise and last year there were three full Selection Days (the interview stage). The Diocesan Director of Vocations has created a Wider Vocations Team which includes all those involved in exploring vocation for both ordination and

Lay Ministry pathways. Liz is part of this team, which meets regularly for lunch with invited speakers. In the last year, this included the National Officer for Young Vocations who gave us a helpful insight into nurturing vocation amongst the younger generations. Liz has written for the Diocesan Sunday Resources - a resource for churches without anyone to lead worship. The Disability Advisory Group on which she served is currently without a leader so is in abeyance.

PCC Report

The PCC met 8 times under normal circumstances and on 15th April met via Zoom meetings. This should have been our last before the APCM. We welcomed two new members this year on to PCC who have proved invaluable; they are Liz Booker and JoAnne Rutter. David Wordsworth and Daniela Spilca returned for another term as churchwardens and John Hyde and Sheila Holmes returned as deputy churchwardens.

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) was launched in 2019; so far we have 24 members along with 15 people who pay by standing order as well as those who give annually

or every 6 months. The PCC would like to encourage as many members of the congregation as possible to join the PGS as it helps enormously with budgeting.

In the last few weeks no offertory has been received at church of course; it could be that those of you who give by this means might consider making a donation and also joining the PGS. Do feel free to talk to David, Daniela, Peter or John about the advantages of this scheme.

The long awaited service booklet is finally in operation. The old served us well for a good number of years. The many unused hymn and prayer books, in the men's vestry, have been donated to Africa4Books. Charles sold some of the other unused books to other churches.

The PCC thank you for your support and trust as they continue their work on your behalf. Please pray that with God's help and guidance they will continue to act wisely.

Acting Secretary

Music - Worship

From the last APCM in April 2019 until 15th March 2020 music continued to be a significant element in worship at St Margaret's. Then the coronavirus pandemic necessitated the closure of all churches. Our online parish services with St James' now include recorded hymns and worship songs.

However, for most of the year the historic pipe organ and the robed choir have continued to lead congregational singing at the 9.30 services, except on the second Sundays when the Family services were accompanied on the keyboard. The reflective Holy Communion services at 8.30 on alternate Sundays were said without music.

Musically the aim has been to complement the readings and seasons in the church's year with tunes that are easy for everyone to sing or listen to. The choices of the 246 hymns, the 24 chanted psalms and canticles and the 33 choir items aimed to combine relevance with familiar tunes and with new items from time to time.

We have continued to use musical settings of the **Sung Eucharist**

service on alternate Sundays, with two of the three settings having been composed locally by David Yeandle and Philip Godfrey. Several members of the St James' congregation have been regular participants on the third Sundays. The monthly **Family Service**, devised by Janine Hamilton, continued to use a mixture of hymn tunes and worship songs. The monthly **Matins or Evensong** services based on the traditional Book of Common Prayer usually included a choir anthem. The easy melodies of the chanted psalms and canticles enabled the congregation to sing them as well as the choir, and the printed music helped this.

The number in the regular choir varied from 9 to 12. Gillian is a welcome new soprano. We bid adieu to 3 long-serving members: Sally has retired and re-joined the congregation; Mike Sullivan has moved to Berkshire; David Jones has died. Each of them made very significant contributions to the music and support of the choir at St Margaret's.

The practices on Fridays from 6.00 to 7.00 pm help familiarity with the music on Sundays and at special services. Incidentally, regular singing is also valued for exercising the vocal muscles and lungs.

Several members of the choir also sing in other choirs and choral societies. It is encouraging that other potential singers make contact or respond and come when they can, especially at festivals and carol services.

The choir extended to 26 for the Evensong at the Flower Festival, when other music included men's plainsong Compline and a concert sung by 'Tapestry'. Organ and harp music complemented the outstanding floral display during the afternoons.

We are grateful to Bruce Garner, Alwyn Frost, Stuart McCarthy, Pete Allen, Elaine Gunn, and Philip Godfrey for their accomplishments on the organ and the keyboard at the services and choir practices. Mike Richards and Sally Spowart have looked after the music library with the many leaflets used by the choir and congregation. David Yeandle led the choir during Charles' holiday in October. Each member of the choir has contributed energy and commitment in many ways to the well-being of the whole group. The results have been much appreciated by us all at St Margaret's.

Charles Beresford

Flower Guild

This annual review records a year of two parts – the first eleven months that followed the customary annual pattern, and the last month that brought extraordinary times. What a contrast.

The Flower Guild began the year, busy with preparations for the Flower Festival on June 29th and 30th 2019. The theme for the Festival was from Genesis 2:8 - 'And God planted a Garden, eastward in Eden'. As ever, members of the Guild, plus our regular returning arrangers, used all their talent to produce a magnificent display in the church. There were many helpers behind the scenes – carpenters, lighting experts, fetchers and carriers, coffee makers, tidy-uppers – to whom we are indebted. And of course all the family and friends who soothed worries and put-up with frazzled tensions. Thank you to everyone. It was a great piece of team effort to create such a superb collective work of art.

The weekly flowers in church continued during the year. I am always impressed how the rota is quietly and seamlessly carried out. A fresh arrangement of flowers

welcomes a congregation and visitors to the church.

The annual Christmas party and fund raising event for the Flower Guild was held in early December, kindly hosted by Tessa and Charles Beresford at Barn Hall. It was a very enjoyable and warm social occasion.

But from March 2020 normality was gone. The Public Health emergency to combat the Covid virus, has 'locked-down' the country. Let us hope that the closed church can be open soon and our communities re-assemble.

In January this year, the Flower Guild began planning for the 2021 Flower Festival. We chose the theme: 'I am the Light of the World' from John 8:12. When the current dark times are over, we trust that we will be able to join together in flowers in June next year.

Bridget Flanagan

World Mission

CMS – Kylie and Bhim Bahadur

Before last year's APCM, Kylie, Bhim and Joshua relocated to another part of India, in the NW. By the beginning of summer, they

managed to find permanent accommodation.

Kylie explained a bit about their work plans in the new location. "We have entered a three-year partnership with a Christian network of 40 plus NGOs who work with rural and unreached communities. This includes organisations that focus on health, education, child protection and several hospitals and churches. As part of this new role, we will be developing a curriculum for organisations to use, visiting different projects and providing training to equip organisation's leaders and staff to address human trafficking through their existing roles. We will also seek to mobilise churches within the network to address human trafficking and child protection."

The current leaders are keen to continue the child protection training. Bhim was due to attend their next regional meeting, which is a spiritual retreat, in mid-March. As child protection is the focus at the minute, organisations are focusing less on human trafficking.

One of the major problems they are witnessing in the NW is wife trafficking. Brides (called Paro) are sold, abused, "broken" and often resold. Kylie also described with great sadness the extent of human trafficking, linked to sex abuse,

pornography and witchcraft (even if disguised as white witchcraft, still evil); and people's fear of reporting all these to the police.

The greatest news of the Bahadurs last year was the arrival of baby Daniel Isaiah, at the beginning of August. What a joy and blessing for them! Kylie shared with us her thoughts: "After having suffered several miscarriages, this is a great comfort to me to know that all those who are born, aborted, miscarried and stillborn literally possess the life and light of Jesus". Joshua is delighted to have a little brother and can't wait for Daniel to be able to wrestle him and Bhim – he will probably have to wait a bit longer. He has started a football club and is enjoying a bit of gardening. He loves reading and basketball.

India has passed a law to create a National Register of Citizens. As part of this law, all current citizens must prove that their family was enrolled in the 1951 Census, after India gained its independence. It's a big political issue at the minute with many protests. In Delhi, 24 people were killed as part of protests connected with this. Bhim is Nepali and therefore will have difficulty proving his Indian citizenship even though he has an Indian passport

From the NW, Kylie and Bhim continue to support the team they have organised and trained in the old place, Kalimpong, in their work against human trafficking and domestic abuse.

Kylie reported back that their funds are low, especially for the team in Kalimpong and she asked the supporting churches to try and help them out. Our PCC is currently reviewing our contribution, and hopefully, at the next meeting we will make the decision to increase it.

This coming July we will be celebrating 10 years of supporting Kyle (and later Bhim) in their mission in India. We thank you, Kylie and Bhim!

Mission Possible UK

Last year was the third year that St Margaret's has supported Mission Possible UK, with its *Historically Marginalised People Project* in Rwanda; it was the third and final stage of a £10,000 pledge towards this project. The first year we helped buying a piece of land to be farmed by the community, the second year our contribution went partially towards buying cows for the families and partially towards school uniforms and school meals, through a new £5 per month sponsorship programme. With the

third instalment payed last year, we are currently supporting 32 Historically Marginalised Children at £60 per annum (£1920). We have paid to do this until November 2020. The PCC will need to decide whether to continue supporting these children or follow a different project. MPUK is caringly and selflessly lead by Richard and Ruth Wallis who live in St Ives.

Compassion UK

Our Family Service, lovingly and beautifully lead by Janine, in partnership with Compassion is supporting Boramungu, an 11 years old girl in Rwanda. We vouched to support her throughout her studies. She is doing well at school. Several members of the congregation also support other children through Compassion. Earlier this year we had a visit from a representative of Compassion UK, who spoke to us at the Family Service. After the service, people had a chance to talk to her, to get more details about the possibility of individually supporting a child.

Daniela Spilca

Deanery Synod

There were three meetings of the Synod this year.

In May we met at the church of St Mary Magdalene, Brampton. At this meeting we were informed that all vacancies in the Deanery had been filled, the last two being Kimbolton and Fenstanton.

The speaker was Lucie Beard from Wisbech. Her role as Operations Manager, which she does for 35 hours per week, is funded as part of the diocesan *Market Towns Initiative*. Her role is varied from managing church halls, overseeing maintenance, to putting information online. She ensures safeguarding training happens and that GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) are met.

In Wisbech the local authority is happy to work with the church. Where her role supports needs in Wisbech and its Priest.

Geoffrey Hunter and Timur Alexandrov also spoke at this meeting on “Re-imagining our Building” This three year project is now in its second phase after an audit to find out how people see their churches. The hope is to re-imagine the church as a community asset for the common good. Non-

conformist places of worship use their space for the community more than C of E. The hope is to develop tool kits and guides to help churches provide attractive space for community use.

The second meeting was held at St Peter's Church, Easton where Canon Jonathan Young drew our attention to the fact that there is a need for more volunteers to help at Sunday Eucharist at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Help is needed to transport people from the wards to the chapel. (Daniela Spilca and David Wordsworth already volunteer to do this).

The Archdeacon, the Ven Hugh McCurdy, licensed the Revd Ian Brennand as Rural Dean of Huntingdon at this meeting. The Synod promised to support the Rural Dean. The Archdeacon covered a range of items and was pleased that all clerical vacancies are effectively filled. He explained that the Diocese have submitted to the Church Commissioners a £3 million bid for a second phase of the Market Towns Initiative to broaden the geographical scope, against the fact that only 0.5 per cent of the population of market towns in the Diocese attend church services. He assured the Synod that no parish share funded the initiative; it was mainly funded

by Church Commissioners with some funding from the sale of diocesan assets. He assured the Synod that "the diocese" recognised the difference between Cambridge's deprived areas and those of Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and others in the Fens, all of which face challenges. The five levers of the Diocesan Strategy were relevant in helping all parishes consider how they might engage more effectively with the communities in which they are embedded.

Recent statistical research indicated a majority of the population now professed to "no religion" but that this was not indicative of an absence of spirituality, rather, a need that we could help to fill in new ways.

The Archdeacon outlined a number of initiatives that enabled lay people to develop local ministry and some people to become ordained, who had in the past been overlooked by virtue of their socio-economic background. Removal of that obstacle had led to so many ordinands that the Diocese was struggling to cope with the numbers.

The new Rural Dean explained that he would be going round all the churches in the Deanery attending

as a member of the congregation (which he did when he visited us recently) or assisting in the service in order to experience the culture of each Parish in so diverse a deanery. His comment when visiting St Margaret's was that it was the first church in which he had to remove his coat because he was so warm!

The Rural Dean urged the Synod to understand that given the damage already done to the reputation of the churches, including the C of E, safeguarding must be actively pursued by every parish.

The Rural Dean pointed out that the British Social Attitude Survey of Religion showed that the C of E was no longer the identified religion of the majority of people in Britain. It had been replaced with "no religion". We had become the minority, a fact we should face and to which we should respond boldly.

The meeting planned for 17th March at St Margaret's was cancelled due to coronavirus. We were however issued with a copy of what speakers were going to talk about; one was Christian Aid and the other was about the work of a member of the General Synod by Richard Morgan.

If anyone would like to read any of these minutes please do ask

David Wordsworth
Deanery Synod Rep

Tower

Support from a dedicated band of ringers has enabled the bells to be rung for morning services on every other Sunday (alternating with St James' at Hemingford Grey), for weddings and also for special services such as the Christmas carol service. On 18th April 2019 a bell was tolled at 7pm for seven minutes alongside others across the country in solidarity following the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris on 15th April. Three quarter-peals have also been rung this year. In January the bells were rung following the Huntingdon District of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers Annual District Meeting held at St James'. Various bands of ringers from across the country have visited. One group even brought along their dogs as they completed a dog walking ringing tour of the local area!

We are very pleased that our newest ringer can now ring independently and has progressed sufficiently well to be able to join

us for Sunday morning service ringing. Learner practices continue on Wednesday evenings at St James' prior to the general practice.

The bells are in good working order and apart from on-going general rope and bell maintenance to ensure that they ring smoothly and safely no major work has been needed this year.

The installation of a bell simulator at St James' that will enable ringers to improve their style and repertoire has taken longer than planned but is now almost complete. A simulator allows a ringer to ring a 'silenced bell' and doesn't need several more people present to ring the other bells. A computer generates the sound of simulated bells, which ring in perfect time, so the trainee only has to worry about their own mistakes enabling them to improve their striking. We are most grateful to St Margaret's for funding this initiative.

Sharon (Tower Captain) and Martin Williams (Steeple Keeper)

Finances

John Hyde has continued as Treasurer with the support of St James' Accounts Manager, and Administrator.

The general fund shows a deficit for the year of £2,353 before a gain on investment.

Income from offertory, planned giving and tax reclaimed has risen by £4,204 and other income streams have also risen slightly.

Costs have increased by £4,991.

The Parish share was £13,799 (2018 £15,975).

We are grateful for the on-going support of The Friends of St Margaret's and continue to receive repayment of VAT from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

The value of the investment has fallen due to the pandemic and we await guidance as to whether this will be merely mentioned in a post balance sheet events note or whether the gain will not be recognised and taken out of these accounts.

We are confident that despite a loss in income the church can continue as a going concern.

Karen Timmins (Bookkeeper)

Fabric

The most major job carried out on the church in the last year was to have the tower pointed. This was done towards the end of 2019.

The boiler was serviced in October. Some of the guttering was very old and rusty and had to be replaced; the remainder was cleaned out and painted inside and out. The extractor fan in the toilet has been replaced and the damp wall in the toilet stripped, repaired and a new heater mounted on the wall to stop condensation. These works were funded through The Friends of St Margaret's.

The notice board near the south door has been repaired and can now be hung on the back pillar when there are flowers in place.

The Vicar's vestry has been broken into four times in the last year. Nothing has been taken but each time we have to replace the lock and a number of new keys cut which is annoying and expensive. We are considering having CCTV fitted. This simple job is proving much more problematic than first thought.

In the men's vestry some new shelves have been created for choir music and some cupboards have also been built above the

hanging space for robes.

Cupboards have also been built in a similar fashion in the ladies vestry, where a small cupboard is to be converted so that it will take the two vacuum cleaners and provide additional storage space.

The organ was tuned in time for Christmas services and the clock has recently been serviced. Now that we have completed all the points from the last Quinquennial of 2015, you will not be surprised that we had our 2020 quinquennial inspection on 26th March.

Fortunately, there is nothing wrong with the spire or the lead roof, as they would be two very costly items. The north wall, as we suspected, needs pointing and some small items need attention.

I am not sure how we would manage if it was not for The Friends of St Margaret's and all those people in the village who support the Flower Festival. Thank you for all that you do.

David Wordsworth
Fabric Committee

Safeguarding

I am happy, and relieved, to report that there have been no safeguarding concerns or disclosures in the last year.

The Church of England takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and over the last couple of years has significantly ramped up its safeguarding regulation and organisation. In the last 12 months in particular there has been a plethora of new Statements from the House of Bishops, National and Diocesan policies and detailed Practice Guidelines, all of which the PCC is required to follow.

Accordingly, St Margaret's PCC has issued and complied with the following Parish policy statements:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Statement on Domestic Abuse
- Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

While the policies make it clear that the responsibility for safeguarding in the parish falls to the Incumbent jointly with the PCC, the PCC has appointed a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Ian Sinkinson, to lead on our safeguarding compliance. The new guidance has caused an increase in

PSO workload but help has been provided by an updated Diocesan website containing guidance, tools and templates, as well as the issue of a new Parish Safeguarding Handbook. Another innovation is the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, a software application that enables the PCC and PSO to keep track of outstanding safeguarding compliance actions. This currently shows that we are fully compliant in all urgent and important issues at levels One and Two. There are a small number of minor non-urgent issues for the PCC to consider recently introduced at level Three.

Ian Sinkinson

In Conclusion

Perhaps the biggest challenge we face as I read this review is the absence of mission goals or evidence that the church is fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission, which we find at the end of Matthew's gospel – to be disciple-making disciples.

By the grace of God I trust that our own individual life of faith has grown, but to what extent have we been able to tell others our own story of faith and lead others' inquiry about the meaning and

purpose of this life so as to present them with the claims of the gospel? Today we are all faced with the fragility of life as never before in our lifetime, and the fact that we are not in control as we are humbled by the power of an 'invisible' virus. Will we allow ourselves to be awakened from our comfortable malaise to recognise the love of our Creator God, and the hope He gives us in Christ, as the only solution to the human predicament in the face of a broken creation and a sinful humanity?

Will we hear again the greatest command to first love God and then our neighbour, which we hear at every service of the Eucharist, so that in the year ahead we will be more confident in the mission to which Christ calls his Church?

Revd Peter Cunliffe