

## Background

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission. It has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Parish Church and churchyard.

## Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Provided all the places are filled, there are Twelve elected members of the PCC, four being elected each year for a term of three years. During the year 2020, the following served as members of the PCC:

Vicar: The Reverend Philip Chew

Wardens: Mr Roy Griffiths

Deanery Synod Representatives:

Mrs Sandy Harris

Mrs Janet Reeh

Mrs Sue Jones

Elected Members:

Until 2021

Until 2022

Until 2023

Mrs Liz Almond (Treasurer)  
Mrs Susan Jones  
Mrs Carole Williams  
Mrs Ros Cockrill  
Mrs Julie Carter-Lindsay (Co-opted)  
Mr Frank Andrews (Co-opted)

Dr Cheryl Rees  
Mrs Rachael Rosser  
Mrs Janet Reeh

Mr Stanley Parkinson  
Mrs Emily Ryan  
Mr Liam Batty

There are seven PCC committees.

### Standing Committee:

This is the only committee required by law. It has the power, if required, to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council, but its usual task is to prepare agendas before PCC meetings

### Finance Committee:

This committee oversees the general financial dimension of the work of St Nicholas', by budgeting and monitoring income and expenditure.

### Social Committee:

This committee organises a variety of social events, some to raise money, all to encourage a growing fellowship within the congregation.

### Stewardship Committee:

This committee is responsible for organising our Stewardship Campaigns, for managing our Stewardship scheme and, when appropriate, inviting new people to join.

### Building Committee:

This committee is responsible for maintaining the church building and the churchyard.

### SNAPS: (St Nicholas Action People)

This committee is responsible for Mission.

### Centre Committee:

This committee is responsible for the day to day running and maintenance of the Church and Community Centre.

Church Electoral Roll: There were 123 Parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll as at 31/12/20

The outbreak of COVID-19, forced the church building to close for worship from Mothering Sunday 2020 onwards. This highlighted the start of a challenging year for everyone. We very quickly responded with utilizing the website and the use of YouTube. I wrote a 'Thought for the Day' throughout the first lock down and Janice and I recorded services from the vicarage. All were published to the website with the help and dedication of Liam Batty.

Easter was a particular challenge and our wooden cross was placed outside the church grounds firmly on the Green, in the wider community, for all to see. The cross was decorated with palms on Palm Sunday, a purple cloth on Good Friday and a White cloth on Easter Sunday. The cross was also decorated with flowers throughout Easter Day by members of the worshipping and the wider community. The cross remained on the Green until Ascension Day. The lychgate was decorated at Pentecost with all sorts of colourful images of the Holy Spirit. Contributions were made by JAM and others. They included rainbows, which had become a symbol of the NHS throughout the pandemic as well as the symbol of God's first Covenant with humankind.

As the pandemic eased throughout the UK during the Summer months, instead of opening the church building for worship on Sundays, after a risk assessment, we held services on the Village Green. This allowed us to keep at a safe distance while being led by our worship group and able to sing. There were around 30 worshippers in attendance in the first instance which rose to around 100 by our final service which was our Harvest service on the last Sunday of September. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August we changed our location to Wrea Green Remembrance Wood and Bishop Jill came to preach and dedicate the memorial plaque. This was attended by in excess of 200 people, all of whom remained socially distanced. Ballam held their services in their church garden at 11.00am on the first and third Sunday of each month up until their Harvest Festival on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October.

From October the 4<sup>th</sup> services at St Nicholas resumed in the church building. They were split into two sittings of the same service at 9.30am and 4.00pm. This enabled the congregation to socially distance by keeping the numbers at around 30 for both services. All COVID safety rules were observed. There was another lockdown in November until Advent. At the beginning of Advent, we resumed the two services per Sunday up to and including Christmas Day. Whenever church was open on a Sunday the Thursday 10.30am Communion also resumed. Ballam also resumed their services on the first and second Sundays and at 9.30am on Christmas Day. The final service was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of December at 9.30am.

There was only one wedding in September 2020 and all others were postponed until later in 2021. We were able to baptize 6 infants through the Summer months of 2020 but many families wanted to postpone. We hope to rearrange them for later in 2021. Funerals were held throughout 2020 with varying degrees of restrictions. Some were graveside only and at no time were there more than 30 mourners present inside the building. In some cases, many mourners remained outside and we were able to use the PA to relay the sound out to them.

Due to the steep rise in COVID cases and the introduction of a new and more virulent strain the PCC decided to suspend services in the church building once more from the beginning of January 2021. This coincided with a further national lockdown. The church had become more proficient at using digital technology and so JAM began to use Zoom as a medium to meet as well as lead worship on significant Sundays like St Valentine's Day and Mothering Sunday 2021, which takes us through a full 12 months of COVID 19. Services were also recorded in church for screening on YouTube every Sunday. We hope that through the success of the vaccine program society might get back to some sort of normality later in 2021.

Overall, I would like to thank everyone for their patience and ability to adapt to what was an everchanging scene, with very difficult demands placed upon all of us. In particular our officers: Warden, Verger, PCC, Sides Persons, Youth Workers, Webmaster, Community Rooms Committee, Magazine Contributors and Editor. In fact, all our worshipping community, for your hard work through a very difficult time.

Rev Philip V F Chew

### Report from the Building Committee

Although we have not been using the church building for services for a large part of the year, we have had to maintain it and carry out inspections. In March 2020 we had the first part of the Quinquennial inspection completed but had to wait until October for the completed report to be delivered due to the lockdown.

The report itself revealed no surprises and suggested very few urgent remedial actions, most of which have been dealt with. What the report does reveal is the need to be aware of the importance of looking after the structure and fabric on a regular basis. It also makes us aware of just how much we may be faced with spending in the coming years

During the year the bell tower has seen repairs and renewals to pulleys and wires which have been organised by Tommy Taylor with assistance from Neil and Norman.

At some point in the next 3-4 years, we are likely to have to undertake a refurbishment of the Church Organ. This is normally serviced on an annual or bi annual basis, lockdown has prevented this years' servicing and we wait to see what happens late in 2021.

The most problematic issue we have faced has been the failure of the Church central heating Boiler. When we returned to Church for Sunday worship in the Autumn, we found that the boiler would not work and that the controller board was defunct. This same problem occurred in 2014 around the same time of year. Once the controller was replaced, we found that the Fan had also failed and needed replacing. A further problem exists with the reset button not working and this part is now believed to be obsolete.

Some of the issues with the boiler have been caused by lack of use during the summer allowing damp to accumulate on electronics and some due to age. The boiler was installed in January 2008 and as with many other heating systems parts are becoming rare as the manufacturer has superseded our boiler many times over.

Whilst there have been no competitions within the village or county Stanley with the help of Jack has kept the churchyard and borders in their usual high standard and continue to receive many compliments from locals and visitors.

### **JAM says 'Jesus and Me!' and it is our Junior Church.**

We continued to meet in Church at 9.30am each Sunday going into the upper room in the centre, returning into church much later in the service, (except for Family service in Jan and Feb) until our last meeting on 15 March, lockdown being imposed a few days later.

We welcome all ages and try to enrich spiritual lives having special time with the older as well as the younger children.

We then greatly appreciated Rev Philip's daily thoughts on the website and Sunday service on YouTube. We had a socially distanced gathering of JAM and NBC families on the village green on Tuesday 4 August when Rev Philip and Ros both very kindly played their guitars. The theme was Celebration of community. Biscuits were decorated, many worship songs were sung, games were played and we split into family groups to take a picture best defining community coming back to share with the circle and a prize for winner voted by group. It was good to meet again.

We next met via zoom on Sunday at 10.30am towards the end of October. We led an all-age service via zoom on Sunday 15 November to celebrate JAM's thirteenth birthday. The theme was being aware; what it means to be 'children of light' based on Thessalonians Chapter 5.

We performed a socially distanced Nativity in an open barn at Mere Farm on Sunday 20 December at 4pm. This was an amazing experience and we are very grateful to Rev Philip and especially the Hargreaves family for enabling this event.

We continue to meet via zoom on Sunday mornings at 10.30am

Cheryl and Annie are grateful to have the help of Penny and Carole

*Cheryl and Annie.*

### **Nicholas Bear Club**

Nicholas Bear Club was held in the church and centre on alternate Wednesday afternoons until our final meeting of the year on 4 March 2020.

We start at the back of church with a theme related informal service. The message is about God's love and our love and care for one another. We sing theme related songs with live music (Ros plays the guitar which the children love) and there is time for children to choose their own songs. We then move into the centre for a craft activity, play and refreshments with a chat.

NBC invites preschool children (any age, we love babies!) and whoever is looking after them but welcomes everyone. Understandably we have not been able to meet during the lockdown restrictions due to coronavirus but we had a socially distanced gathering of JAM and NBC families on the village green on Tuesday 4 August as detailed in the JAM report. I continue to be grateful for help from Ros, Penny and Avril and we look forward to meeting again.

Cheryl

### **SNAPs (St Nicholas Action People) Annual Report 2020**

The committee met four times throughout the year and consists of Frank Andrews (chairman), Cheryl Rees (secretary), Revd Philip Chew, Sandy Harris, James Carter-Lindsay, Brenda Cooper-Longworth and Kelly Ford.

We have continued throughout the year to send email copies of our weekly notices to all members of the congregation who have so requested. The number of recipients continues to grow and it is worth noting that this weekly update is missed whenever it is not produced. It appears to be even more appreciated when the church family have been unable to meet face to face.

The St Nicholas Church leaflet still requires updating and SNAPs intend to pursue this just as soon as we can start holding our normal, non-zoom, meetings again. Plans to investigate the viability of placing a camera in church to enhance the lines of vision has been deliberately put-on hold until after the lockdown. Welcome Packs have continued to be given out throughout the year to ensure new residents felt personally welcomed by the church. It is, however, likely that some new arrivals will have been missed during lockdown. More help is needed to spot new arrivals.

A Parish Weekend at Rydal Hall from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021 has been booked and Revd Philip is currently considering the theme and possible leader/s. SNAPs have considered the viability of formally joining the Northwest Partnership of Churches and a number of members have joined in various events to see if it would be right for our church. No decision has yet been made. Men's Breakfasts. The pandemic/lockdown has precluded holding even one Men's Breakfast this year. The Prayer Circle has continued in operation throughout the year ensuring that all SNAP and church concerns are based in prayer. These specially written prayers expertly drafted by Sandy, are readily made available to PCC and other church members.

No Easter letter was distributed as the first Lockdown precluded both distribution and listing service times. A Christmas message from the vicar was printed on the inside of a specially produced Christmas Card and distributed envelope free to 944 homes in Wrea Green and Ballam.

Frank Andrews

### Social Committee report

The year started off well with a well-attended buffet supper and talk by Norman Harris on his and Sandy's trip to India. The interesting talk and fabulous photographs were up to Norman's very high standard and followed a two-course supper provided by the Social Committee.

By the time our next fundraiser a "Wellbeing and Pamper Evening" on March 20<sup>th</sup> was due to take place, we were in the middle of the COVID pandemic and Lockdown 1 had started. During the next few months, we had to cancel The Afternoon Tea in June, the refreshments for the St Nicholas Choir Concert and the Church BBQ which would have been in July. As we went into lockdown, we were also planning the Charity Bunko Evening for November and a Christmas Wreath Demonstration. As the year progressed, we got our act together by having Social Committee meetings on Zoom and we organized a Christmas Raffle to raise funds towards keeping the church financially viable.

This has certainly been a difficult year for the Social Committee to function but as we get to grips with life as it is at the moment, we are planning our Social Events for 2021.

Sue Jones

### Financial Review

During the year we have incurred a surplus of £9,109 for the year with cash resources at £23,590. The cost of Ministry is £54,461, including a contribution of £53,589 to the Diocesan Parish Share, which largely provides for the stipends, pensions and housing for the clergy. The "fixed" cost of ministry at £54,461 is 67% of our regular annual expenditure of £81,430 incurred in the cost of running and maintaining the church, leaving £26,969 as "variable" costs and there is little margin to reduce this expenditure.

We are most grateful for all the ongoing financial support received from the community, including legacy and one-off gift and grace contributions. The Centre provided vital funds from reserves to the general fund at a crucial point during the year when general fund cash resources were very low. We received one legacy in 2020 of £10,020.

We have to report that the Parish Church and Community Centre made a loss of just over £3,900 in 2020. It continues to be self-supporting on a charitable non-profit basis but has assumed designated status. This allowed funds from long term Repairs and Renewals account to be transferred to the Church general account. The Centre has reserves of £12,701.

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds (if possible) which equates to approximately twelve months' unrestricted payments, to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. The balance of £23,590 on unrestricted funds at the year-end compares with an expected unrestricted expenditure of circa £83,000 in 2021.

Liz Almond

## Deanery Synod Annual Report

- *Synod usually aims to meet three times a year and also organises Deanery Services and Events - but of course, these have been curtailed. Meetings whether physical or by zoom, include an act of worship.*

### Our last physical meeting was at Freckleton in late February 2020

We were addressed by Steven Whittaker, speaking about the Diocese's Youth Provision Development Project. He said, "The Doing of Vision 2026 came down to what is done the parishes." He explained his first aim was to instigate debate in Churches and PCCs about what their particular church could do differently; he wanted to encourage, challenge and inspire.

The project's aim is for the team to work with individual churches helping them to grow Christ-Centred Youth Provision, stating this involves everyone in the congregation and for many it would necessitate a change of culture. Challenging statistics he mentioned, included that of all the nation's dioceses. The Blackburn Diocese has the largest number of people coming to confirmation -- Yet statistics relating to retaining faith, show our diocese ranks nationally as one of the lowest! There are twice as many children are in our church schools as people in our churches. In Blackburn's 238 churches there are only 400 young people - not many to carry the Church into the future! Parishes can contact the diocese to tap into assistance with youth work.

Other matters mentioned in that meeting included stating that at the start of 2020, the Parish Share due from Kirkham Deanery's churches was actually some £1.04 million in debt. There was a reminder that advice is available to help parishes play their part but meanwhile, that outstanding debt had to be borne by Diocesan reserves which were already sorely stretched. Reserves *should* be used – but used mainly to resource the Vision and growth of the church in Lancashire. There is a real need for education on 'giving', to inform of the real cost of active ministry and mission.

### New Deanery Synod Reps

The number of Deanery Synod reps per parish depends on the size of the electoral roll. It is pleasing that St Nicholas has now managed to fill our 3 places, *Sandy Harris, Janet Reeh and Sue Jones*.

### The October Deanery Synod meeting was held via Zoom

We acknowledged the death of Deanery secretary, Mike Briers with prayers for the repose of his soul and for support for his family. For many years he had been a key member of both our Synod, and of Diocesan Synod. He'll be missed in those roles and also as a friend.

This was an open meeting held primarily to give presentations about the '**Draft Review and Update of the Vision 2026 Diocesan Plan** - called '**Vision 21-24**' and to allow discussion by our Deanery Synod. Guest speakers were Bishop Philip, Archdeacon David and Diocesan Vision 2026 coordinator, Carolyn Barton. Unlike the original launch, this comprehensive, 74 page document was being disseminated in full in order to enable wide involvement including the reporting back to all PCC's in - to allow them to discuss it too, feeding back to the diocese as they wished.

To the original, 'Making Disciples' 'Being Witnesses' and 'Growing Leaders', there is an added an emphasis on 'Inspiring Children and Young People.' Vision Coordinator Carolyn said that comments from the various Deanery Synod presentations, plus feedback from parishes or individuals would be collated together and presented in a summary in due course - probably early in 2021. That will be followed by the production of smaller documents and open presentations, much as in the original launch.

### The First Synod of 2021 was held at the end of February – again by Zoom

The main topic was very broad - "**The Use of Technology in Church Life**"

Ronnie Semley, is no longer producing 'THE SEE' but as the 'Diocesan Communications Officer,' he's part of the Bishop's Leadership Team. He serves on the Covid Taskforce and various other groups; produces the fortnightly Parish Updates sent to parishes; and ensures there's a tremendous amount of information on the Diocesan website, which he has evolved and he does lots of other communications related tasks.

Ronnie began by stating how the 'Church online' has grown during Covid, saying we mustn't lose this impetus in the future. He stressed how parishes can achieve outreach by using all kinds of social media and lively websites but they needed regular updating. He gave a very full, detailed presentation reminding of the many Youtube videos, webinars and learning opportunities available, on the Diocese's & C of E websites and also mentioned that the group, 'Diocese of Blackburn Epiphany to Easter 2021 Resources' Facebook page, which has morphed from the 'Advent to Christmas' one, and is full of inspirational ideas and resources - posted because parishes are finding they're successful ideas worth sharing. There is a tremendous number of resources available for us now and some inspirational work being done by some churches to learn from too. Ronnie has many contacts and is available to give advice.

A 20 minute 'beginner's guide' video, produced by The Area Dean to show how to make and post Youtube videos of services, events etc. was sent to us and also shown in the meeting.

The meeting included useful open discussion plus a Q & A session.

Information from these will be added to Ronnie's suggestions, links and information and emailed to us in due course.

**Deanery Synod Meetings include** acts of worship (*whether physical or by zoom*) and notices . . .

\*Prayers were asked for Rev'd Jane Greenhalgh, Vicar, Holy Trinity Freckleton & Warton St Paul.  
She is very ill. *(She took some services for us during our vacancy.)*

\* An exciting new chapter is about to begin in the life of Whalley Abbey as Rev Adam Thomas has left St Cuthbert's, Lytham to become Director of the 'Centre for Christian Discipleship and Prayer' in the newly purposed Whalley Abbey. This will include establishing a new Monastic Community for the first time in nearly 5 centuries. He'll work closely with the steering group to help reconnect the Abbey with the parishes. It will surely become a spiritual powerhouse, contributing significantly to the work of realising Vision 2026. *(No longer a wedding venue)*

\*It was announced that, due to CV, at the moment only 1 in 5 churches in the diocese are open, acknowledging that local circumstances and size of buildings are understandably wise delaying factors. Generally, plans are being made as the pandemic eases.

\* In the absence of a lay volunteer coming forward, Rev'd Tony Hodgson has offered to act as Deanery Synod Secretary.

\*On April 30th Rev'd David Lyon, Vicar of St Annes, Heyhouses, and Area Dean, will retire and so will no longer be leading us at Deanery Synod. We thanked him for his work and wished him happiness in a fulfilling retirement.

Sandy Harris