

**“Seven whole days not one in seven”**

**Inspiring people through worship and word to live out God’s love in their daily lives**



## The Parochial Church Council of Horne, St Mary the Virgin

### The Annual Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments for 2023-2024

#### **Worship in Church**

The wardens thank Nicholas for his prayer, thought, planning and devotion to leading our congregational worship together and the many ways in which he nurtures and encourages the Windmill United Benefice community and our community of St Mary the Virgin, Horne. But ... this year has been different because Nicholas and Judith retired at the end of January 2024. At his last service with us on Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup> 2024, Nicholas gave each of us an olive wood heart that he explained illustrates two contrasting ways in which we experience love, with the soft curve of one end of the heart representing the joy of love and the opposite pointy end representing the pain of love. As we each went forward to receive a heart from Nicholas, we responded in various ways ... some with Amen, some with thank-you, some with peace be with you but all of us receiving with love from Nicholas and all of us giving our love in return. It was a poignant time when we felt sorrow at Nicholas and Judith leaving us to retire and yet, hope for their future happiness as they begin a new chapter in their lives and hope for our Benefice as we look forward to our future with a new incumbent.

The wardens are deeply grateful to Nicholas for his generosity in leading us as we worked on the Benefice Mission Action Plan, Vision Statement - “Seven whole days not one in seven”. He also guided the Benefice until he retired as we worked our way through the clergy recruitment process.

At St Mary’s we have enjoyed the styles and various themes of the talks and sermons that Charles and Steve have given as they share their thoughts and knowledge with us. The wardens are immensely grateful for the ministries of Charles and Steve with their extraordinary guidance and support in worship and as we proceed with the clergy recruitment process.

The wardens thank Ginette and Peter Nye for the gift and spiritual inspiration of the music and singing that so enriches our worship in this church and the other Churches of the Windmill Benefice.

#### **Interregnum**

The wardens thank Charles and Steve for the extraordinary support and guidance that they are giving us during the interregnum. The interregnum road is full of potholes and bumps and they have helped to smooth the way over many of them to make our travel easier... it is much appreciated and they have our grateful thanks.

The wardens thank St Mary the Virgin parishioners who have stepped up to take on some of the many administrative tasks that Judith used to undertake. How we miss her!

The wardens thank Lauma Kazusa and David Spruce who made an excellent job of editing and driving forward the publication of The Windmill United Benefice Profile, an essential document to accompany our advertisement for a new incumbent.

David also stepped forward to organise the Lent Course 2024 for the Benefice and he, Andrew Goudie and Helen Longhurst volunteered to lead some of the Lent Course sessions.

The commitment of so many to ministry at St Mary the Virgin is enabling much of our church life to continue smoothly during the interregnum.

#### **Duties in Church**

The wardens thank David Spruce for his work to allocate people to the various key duties in our Church each month. Sometimes, such as at peak holiday times it can be difficult to find enough people who are available so if you feel called to take part in one or more of the rota duties please tell Andrew, Sue or David. Ongoing training & guidance is available for readers, organising refreshments,

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intercessors (leading prayers), minister of Communion (offering the Chalice) and sides people. These are valued roles and you are very welcome to join the duties team.

### **The Church and Churchyard**

Following the Quinquennial Inspection in June 2020, the work identified in the Architect’s Report remains to be addressed. Work to re-shingle the spire is the most significant requirement, however, lack of funding is an issue. The Wardens approached the Architect about seeking external funding but up until now there is no progress to report.

Routine maintenance and inspections at St Mary the Virgin, Horne have been carried out; for example, fire extinguisher and lightning conductor checks, the boiler serviced, oil tank checked, portable electrical appliances tested, the five-yearly full electrical inspection and gutters, downpipes and drains checked and cleared.

The wardens are grateful to Bozi and Julie Mohacek for continuing their work to maintain the grass and hedges in the churchyard and for generally keeping an eye on things. Thank you to the regular strimming team for their dedication to keeping things tidy in places that the mowers cannot reach. New team members are always welcome so if you think that you can join the team to help, please have a word with the wardens or David Spruce. Thank you to the many others who come along unseen to work in the churchyard as and when they are able. We notice when you’ve been and it’s much appreciated.

Our church interior cleaning regime is important as it not only ensures that St Mary’s looks as good as possible but also is a way of regularly inspecting the fabric of St Mary’s to identify items that might need attention and damage that needs repair. Thank you to Suzanne Robinson for organising the cleaning rota, leading the cleaning team and especially for her organisation and leading of the winter clean on December 30<sup>th</sup> 2023. Thank you to the cleaning team who turn out regularly to do an excellent job and to those who answered the appeal to do a winter deep clean which made the church so much cleaner and brighter.

The wardens thank Lauma Kazusa who coordinates the flower arrangers at St Mary the Virgin, continues to promote an awareness of important environmental issues to consider when providing church flowers. At St Mary, we discourage the use of floral foam in arrangements as it is a toxic microplastic that is harmful to people, animals and pollutes waterways. We encourage the use of seasonal local flowers to help reduce our carbon footprint. For further information and guidance please follow the link below to an article in the Church Times.

[Not mourning Oasis glory: the environmental impact of church flowers \(churchtimes.co.uk\)](https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/news/2023/12/30/not-mourning-oasis-glory-the-environmental-impact-of-church-flowers/)

### **Horne Parochial School Building**

The wardens have addressed minor ad hoc repairs, mainly to the north facing roof areas and regular maintenance.

The Horne Parochial School Building eco-energy efficiency project has been completed so now the building is well insulated, has replacement double glazed windows and doors, eco energy lighting, an air-to-air heat pump installation and commissioned solar powered energy creation.

The final step will be to link up with the national grid so we can generate some income to offset the church heating costs ... we look forward to that!

The PCC is grateful to the headteacher and staff at Butterfly Nursery who have worked with us throughout this project to work around disruption to their routine at various times during the project work.

This work has made the building energy efficient and is the first stage of our project to make the site fit for purpose as a resource for church, nursery and community use. The project was funded by the proceeds from the sale of Newchapel Hall set aside for this purpose.

Andrew Goudie and Sue Wates

Joint Churchwardens - St Mary the Virgin, Horne