**Parish of Limpenhoe, Southwood & Cantley**

**NORFOLK**

ANNUAL REPORT for 2024

Incumbent: Rev’d Martin Greenland

**Background**

The Parish comprises three Churches, St. Botolph in Limpenhoe, St. Margaret in Cantley and St. Edmund (ruin) in Southwood. It is part of the Diocese of Norwich within the Church of England. The parish is rural with few amenities and forms one of seven in the United Benefice of the Acle and Bure to Yare, which was established in June 2015 following a reorganisation of the Blofield Deanery.

**Aim and Purpose**

Limpenhoe, Southwood & Cantley Parochial Church Council has the responsibility for co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Martin Greenland, in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Church of St. Botolph. It is also responsible for promoting secular use of the church through Champing and other means of engagement with the wider community, and for maintaining the biodiversity of the churchyard.

It also has oversight for the remains of St. Edmund, Southwood, which was closed in 1881 and is now a Grade II listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Historic England have been asked to decide the future maintenance work required. Currently £4241 is held in restricted funds, which is to be used towards this work. The churchyard is included in the NWT Churchyard Conservation Scheme and has been managed by BADCOG since 1990.

The Parish Church of St. Margaret, Cantley is leased to the Diocese of Norwich Churches Trust, which is responsible for its maintenance. The vestry roof has been repaired but due to previous water ingress, the ceiling there and in the south transept are a cause for concern: the latter area has been taken out of use. It is hoped that the windows will be repaired in 2025.

**Objectives and Activities**

With effect from October 2024, St. Botolph’s was granted Festival church status by the Bishop of Norwich. We will still be required to hold six services per year and to pay our Parish Share to the best of our ability. This is due in part to the fact that we are likely to lose our AWA Sarah Mules in the summer of 2025 and our rector has to apportion his time across seven churches.

The church is open every day to allow regular access for those requiring a place for quiet reflection and prayer. Following the formation of a Friends Group in 2022, it is also a priority to enable as many groups as possible to use the Church. Champing continues to be very popular with 27 groups using the church this year. The visitors book has some very heart-warming and uplifting comments. The monthly Breakfast Cafe (in conjunction with the Village Hall) goes from strength to strength.

**Worship and Prayer**

Regular church services were conducted in 2024 and there were 19 services up to the end of December, there were 2 funerals. The average attendance (excluding the funerals) was 13. The largest congregations were at the Easter Service (28) and the Christmas Carol Service (67) 7 services were Holy Communion, conducted by Rev Martin Greenland and 12 were Morning Prayer, conducted by Sarah Mules our Authorised Worshipping Assistant.

9 services were held at St. Margaret’s, Cantley, during the year, four of them in conjunction with the primary school. There were 3 funerals. Additionally, one funeral for a parishioner was held at a crematorium. The Carol Service was very well supported with 91 in attendance at the community Carol Service (there was a separate Christingle for the school).

**Structure, governance and management**

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Rector), and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. At present there are 12 parishioners on the church Electoral Roll.

We recognise that our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church community.  The PCC has complied with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 following the guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.  Safeguarding training has been carried out in accordance with the guidance including Domestic Abuse awareness and safeguarding is a standing item on all PCC meetings.   DBS checks have been carried out where needed.

The full PCC met 5 times during the year. Due to the timescales involved with the restoration planning, some decisions were made by email and the details were included with the next set of Minutes. PCC members who have served during all of the period from 1st January 2023 until 31st December are:

* Incumbent: The Reverend Martin Greenland (Chairman)

Elected Members

* Mr Tim Lees (Treasurer & Fabric Officer)
* Mrs Christine Fisk (Secretary)
* Mrs. Sarah Mules (Electoral Roll & Safeguarding Officer)
* Mr. John Mules (Vice Chair)
* Mrs. Louise Lees (Chair of the Friends Group)

**Maintenance and Restoration**

Following on from a public consultation early in the year, we appointed Nicholas Warns as our Architect in February. Various meetings took place to discuss the Quinquennial Report and explore the options for making some improvements i.e. a small kitchen area and toilets. Plans were drawn up and engagement with all interested parties took place. A public consultation exercise was completed in November and the final draft plan, encompassing all the suggestions that have been made, was received just before Christmas. Informal meetings were held in September with several people from the Diocese Office and the feedback has been positive, so we feel we can proceed with some confidence. The next stage is to re-write our Statement of significance and engage the DAC formally. Approval for the fees for this next stage have been given by the PCC.

As a stand-alone project we have explored upgrading the heating and this is currently work-in-progress.

We also had a quote for replacing and upgrading all the lighting but this is quite expensive and is likely to be part of the larger restoration plans.

**Friends Group**

The Friends Group, which was formed in June 2022 has proved very successful in gaining local support, raising money and undertaking a wide variety of projects in the church and churchyard. A Breakfast Cafe has been run monthly in conjunction with the Village Hall and this has been a significant fund raiser as well as providing a benefit for the local community. A successful Café was again run in conjunction with the NCT Bike Ride in September. Other fundraising events have included a Pizza-in-the-pews evening and a candlelit dinner. Several work parties have taken place in the church yard to extend and edge the Rose wall garden; take down a large sycamore and then clear up the wood and chippings; rake up the grass after it had been scythed in the conservation areas and more generally after No-Mow-May. Jams & marmalades have been sold from the back of the church, along with water colours and craft items and these have been popular.

**Volunteers**

Thanks go to our dedicated flower arrangers in Limpenhoe and the volunteers who look after the church and churchyard at Cantley.

**Financial Review**

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £7912 and further receipts on restricted funds of £10,949 were from grants, donations and fundraising activities.

Unrestricted income was up by 1% compared with 2023.

£9063 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry from St. Botolph’s Church, including the contribution to the diocesan parish share that largely provides the stipend and housing for the clergy.

Parish Share - the sum that the churches in the benefice have to find is calculated according to a formula that takes account of the number of priest-led services, average attendance and unrestricted income. We paid 61% parish share for the year.

The PCC continued to receive restricted grants from the Parish Council for the cutting of the grass in Limpenhoe and Cantley churchyards

The net income for the year was £7912 on unrestricted funds. Adding bank and deposit balances brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances carried forward at 31st December on unrestricted funds totalled £17,570 and on restricted funds £12,640, giving a total of £30,211 compared to £28,222 in 2023.

The financial outlook for 2025 and beyond looks challenging. There is significant and costly repair work to be done, which will require significant financial resources and substantial fund raising will have to be undertaken. The Parish Share has increased by 5% and it is likely this will not be met in full.

Approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by the Reverend Martin Greenland (PCC Chairman)

Chairman

Date ……………….