

Report on St Oswald's Fulford Church Activities 2022 **for the APCM Tuesday 18th April 2023**



VICAR'S INTRODUCTION

It is so encouraging to see reports from so many church groups and activities that have taken place throughout 2022, especially after having been so limited in the previous two years. And these are only the tip of the iceberg.

There are various teams we could have heard from such as the Magazine Team, the Publicity Team, the Flower Arranging Team, the Church Cleaning Team, the Brass Cleaning Team, the Tech Team, the Sidespeople & Deputy Warden Team, the Readings and Intercessors Teams and the list goes on! We could have heard about the mini Church Fairs that we trialled in 2022; how we ate together for the Lent Course 2022 and the Barnabas weekend; and how we were once again involved with the Fulford Show, receiving generous contributions for some of our groups that benefit the community.

As well as having the privilege of going into St Oswald's Primary School for regular Collective Worship, occasional lessons and both myself and Andrew Wilson serving as Foundation Governors, we were able to welcome the School and their families back into Church for events in 2022. Although it wasn't until 2023 our Explorers' Group for 7-12 year olds started running again we did have a bbq for our teenagers with the hope of more events to come and the local cub group came for a look round church.

We saw a steady increase in the numbers of people attending church in person and the number of views of our service on YouTube (60 households viewing the services is not unusual). We have hosted a large number of baptisms and had several special occasions such as a visit from our Archbishop in March and a wonderful Harvest Festival that allowed us to share many gifts with both the foodbank and local families, which worked well with the regular collection of items for those who are struggling. It was very good to work with Imphal barracks, the British Legion and the many youth organisations in our community on Remembrance Sunday. We were well supported by a few retired clergy when needed and managed a very successful Evensong as part of the heritage weekend. We had two concerts – one a memorial concert for our organist emeritus Michael Mead – the other a concert by York Opera group.

An important part of the year was first the jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth then sadly her death and funeral – as well of course as the Accession to the throne of King Charles III but I will reflect on those events more fully at the APCM.

Please take time to read the reports below and come to the Annual Meeting with any questions.

Thank you to so many people for making these things happen. We have a beautiful church building but we all know that the Church is really about the people.

Rev Canon Sue Sheriff

CHATTY CRAFT

Chatty Craft was online until May 2022 then we met in person twice a month on Tuesdays. Numbers have been low, but the sessions were enjoyed by those who attended.

Over the year Chatty Craft has donated two large boxes of knitted hats to the Mission to Seafarers together with well over twenty crocheted blankets for Ukrainian refugees in Poland. All these donations were much appreciated.

Jackie Tuvey-Smith 02/03/23

CHURCH HALL REPORT

In 2021 we opened the church hall to a limited number of regular commercial hirers, who adhered to our guidance for running a Covid-Safe sessions. That is, they limited the numbers attending each sessions so that there could be proper social distancing and they wiped down all surfaces before and after their session. At the same time, we agreed to ensure that we would provide a Covid-Secure venue that they knew was well ventilated, cleaned and uncluttered. As time went on, these extra precautions were relaxed but not abandoned, because they turned out to be good precautions and not too hard to maintain. Therefore all these hirers continued throughout 2022 to run their sessions (see list below). During 2022 we added the Garrison Beavers on Fridays evenings and also started hiring out for occasional birthday parties which have gone very well. The City of York Council have hired the hall as a polling station and will do so again in 2023; and the local history society regularly uses the church hall for its meetings, social get-togethers and committee meetings. In 2023 we will consider additional types of hire (cinema, fundraising, etc)

In addition during 2022, we were able to restart some of our church-based activities. These included a replacement for Noah's Ark called St Oswald's Tots for parents, carers and young children. This takes place on Thursday mornings from 9.30 to 11.30 and is extremely popular. We also held two trial cafes in the spring and were sufficiently organised to open in September on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 10am to noon during term times. Again, this was welcomed by the wider community. We also restarted Time Out for the Elderly which is held once a month, usually on the last Thursday and is a valuable outreach using the space of the church hall. The Sunday services make use of the church hall for Pebbles and other children and young people's groups and, the after-church refreshments continue to be well attended and full of laughter and conversation. In addition, the church hall is used by the Church Magazine folding team; and as a refreshment venue during the Heritage Weekend in June; and also for the Christmas Fair. You can see that the church hall is a versatile, adaptable and valuable asset for the church; and will remain so, even when there is installed in the church itself a kitchen area and toilet facilities.

The regular use of the church hall during 2022:

Monday evening	ZUMBA with Sam Harrison for 1 hour.
Tuesday morning	CAFÉ
Tuesday evening	bi-monthly PCC meetings
Wednesday morning	CAFÉ
Wednesday afternoon	AFTER SCHOOL KARATE with Simon Flint
Wednesday evening	KARATE with Keith Gullane and Michael Dean
Thursdays	very occasional POLLING STATION
Thursday morning	ST OSWALD'S TOTS
Thursday afternoons	once a month, TIME OUT
Thursday evening	GARRISON GUIDES with Charlie Goodfellow
Friday evening	GARRISON BEAVERS with Gemma Stevens
Saturday morning	once a month, LOCAL HISTORY MEETINGS
Saturday daytime	occasional CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTIES
Sunday morning	church children's groups, after-church refreshments,
	Fair Trade stall
Sunday afternoon	occasional CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Under the guidance of Sue Sheriff and Terina Hurley (treasurer), we decided the full hall would be the venue and that the fee would continue to be £15 per hour. The Guides and Beavers have a reduced rate as they use half the hall; and birthday parties have a special rate of £45 for a 2-hour party which includes time to fully set up and clear away. At the moment, the church hall ovens and cookers are not available for hire. Please consult the accounts for the breakdown of hall hire income and expenditure. The cost of heating and maintenance needs to be looked at and the prices and policy need to be revisited by the PCC as soon after the APCM as possible.

Last, but as important (if not more so) is the weekly cleaning of the church hall done expertly and reliably by Jean and Keith Hood. We could not manage without them.

We are SUCH an attractive venue for a diverse array of events and look forward to being able to open more fully in 2023 with the aim of fulfilling our mission:

COMMUNITY CAFÉ REPORT

The Village Cafe reopened, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am to 12 noon, term time only, under the new name of The Community Cafe, in September 2022. We have two separate teams with a link between the team leaders. A Community Cafe WhatsApp group was established to help keep everyone informed and included. We have a small team of bakers who bake to their strengths once a month and ensure that food products are clearly labelled and ready for the beginning of each month. A monthly baking sheet is sent to Terina at the end of the month so that bakers can be paid. Our portions are reflective of the price and are worked out accordingly. Eg. We pay our cake bakers £6 per cake and ensure that it can be divided in 12 portions giving a profit of £6. This is a general rule of thumb for all our products. There is minimal waste. We have even had a mention on Facebook.

THE TUESDAY TEAM

The Tuesday team comprises a team leader and, currently, four helpers; and usually we manage with three people. The team leader is SO grateful for their help, support, friendship and ability to converse with a diverse array of customers. We usually serve about 20 customers, some who come on their own and one of the team sits with them and, sometimes, introduces them to someone else. In this way, new friendships have formed, and the team has become very cohesive. Occasionally we have other organisations come in to set up a table of information and various community helpers bring in a few residents that would not be able to come otherwise. I think it is fair to say that we offer a warm welcome and a friendly and safe place to be.

THE WEDNESDAY TEAM

This comprises of a team leader, assistant and four others. We regularly have a team of five. We not only work together but have established a strong friendship group celebrating birthdays and often get together socially.

Wednesday is generally busy and as well as regular customers of all ages, we are supported by Sue Sheriff the Vicar, Bryan Milner Church Warden, Ken Wells for putting out the newspapers, Ellen Vipond, from York City Council, a monthly ward team meeting with Keith Aspden and Andy d'Agorne as well as other organisations. We have a Council run walking group who meet on the second Wednesday of each month and join us in the cafe after their monthly walk. We regularly have church members after the Wednesday service from St. Oswald's as well as members of St Georges Church after their service on a Wednesday. We offer a warm friendly space full of fun.

We must also say a big thank you to Jackie Tuvey Smith who keeps us on the straight and narrow with our weekly takings.

TUESDAY Louise Wheatley 5th March 2023

WEDNESDAY Barbara King 5th March 2023



CONNECT GROUPS

Over 2022 there have been three or four Connect Groups meeting. One at Sir John Hunt Homes on Wednesday mornings, one at Redman Close on Wednesday evenings and one at Tree Tops, Heslington Lane on Thursday evenings. The group meeting in Cherrywood Crescent met together for the first part of the year but took a temporary break for the latter part. At the start of 2022, some groups were still meeting online.

There have been several studies which have been common to most groups. The first of these was Living in Love and Faith. This series of study was produced by the Church of England in preparation for the discussions at General Synod at the beginning of 2023 and its aim was to raise awareness and understanding of Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. This course was excellent at making us aware of our prejudices and misunderstandings surrounding people whose identity or sexuality is different from our own. The course consisted of a mixture of Scripture, podcasts and discussion.

During Lent we met together in the church hall and shared a Lenten lunch of delicious homemade soup. Our study, Living on the Breadline, was a very thought-provoking mix of Bible study, film interviews and discussions. Again, we were made to confront any potential prejudices we may have towards those who were living on the breadline, often in hidden poverty.

With 2022 being the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, it seemed a timely opportunity to watch the film the King's Speech and look at the themes raised in it. The series of studies, underpinned by Bible passages, looked at such themes as fear and perseverance.

Unlock-Urban is a Christian organisation which seeks to facilitate Christians to tell their stories and they produce study materials to help us to do so. We looked at materials about Unlocking Feelings which focused on six different emotions through study and activities. This was especially valuable for people who find it hard to express how they feel and what makes them feel that way.

The courses we have studied this year have had a common thread of trying to understand, sympathise or perhaps empathise, and react positively to other people's circumstances and points of view, whilst, at the same time, developing our own faith and deepening our understanding of God in his three persons.

The Connect Groups continue to offer an opportunity to meet in a friendly environment to share fellowship, learn more about the Gospel and to pray together. It does not matter whether your knowledge of the Bible is small or whether it is extensive, you will be made very welcome in any of the groups.

These are the words of someone new to Connect Groups: "I had so many questions regarding church and the Bible and when I had Connect Groups explained to me, I was told I would be most welcome to join. I was so nervous not knowing what to expect but everyone in the group is lovely and so kind. I had previously been looking into the Bible and had read it all the way through, but the group helps me so much in looking at things with a different perspective and opening up more opportunities to learn and grow."

If anyone is interested in knowing more about any of the Connect Groups, please have a word with me and I will happily chat with you.

Jackie Tuvey-Smith 02/03/23

MINISTRY TEAM

The Ministry Team supports Rev Sue in the taking of services and in preaching.

Rev Gill Smith-Riley has Permission to Officiate and has presided at Holy Communion services on an occasional basis.

RPA Jo Poole sadly needed to take 3 months compassionate leave at the beginning of the year but it was wonderful to welcome her back on Maundy Thursday.

Malcolm Poole, unfortunately, is no longer a member of our Ministry Team because he had to relinquish his role of RPA owing the great demands of working at York Minster. Malcolm is still a great support to our Technical Team and in maintaining our Online presence.

I started the year as an RPA but was called to apply for Readership training. I was accepted for training in May following interviews, a presentation (greatly inspired by the Living on the Breadline Lent Course) and chairing a discussion. Training involves work within the Parish but also academic training and during 2022 I studied Christian Doctrine and History, Christian Worship and the New Testament.

Jo and I have led numerous services throughout the year and Jo, Gill and I have preached whenever called upon by Rev Sue.

Jackie Tuvey-Smith Reader-in-Training 13/03/23

MISSION SUPPORT REPORT

At the APCM in 2022 it was decided to concentrate our main Mission Support on two mission organisations. These were Mission to Seafarers and Barnabas Aid. Our connection with Mission to Seafarers has been long standing and we had an interesting and informative Mission Seafarers' Sunday in July 2022 followed by a cake stall. This was in addition to the sending of hats knitted by people connected to the church and received with great delights by Seafarers who travel throughout the world and the sale of Christmas Cards. A brief report from Barnabas Aid can be found below.

We also had occasional collection for Children Society (especially through our Christingles), and Christian Aid, as well as being a collection point for DEC (Disaster Emergency Committee). The conflict in the Ukraine was high on many people's agenda in 2022.

Barnabas Aid (B/A)

Having had an encouraging International weekend with Tim Tai and his wife Angela 2/3 April 2022 I thought it would be good to have another speaker visit us.

We are expecting this to be the first Sunday in Nov, which is always in the special week, when churches internationally highlight the Persecuted church annually, with special events and teaching. Hopefully this will be a speaker for the Morning service and an afternoon Presentation preceded by a lunch 'Eat Simply so that Others may Simply Eat'. I am in touch with the CEO and await his reply.

It's always a good idea to review our commitment to a particular ministry we support and to make adjustments when necessary. With this in mind, I am asking for your support in revising the list of those who receive the bi-monthly Prayer Diary and have committed themselves to pray for this vital work. There will be a list to sign appropriately.

I'm fully aware that our interests and support for ministries can change. There may be those who wish to discontinue receiving the Prayer Diary and there are others who wish to be added to the list. Currently our numbers stand at 23.

I'm concerned that we do take our copy if requested as good stewards of the postage spent by B/A, while fully aware that priorities do change and some may no longer feel they can give the commitment required. I would like to suggest that any recipients who lead our intercessions on a Sunday include a specific prayer for emphasis from the current Prayer Diary, bringing to the wider congregation an awareness of what's going on in the Persecuted church worldwide.

Thank you for the invaluable support given to our Christian family under threat.

In His service Gill

Revd Gill Smith Riley

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

March 2022-March 2023

We have continued to support each other in our different activity groups and reach out to the community and to those we know who are struggling. This has been by giving lifts to people with hospital and Doctor's appointments, taking people out to lunch, cooking for them, walking with friends to encourage them, sitting with those who are confused so others can have breaks, shopping and giving lifts to supermarkets. We have continued to support each other in prayer with the pray circle and What's App groups. We have visited those in nursing homes and Rev Sue and a few helpers have done monthly communion services in Connaught court and Ouseview with two different but very moving Christmas services. Friendships have built here and several of these participants come to Time Out as well which is very encouraging. We have tried to keep in touch with newcomers and contact those who we have not seen for a few weeks to check they are OK. Some of our groups' helpers are from the community and we have continued to grow in friendship and mutual care for each other which is wonderful.

Pippa Ensor March 2023

PEBBLES REPORT

I am pleased to say that we have been able to continue with Pebbles and now have a team of Leaders and a rota (thanks to Ali) which makes things a lot easier.

We have also been able to use the Pebbles room again which has now been equipped with some lovely new tables and chairs.

We get on average 4/5 children a week and have a really good well behaved and enthusiastic group of children. Our time is spent with some teaching, crafting and if time permits music, singing and sometimes playing a game.

Both leaders and children enjoy this time spent together

Jill McCreedy

PROJECT 150 REPORT

The church building renovation programme continued apace during 2022. The main priority was to complete the re-roofing of the church. This started in Autumn 2021 and was finished in May 2022. The works included stripping off the existing slates, repairing and where necessary replacing the roof timbers, installing roof insulation and relaying the slates. At the same time, the rainwater goods were renewed and high level maintenance works were undertaken. The result is a church roof that should last for another 100 years. The contractor was Pinnacle Conservation Ltd who liaised closely with the Church to avoid unnecessary disruption to church services and activities during the building works.

After the completion of the works, the opportunity has been taken to address the future building priorities of the Church. These include the need to improve the heating of the church after the failure of the high-level system and to provide a disabled toilet and kitchen facilities within the building. These priorities will be pursued over the next few years.

Heritage Weekend:

To satisfy the conditions of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant for the restoration of the rose window, a community education project was organised culminating in the Heritage Weekend at the end of June 2022. Twenty volunteers were recruited and trained as welcomers and guides for this and in addition six volunteers were trained to support children's activities. Children's tables and chairs were purchased to make it easy for the children to take part in craft and jigsaw activities. Scarlett Abbott, a marketing company, was commissioned to design pull up banners, display boards, posters and leaflets with details of our rose window restoration project, beautiful stained glass and church history. Heritage pages were added to the church website for our history and restoration story to be shared far and wide. Stonemasons who had been involved in the restoration work gave demonstrations and visitors were even able to have a go themselves. The Heritage Weekend was a great success with many visitors from the community and further afield enjoying knowing more about St Oswald's. As well as being an opportunity to share our history, the Heritage Weekend was a chance to make new friends and celebrate St Oswald's place in the community.

Michael Courcier and Suzanne Esson



ST OSWALD'S TOTS GROUP

March 2022-March 2023

Tots is the new name for Noah's ark and it restarted in Spring 2022. It was requested by a group of Mums in the community as it was a much needed resource for carers and their children which had been greatly missed during lockdown. A few tweaks were made but the format is much the same as previously, with lots of bays created with different toys displayed, so a home corner and cosy reading area for example. The sit on train remains a huge pleasure as do the ride in cars! A fun craft activity is available each week with creative interesting things produced using different sensory options to engage the children-we have handprints and hearts, hedgehogs and stars etc. The making of the poppy banner for Remembrance Sunday was a great success and drew in families to come and see what their children had made on the Remembrance Sunday service. We had a wonderful outdoor summer party session with water and bubbles, and different play opportunities and an ice cream van coming to visit at the end. We have a great team of 10 volunteers at present, who are from church and the community, and we work really well together planning and preparing sessions via a What's App group. A healthy snack is provided for the children with parent's opinions sought for the best options, and fresh coffee/tea and chocolate biscuit as a treat for the parents. We have seen great friendships develop between adults, a much needed time to chat and be supported by others with many coming from the new Germany Beck development houses but from around York too. We have seen children flourishing and become more independent and confident to join in with playing with each other, and joining in the songs and Christian story-time we have at the end of the session. We have had great feedback from parents and now as word of mouth spreads we have almost 90 children on the register – although some have gone on to school and others only came once or twice as other groups re-opened. We might have to consider limiting numbers as we reached capacity with 40 children attendees recently (although fortunately not all quite at the same time) plus their grown-ups bring numbers up to nearly 80 in the hall (some tots bring more than one grown up and some grown ups bring more than one tot). Discussions are underway how best to manage this. More recently we have had food bank items available for those in need and clothing donations also for children and adults which have been greatly appreciated and another great way in supporting those in our community, and we are finding google translate a very useful tool to aid communication. If you would like to join our happy team do come and have a chat to us.

Pippa Ensor March 2023

TIME OUT

Time Out re-started in Autumn 2022 after a very long break during the COVID pandemic. The first afternoon was held in the church hall on 29 September and we were entertained before tea by Ken (with a quiz kindly provided by Connaught Court Nursing Home) and then a lovely sing along session led by Keith accompanied on the piano by Roger. Tea and cakes were then served and we were then treated to wonderful music provided by New Notes.

The second Time Out was on 27 October 2022 and followed a similar format but with music from some of the same musicians as New Notes (but was a group with no name which amused some of those listening). On 24 November 2022 we were entertained by all our own St. Oswald's talent with Pippa Ensor and Sue Baughan providing a humorous rendition of Cinderella and Keith Hood singing a great medley of songs for our musical session.

The 15 December 2022 was our Time Out with a Christmas flavour and Reverend Sue Sheriff did a chocolate nativity with Christmas singing from some of the school children from Fishergate Primary School. We have a great team of helpers supporting in the kitchen, baking and helping to push wheelchairs for the residents of Fulford Nursing Home who come to join us at Time Out. Members of the team both bake and provide cakes for the teas and Sheila Merchant in particular provides a home baked cake for Time Out each month.

As well as residents from Fulford Nursing Home we are joined by some of the residents from both Connaught Court and Ouseview nursing and care homes. We also have a number of members of the congregation and local residents who attend.

The afternoons seem to be enjoyed by all involved including the helpers and musicians and it is great to see the toe tapping and singing along by everyone.

Angela McClean

WILD AND MUDDY FOREST CHURCH

March 2022 – March 2023

Attendees of Wild and Muddy Forest church have continued to grow and flourish in the muddy outdoors, and we look forward to seeing each other at our meetings in the church garden area. We have gained and lost some families and then new families come along. Now we have 22 children on the books who bring their grown-ups to the 1 ½ hour session on the last Saturday of the month. We have 11 amazing helpers who are lovely people and great at talking too and encouraging our forest church members. Most participants are from the community which we are thrilled about. We have been out in all weathers and used the big tarpaulin in rain which has worked well as a shelter along with a gazebo over the tool area. Children (and adults) love peeling sticks and recently one boy proudly announced he had peeled 9! We are going to try and hang these and make some tubular bells as a semi -permanent feature. We have produced lots of willow crafted items, the children come up with amazing creations! Our first willow dome died in the summer drought, but we have recently woven a new superior one and will get the children watering it. We are installing a water butt to catch rainwater so we can use this precious resource. We have created a magnificent bug hotel out of pallets with the children drilling holes in wood. Several of the congregation got involved too, providing build your own hedgehog and bird boxes, and we are very thankful especially to John Foreman, who also made us signs for the bug hotel and the new community allotment area which was created in June and were painted by Anna. They are amazing! With a late planting season, we did not grow much, but some beautiful sunflowers grew from seeds the children had planted and also some courgettes, so we made courgette and lemon cake. Our lopsided scarecrow leans happily on the sign! We have planted garlic and onions already and are chitting our potatoes ready for planting in a few weeks, so hope to get some more vegetables and flowers on the go soon. A new wild flower area has been sown under the Rose window and some perennial bulbs too. We have fed the birds, made nut free fat balls, and put up bird boxes and solitary bees hotels. We have enjoyed nettle soup, elderflower cordial and other seasonal products, and of course hot chocolate and vegan cookies each week before our sing song and clocky sticks and Celtic blessings. At the end of November, we produced Christmas wreaths made from fallen silver birth twigs and the next week had a Christmas wreath making session at the Christmas Fair which was very successful and bought many of our forest church families into church. The children will soon be involved in planting a new hedgerow in the next two weeks, with free saplings donated by the Woodland Trust. The children have also, under the guidance from one of our teenager helpers, produced an Eco -banner out of recycled fabric for our upcoming Care of Creation service with statements on that they think are important about our environment.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the gentle night to you
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you
Deep peace of Christ
Of Christ, the light of the World to you
Deep peace of Christ to you.

Pippa Ensor March 2023

