

Church of St Peter & St Paul, Bergh Apton

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Year ending 31st December 2023

Bergh Apton Village Hall AGM 2024

Incumbent: The Reverend Christopher Ellis, The Rectory, 29 Ashby Road, Thurton, NR14 6AX
Curate: The Reverend Cate Turner (until August 2023)

The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the Grade II listed parish church, its churchyard and adjacent field, and to ensure that our property and activities offer a safe, friendly, welcoming and stimulating space for clergy, worshippers and visitors.

In an increasingly secular society, we aim to enhance the relevance of the church building and the church family within the wider community.

The PCC is also responsible for the financial stewardship of church accounts, undertaking or assisting in fundraising activities to enable the church to meet its financial obligations, and to make donations to other charities.

Worship

The Parish Team (PT) of five supports the clergy in leading services and there were 34 Sunday services in Bergh Apton Church in 2023, of which 15 were led by the PT.

Rev'd Chris Ellis was on Sabbatical from February, and then suffering from ill health for the rest of the year.

Rev'd Cate Turner took services until her leaving party at Bergh Apton on 30th July. From then on services were led by visiting clergy and the PT. Special services led by the PT were Mothering Sunday and Harvest Festival (after which posies and produce were delivered to parishioners), Songs of Praise assisted by members of Poringland Singers, Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal supported by Thurton School, Remembrance Sunday, and the Carol and Crib services.

Life-event Services in 2023:

There was one marriage blessing, six funerals and one interment of ashes. One adult was baptised and two were confirmed.

The King's Coronation: The church was decorated for the celebration and prayers were said for His Majesty and the Royal Family at the Sunday service on 7th May.

Fellowship: We continue to serve refreshments after all our services. This is popular, with most of the congregation remaining to chat.

The Church Building & premises

The Church is open from 'Dawn to Dusk'.

Repairs were carried out to the roof in April.

Churchyard: Maintenance is by volunteers. The area around new/regularly-visited graves comprises 25% of the site and is mown regularly.

The PCC is very grateful to the Parish Council, for its assistance with the churchyard maintenance costs for 2023.

Use of the building

Wispire: InTouch Systems continues to deliver fast internet services to local properties, including the church. The router is deployed when needed.

Bergh Apton Festival 2023 (BAF 2023): Over 300 people attended 4 fundraising performances.

The Parish Council (PC): The PC used the church for a meeting when the Village Hall was booked

Bergh Apton Arts (BAA): The positive relationship between Bergh Apton Church and BAA has always been, and continues to be, mutually beneficial and supportive. Over the years, the church has been the venue for numerous BAA productions and events, with members of the church often actively participating. In 2023 BAA organised a storytelling event featuring Hugh Lupton. Also, rehearsals began in October for the latest BAA creation 'Unlock Unearth', to be performed 4 times over 2 weekends in January and February.

These occasions enhance the status and value of the church building as a community asset, and BAA has been generous in its donations to the church.

Norwich Foodbank Drop-off point: Members of the community regularly drop off donations at the church.

Four Local Walking leaflets: These are sponsored by the Parish Council and displayed in the porch. They are very popular with visitors.

Second-hand books to buy/borrow/exchange are sited at the back of the church.

Used Stamps: A box is provided for used stamps and old or foreign currency to support charity.

Fundraising

To cover its costs, the PCC relies heavily on fundraising:

Activities include:

The Bergh Apton Festival 2023: mentioned previously.

Plant stall: located near Thurton school and was run in cooperation with members of Thurton Church.

Fete: A popular social and community event, always held on 2nd Saturday in July and, by kind permission of Kip and Alison Bertram, in the Manor Gardens. The fete is run jointly by members of the PCC, Village Hall Management Committee and other members of the community. Proceeds were shared between the Church and the Village Hall.

Quiz & Chilli: events were held in April and in October.

Horse & Fun Dog Show: Over 50 competitors participated on late May Bank Holiday Monday

Norfolk Churches Trust Cycle Ride: Half the sponsorship monies go to our church and half to the Norfolk Churches Trust. This year's event is 14th September. Dust off your bicycle pump and join the fun.

Cashless giving: Enables casual visitors to donate via an online Giving Page, and QR codes displayed in the church and at the church gate. Most worshippers appear to prefer to donate cash at services.

Charitable activities:

The PCC will only donate to other causes monies raised by a special appeal for that cause, by its own fundraising, or following a clear statement that a donation will be made from a particular service collection.

Donations totalling £1,790.60 were made in 2023.

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Risk management

Reserves policy: Since gazing into a financial abyss in 2020, we have built an unrestricted cash reserve of at least one year's outgoings (comprising Parish Share, insurance, utilities, service costs & clergy expenses. This was set at £19,000 for 2023 but increased to £25,000 in 2024 to cover increased Parish Share, insurance etc as well as extra funding for routine and emergency maintenance.

Safeguarding: The CoFE takes safeguarding very seriously. The Churchwardens and PCC members are required to undertake Safeguarding training, and they all renewed this in 2023. There is a parish Safeguarding Officer.

Health and Safety: The PCC has a Health & Safety policy and general risk assessment which is updated every three years.

Administrative information

Electoral Roll: At the start of 2023 there were 34 people on the roll, of whom 8 reside out of parish. Two have since died.

In 2023, the PCC met in February, May, August and November.

Summarised Finance Report for the year 2023

Parish share in 2023 was £16,095, and was paid in full.

Income to unrestricted funds	£27,819.62
Payments from unrestricted funds	£24,026.18
Excess of Receipts over Expenses	£ 3,653.44 (after payments to charities)

The income figure includes £5,876.18 from fundraising efforts – (Quiz, church performances, horse/dog show, fete, etc. without which we would have been in deficit.)

Charitable donations from unrestricted funds totalling £1,790.60.

Royal British Legion	£222.00 from surplus 2022 Remembrance Sunday. Payment delayed by recipient.
	£353.00 from surplus 2023 Remembrance Sunday
EACH	£140.00 from surplus 2023 Carol Service
Sanyu	£140.00 from surplus 2023 Carol Service
DEC Ukraine Appeal	£ 96.00 (Gift Aid accruing from donations made in 2022 and paid in 2023)
Christian Aid	£152.50 (Turkish/Syrian earthquake)
Christian Aid	£100.00 (Libyan Floods)
Bishop's appeal	£ 53.50 (Al-Ahli Hospital, Gaza)
Salvation Army	£ 60.00 (Christmas Presents Appeal)
Ormiston Families	£473.60 (half of surplus from October Church Performance)