

**The Parish Church of
Saint Michael and All Angels
Felton**



**ANNUAL REPORT
AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
OF
THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
For the year ended 31 December 2021**

Priest in Charge

Reverend James Harvey
31.08.2014 to 06.04.2021

Bank

Barclays Bank Plc
38 Bridge Street
Morpeth
Northumberland

Independent Examiner

Mr Ian Bell FCA
10 Riverside
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Background

St Michael's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Priest in Charge, Reverend James Harvey, and following James departure at Easter with the Area Dean and Archdeacon, in promoting the whole mission of the church in the Parish, that is, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also ensures effective maintenance of the church and of its fabric.

Membership of the Parochial Church Council

Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are either ex-officio or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Priest in Charge	Reverend James Harvey to April 6 2021	
Wardens	David Archbold Liz Scurfield	
Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod	John Marshall Mark Winter	<i>Lay Vice Chair of PCC</i>
Elected Members	Alan Ferguson Anthea Smith Charlotte Clarke John Inglis-Jones Kathy McConnachie Nick Morton Nigel Marsh Peter Groves Richard Evans	<i>Safeguarding Officer</i> <i>Treasurer</i> <i>Secretary</i>

Committees

Standing Committee

This is the only Committee required by law and it has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The Standing Committee comprises the Priest in Charge, Wardens, and two lay members of PCC.

Finance Sub Committee

The Committee comprises two Wardens, Hon. Treasurer, and one other member agreed by the PCC.

Church Electoral Roll

A new Electoral Roll was made in 2019. The number of members enrolled on the New Electoral Roll in December 2020 was 95. The number of electors on the Electoral Roll at 31st December 2021 was 95.

Debra Philips, Electoral Roll Officer

PCC Review of 2021

The PCC met eight times in 2021 with all meetings held on Zoom because of continuing restrictions because of the coronavirus pandemic. The average number of PCC members at the meetings was just below 12. Other committees and groups met as necessary and reported to the PCC. In March, a week before James's retirement from St Michael's at Easter, we welcomed The Venerable Catherine Sourbut Groves, Archdeacon of Lindisfarne.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Wednesday 28th April 2021, held on Zoom with permission of Bishop Mark Rowe due to Covid-19M, all PCC members elected at the previous APCM had stated their willingness to continue to serve. Mark Winter and John Marshall continued as lay representatives of the parish at the Deanery Synod. The PCC had nine elected members and five ex-officio members, the vicar, two wardens and two Deanery Synod lay representatives.

We carried out Buildings and Fire Risk Assessments for our buildings and grounds with the full reports received by the PCC in January 2021.

Through the year PCC also worked on repairs to the Vestry roof, West Window repairs, and eventually getting Northumberland County Council to repair the long path across the churchyard.

We inevitably spent time with James, before he left, and the Wardens and lay ministry team subsequently planning the continuation of worship and eucharist services and maintaining the churches online services. We also spent time praying, thinking and talking about the future of St Michael's, professional ministerial support and several different proposals from the Area Deanery and the Diocese under the general concept of strategic transformation.

In February the PCC adopted a church Ecosystems Policy, joined the Alnwick Deanery Environment Group and initiated an audit of our sustainability using the A Rocha Eco Church tools. We used time in several meetings to review our work with families and children, which were restricted to online or outdoor activities and struggled when we eventually returned to services in church. A proposal to employ a part-time Families and Children's Work Leader, in partnership with the Alnwick based charity Ignite (formerly Contagious) was approved in January 2022.

Richard Evans, Secretary

Safeguarding

In 2021, we maintained our strong Safeguarding presence by continuing to ensure all volunteers and church leaders are DBS checked and trained. We also upgraded our Safeguarding presence to ensure all our online activities were as safe as possible.

All safeguarding concerns and incidents were reported and recorded in line with our policies. Our annual audit was carried out in January 2022 complete with action points to maintain good operating practices. Details of the audit can be found in the Safeguarding folder in St. Michael's.

Anthea Smith, Safeguarding Officer

Churchwardens

The current Churchwardens were appointed at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP) on 16 September 2020. This meeting was much delayed by the Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19). At the AMP, Nigel Marsh was appointed as Deputy Churchwarden and Nigel works alongside us to gain knowledge of the Churchwarden's role.

The typical pattern of services at St Michael and All Angels is a service of Holy Communion at 8.00 am plus either Holy Communion or lay-led services at 11.00 am. Prior to Covid-19, typical congregation numbers were between 11 and 15 at the 8.00 am service and between 55 and 70 at the 11.00 am service.

This pattern of services continued until the first Government lockdown when social distancing measures were initiated within the church and the pews marked accordingly. Hand sanitising stations were provided at points within the church. On 15th March 2020, St Michael's held its last Sunday services and the church closed. From 6th September 2020, our normal pattern of two services on Sundays resumed with the 8.00 am service held in church and the 11.00 am service live streamed or pre-recorded.

Live streaming of services was not a major success and not universally liked by many members of the congregation. However, the pre-recorded services were successful, reaching out not only to our own members, but also to people in distant parts of the United Kingdom and abroad.

To comply with HM Government Covid-19 requirements, pews were marked so that vacant pews were available between those used in order to maintain social distancing. Two Social Distancing Zones are also provided. Hand sanitisers are available and we request that face coverings are used at each service. We have continued to complete Track and Trace forms for each service. As a direct result of Covid-19, we project both the liturgy and hymns onto the screen and monitors, at the 11.00 am service, thus preventing the risk of the transfer of the virus from books used by other people. A separate batch of Service Books are used at the 8.00am am service but these are not re-used until the following Sunday. The giving of Holy Communion was moved to the crossing rather than at the main altar to limit the number of people passing each other. Together with using the side aisles for circulation, this has proved to be a safe regime. We continue to offer Holy Communion in one part only.

Our Priest-in-Charge, Revd. James Harvey, left us for a new post in Darlington on 4th April 2021. The 8.00 am service continued, led by a number of retired clergy who willingly came to support us in this most sensitive time with continuing coronavirus outbreaks. We are indebted to our Self-Supporting Minister, Revd. Gabby Llewelyn, who provided amazing support and guidance to the Churchwardens and the church during this difficult time. Revd. Gabby Llewelyn also led many services and provided much needed pastoral support to church members and to the community.

Since the beginning of the vacancy, available members of the clergy, retired or otherwise, have provided essential cover for our 11.00 am service also. St Michael's was delighted to welcome Bishop Mark Wroe and Archdeacon Catherine Sourbut Groves who led a number of services for us. We were also delighted to welcome Bishop Christine Hardman to our church, giving us the opportunity to give her our good wishes for her retirement. We are grateful to them, and to the Area Dean, Revd. Alison Hardy for their support.

In June 2021, St Michael's returned to the two-service format. A service of traditional Holy Communion is held at the 8.00 am service. A service of Holy Communion is held at 11.00 am on the first and third weeks of the month, the remaining services being taken by St Michael's lay Ministry Team. Whilst the number of communicants at the 8.00 am service has

remained steadfast at 10 - 19, there has been a reduction in numbers at the 11.00 am service, these ranging from 30 to 40 people. It is worthy of note that, at both services, the attendees are surprisingly mainly of the older age range. We had anticipated that these people would have been more reluctant to return to church due to Covid-19, but it is the younger families, young people and children who have not returned. This is a concern to the Churchwardens and the PCC, but we understand that this is typical within the Diocese and wider church.

Whilst two services were provided each Sunday, we continued to provide a pre-recorded service, although the number of people viewing it had declined. During the summer, the content of the pre-recorded service was reduced due to the pressures placed on people during the vacancy. Following a further decline in viewing numbers, the pre-recorded service ceased in October. However, in September, the 5 o'clock service resumed. This is a contemporary service which is suitable for all age groups held on the 3rd Sunday of the month and is well attended with frequently more than 40 people being present. We are pleased to report that younger families and children have returned to this service. Evening Prayer Time is held on the fourth Thursday of each month.

On Christmas Eve, we held the traditional Candlelight Carol Service which was led by a lay member of the team, Elisabeth Rowark, with the address being given by Archdeacon Catherine Sourbut Groves. We were delighted that almost 100 people attended, many of whom were new to the church.

During 2021, the church has remained open every day for private prayer and the church was visited by many people daily, lighting votive candles as part of their prayer cycle.

During 2021, the Coffee Plus and Outrageous Women home groups have continued throughout on a weekly basis.

Over the year, a substantial number of repairs have been undertaken, particularly to the church roof and vestry. As noted in last year's Annual Report, some previous repairs have not proven to be satisfactory and these have been attended to. During the year, we took the opportunity to address most items identified in the Quinquennial Report. The fabric of the building is now in good order and all valuables remain in good condition. The churchyard has been maintained by one of our church members providing an attractive entry to our church. However, the repairs to the Nave West Windows remain outstanding. A meeting has been held with the preferred glazing contractor and it is hoped that this work will be progressed in 2022.

St Michael's is blessed with a strong and enthusiastic group of lay leaders who lead services and preach the word. As we look to the future, their role as members of the Ministry Team will be used to the full. St Michael's is a close family which works closely together and we are very grateful to all of those who provide their time and talents to the work of the church. We look forward to the obvious challenges that we face into the future, but we know that there are many who will help the church achieve its objectives. We also offer our sincere thanks to those who prepare and maintain rotas, undertake cleaning, arrange flowers, look after Junior Church and the young people, and carry out repairs; their assistance is greatly appreciated.

**David Archbold + Elizabeth Scurfield
Churchwardens**

Financial Review

The financial health of our Church is one of the things that enables us to fulfil our mission to celebrate and follow God's word. We are extremely grateful that St. Michael and All Angels is supported so strongly and appreciative of all who give. Despite the ongoing pandemic and some urgent repair to the fabric of the church building, we are in a healthy financial position.

We have met our Parish Share payment of £29,051 in full. We have also fulfilled our aspiration to give £1000 to each of our three mission partners (Street Pastors, Tearfund and Christians Against Poverty) and made an additional one-off payment to our sister church, St. Mary's Longframlington, of £1000 in recognition of the financial challenges that they have faced. This giving is 8.6% of income to the General fund.

General Fund

Planned giving to the General Fund has increased by 2% from 2020 and now represents 77% of General Fund income. This high level of planned giving by so many people has been a major factor in maintaining our income during the pandemic and we are very thankful for people's foresight and commitment to giving in a planned way. Gift Aid has been recovered during 2021 though was delayed during the end of the year and this is reflected in the lower amount this year. This will correct itself next year.

Payments from the General Fund include the major repairs to the vestry. Together with other church maintenance costs, this accounts for almost £6,700 of our expenditure over the year.

The retained balance in General Funds of £36,000 is the same as in 2020, so we are successfully balancing our income and expenditure in the general Fund.

Restricted Funds

In relation to our Restricted Funds:

- The 'Building Improvement fund' now stands at £24,600 which we hope will meet in large part the cost of the essential repair to the West Window during 2022.
- Expenditure for the 'Children and Young People fund' has been less during the pandemic because of reduced activities and this Fund has accumulated a further £6000 during 2021. However, income into this fund will need to increase to meet our future ambitions.
- The PCC continues to administer the funds held within the Felton Relief in Need fund. No grants were made in 2021 but an arrangement has been made with Christians Against Poverty that may improve the dispersal of this fund to those in need.
- The 'Admin Work fund' has been generously supported by a third (and final) £10,000 contribution from Stewardship to support the administration of the Church. Expenditure from this fund continued to support the high quality of on-line and in-person services and the administration of weddings, funerals and baptisms.
- The 'Flowers fund' continues to support the beautiful flower arrangements of the Church.

Joint Account

A joint account with Longframlington PCC is maintained to pay for the Vicar's expenses and other items of expenditure common to both churches. There has, of course, been less expenditure from this account during 2021 due to the vacancy. Any monies remaining in this account at the year end have not been included in the assets of the PCC but both PCCs have ceased regular payment into the joint account and a payment of £1750 made to both PCCs to reduce the retained balance. The joint account remains active and will return to its full use when a new vicar joins us.

Financial Accountability

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis. Where Gift Aided donations are made to a restricted fund, the tax recovered is credited to that fund. The PCC has a Reserves Policy that aims to maintain a balance within the General Fund of £15,000, and we have achieved this during 2021. Other than those assets vested in the church wardens on special trust (i.e. inalienable assets) which are listed in the church inventory, Felton PCC does not own any item valued at over £1,000. Items below £1,000 are not listed as fixed assets but the church wardens maintain an inventory of all PCC property. The accounts have been audited and approved by Ian Bell FCA, to whom we are also very grateful for having supported the development of our financial management.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of so many people in the Church and look forward to fulfilling God's work in 2022.

Charlotte Clarke, Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report to the members of St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Felton, Parochial Church Council.

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and Independent Examiner

The PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed _____ 

Dated 10-2-22

Mr. Ian Bell FCA
10, Riverside, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9EA

Movements on Funds during the Period (£)												
Twelve months ending 31st December 2021												
	Building Improvements	Mission partners	Children & Youth Worker	Fireworks	Flowers	Admin Work	Felton Relief in Need	Other	Total Restricted Funds	Not in Accounts	General Fund	Total Funds
Balance at 1st January	21,873	1,046	22,704	77	439	13,434	7,816	1,809	69,199	0	36,288	105,487
Total Receipts	2,773	261	7,240		313	10,010		1,000	21,997	4,308	46,650	77,556
Total Payments		(262)	(1,316)		(232)	(5,810)			(7,621)	(4,308)	(46,072)	(58,001)
Balance at 31st December	24,646	1,045	28,627	77	520	17,634	7,816	2,809	83,176	0	36,866	120,042

Felton and Longframlington Joint Ministry Account - (£)
 (Twelve months to 31 December 2021)

Bank Balance at 1 January 2021		1701.76
Receipts		
Felton	2250	
Longframlington	2250	
Diocesan Contribution for 2019	1130.17	
		5630.17
Payments		
Council Tax	275.12	
Vicar's Expenses	174.15	
Telephone/Internet	474.4	
Photocopier Lease	909.6	
Water Charges	210.56	
Photocopying Click Rate	91.82	
Mobile phone	82.01	
Stationery	12.92	
Felton PCC	1750	
L'Fram PCC	1750	
Reconciling adjustment	47.25	
		5777.83
Credit for the period		-147.66
Bank Balance at 31 December 2020		1554.1

Priest-In-Charge and the Future

As previously noted in the Churchwarden's section of this Annual Report, our Priest-In-Charge, left St Michael's for a new post in Darlington on 4th April 2021. During the last year, the continuation of all services has been made possible by the available members of the clergy, retired or otherwise. We have also been delighted to welcome Bishop Mark Wroe, the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne, Ven. Dr. Catherine Sourbut Groves and the Area Dean, Revd. Alison Hardy. Essential assistance and guidance have also been provided by our Self Supporting Minister, Revd. Gabby Llewelyn.

There has been much discussion within the Alnwick Deanery about the future grouping of churches. At one stage, it was suggested that St Michael's moved into an Alnwick East Sub-Deanery, but this was discounted by the Diocese.

Over recent years, St Michael's has been linked with St Mary's at Longframlington and a further suggestion was that an additional church, that at Whittingham, be also joined to this grouping. This has now also been discounted.

It is obvious that St Michael's would adopt whichever proposal that was approved by the Diocese, but we have maintained the view that we had no other agenda than to continue our link with St Mary's.

Our Parish Profile has been prepared and was approved by the PCC in November 2021. The Parish Profile was submitted to the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne following the PCC meeting.

**David Archbold and Liz Scurfield
Churchwardens**

Alnwick Deanery Lay Representatives Report

It has been a delight to get back to face to face meetings in the Deanery, and our first chance to get together in this way was at St Mary's, Longframlington in September.

Previous meetings have been very engaged discussing the Diocesan Transformation work, but we have now marked both a return to our more regular business as well as a chance to welcome new officers and hear about some best practice across the Deanery.

We needed to elect a new Deanery Lay Chair and Hugh Williams of St Cuthbert's, Amble agreed to stand and was duly elected. We also have a new Deanery Finance Officer, Jo Chillingworth., and Deanery Secretary, Jill Wharton. This is both an immense relief and a blessing as these roles had all become vacant together and there was a lack of candidates able to take them on. The new team will offer much needed support to our very busy Area Dean, Reverend Alison Hardy.

Inevitably Deanery finances and Parish Share payments still form a part of our discussions. It is obvious that Covid has had a very detrimental effect on all parishes and that giving in particular has dropped in a number of them. Parish Share collection will once again be a struggle this year and the Deanery Finance Officer encouraged all parishes to do what they could to ensure full payment was made, or else to seek support if they felt this was going to prove problematic.

More encouragingly, there was a positive discussion on mission going on despite the challenges of the pandemic. A number of parishes presented on specific missional activities, such as the ongoing wedding ministry (Longframlington), Messy Church Takeaway (Warkworth), the Alnwick Bell project (St Michael's, Alnwick) and Amble Men's Group. It was good to see that there are pockets of good practice across our deanery which can usefully be shared and developed.

Storm Arwen put paid to meeting face to face at our November meeting and we reverted to zoom. Our focus was a presentation by Transforming Communities Together Tyne to Tweed (TCT), a small independent charity based in our diocese that looks at parish church organisation and provides help in enabling parish audits. One thing they have developed is a 'Know your Church, know your Neighbourhood' audit toolkit that might be of future interest to us. Various of our deanery reps expressed interest in obtaining TCT support.

At the time of writing, we have yet to meet again face to face as the final meeting of the year is planned for late March. It is noteworthy that several churches in our deanery are currently in vacancy – the latest and potentially most significant being St Michael's Alnwick.

**John Marshall & Mark Winter
Lay Representatives to Deanery Synod**

Leading Worship and Music

In June 2021, St Michael's returned to the two-service format. A service of traditional Holy Communion is held at the 8.00 am service. A service of Holy Communion is held at 11.00 am on the first and third weeks of the month, the remaining services being taken by St Michael's lay Ministry Team. St Michael's is indebted to the lay Ministry Team, which is a loyal and enthusiastic group of church members, willing to lead worship on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month.

In September, our 5 O'clock service resumed. This is a contemporary service which is suitable for all age groups held on the 3rd Sunday of the month and is well attended with frequently more than 40 people being present. Evening Prayer Time is held on the fourth Thursday of each month.

On Christmas Eve, we held the traditional Candlelight Carol Service which was led by a lay member of the team, Elisabeth Rowark, with the address being given by Archdeacon Catherine Sourbut Groves. We were delighted that almost 100 people attended, many of whom were new to the church.

St Michael's aims to provide a harmonious blend of both traditional hymns, accompanied by the organ, and contemporary worship songs at each 11.00 am service. This enables the congregation to continue to enjoy the rich poetry and music of traditional hymnody whilst exploring and enjoying more contemporary worship songs. This has proven to be a successful format.

It is common practice to use the church's audio-visual system to provide the backing music for worship songs. The two organists are both beyond normal retirement age and there are no obvious replacements at the present time. A previous initiative to provide an organ bursary has not revealed any enthusiastic musician in recent years.

The musical accompaniment at the 11.00 am service on the 4th Sunday and at the 5 o'clock Service is provided by accomplished musicians playing various instruments.

David Archbold
Churchwarden

Mission Partners

We support three mission partners, one in each of three categories: international, national, and local, normally for a three-year period.

Our commitment to our mission partners is as follows:

- Pray: We pray for our mission partners each month in our Sunday services.
- Engage: We nominate a member of our congregation to liaise with each mission partner over the period of our commitment, to gain information, feedback to our congregation and arrange for representatives to speak at our services.
- Donate: We support each of our mission partners by giving a minimum of £1,000 a year as a contribution to their work.
- Fund: We aim to hold at least one fundraising event each year for each of our mission partners, raising awareness of their work amongst our congregation, as well as raising additional funds to support their work.

Whilst we were limited by the pandemic in terms our supporting activities, we were able to continue our donations from our core income. Our mission partner support in 2021 was as follows:

International: Berega in Tanzania is a poor rural community in Eastern Tanzania where Tearfund is training local churches in CCMP (Church Community Mobilisation Process). CCMP works with community structures so that the community and people can work themselves out of poverty. It works by local churches bringing the whole community together, addressing the root causes of poverty for their community, identifying the resources available to them, and building their capacity to tackle problems they face.

National: Christians Against Poverty (www.capuk.org) CAP runs a significant network of debt centres, job clubs and other services tackling the causes of debt and poverty and offering a lifeline and practical coaching to those trapped in debt. CAP runs 303 debt centres throughout the UK and over the course of 2020, 14,154 people were helped by one or more of CAP's services.

Local: Street Pastors (Ascension Trust) is a Christian inter-denominational organisation with a passion to empower individuals to work together within their local community and nation. One of the Ascension Trust's initiatives is Street Pastors. Street Pastors engage with people on the streets to care for them, listen to them and help them. They work together with police and other partners in the night-time economy to make communities safer. One of our church members, Val Leek, also volunteers as a Street Pastor in Newcastle.

The three-year term of support for these charities has now come to an end and, during the course of 2022, we will be undertaking a review of our mission support which may identify new mission partners.

John Inglis-Jones

Children and Young People

Food and Fun

In our last report two years ago, we concluded with the words “we are considering what our next steps should be”. Little did we imagine that our last meeting would be in March 2020 and that we would not meet again until 4th November 2021.

In 2021, we met for six sessions, from 1pm to 3pm every Thursday, changing from lunches to afternoon tea. Our numbers ranged from 6 to 10 families, mums, dads and grandparents, mostly local, varying each week according to covid infections in the schools.

We have two volunteers, but we have been supported by the Church with extra cake baking. We had hoped to resume on 20th January 2022 but once again due to high covid numbers in the schools we decided to postpone the start date until later in the year. We are not sure what the future holds for F and F: breakfasts are a possibility, as would a return to afternoon tea. We do hope that we can resume our work with young families before too long.

Anne Byatt + Carol Groves

Crèche, Children and Junior Church (0 to Year 6 Primary)

Whilst there was no Junior Church in the building at the beginning of 2021, the younger members of the church met online every Sunday afternoon, in our Zoomerang! sessions. These were a chance to share some news, games, worship music and prayers.

Over the Easter period, we created an Easter trail, of pictures and clues scattered around the village, for the children and families to follow, with a suitably chocolatey reward at the end, if the trail was completed.

When the restrictions allowed and the weather was suitable, we met as a junior church, on a Sunday afternoon, in the church grounds, to have fun playing games, obstacle courses, craft activities and sharing bible stories and snacks around the campfire. These were enjoyed by everyone and up to four families came together for fellowship and friendship.

In the autumn we restarted junior church during the 1100m service, although our numbers have been very changeable with the high incidence of infection in the village and family circumstances. Since returning to in-church services, the children and families have also been involved in various creative family services at 1100 am such as the Back to School and the Nativity service – *A star is Born*. These were well attended and enjoyed by all.

Our numbers of attendees has fluctuated during 2021, as our older members have moved onto the Ignite youth groups in Alnwick, some families have moved on, and we have not been able to reconnect with the creche and all the families with younger children. Our hope in 2022, is to reconnect with the first school children through Food and Fun, Open The Book and our Junior Church activities.

Julia Butlin – Children’s Co-ordinator

Young People (Year 7 to Year 13 Secondary)

In the end 2021 has turned out to be a strong year for the youth cell groups but Covid has continued to restrict our activities. We started the year in another lockdown and the groups met virtually. We played lots of Zoom quizzes, Youth Alpha was completed with one group and we were able to provide a weekly space for reflection, games and chat online. By Easter we were all getting zoom fatigue, but unfortunately restrictions on youth work remained tight.

As we moved into the summer term the weather improved, the evenings grew lighter and the Covid situation began to ease so we were able to start meeting together outside. We averaged about 20 young people ranging from 11-18 years old meeting at St Michael's Church in Alnwick. Each week we played a mixture of games, ate lots of cake and had a questions and answer session with each leader. This was our way to introduce ourselves but also share something of our faith. How wonderful it was for us to be doing face to face youth work again!

With a generous grant we were able to have two fully funded socials in the summer, one trip was to Airbox Bounce in Cramlington, and the other was for food and games at Alnmouth beach. The value of these was enormous; it gave the young people time to have fun and relax with one another in a way they hadn't in over a year.

In September sadly I, Jessica, went off work sick and remained off for most of the Autumn term. Claire Groves stepped into my role at short notice and she has coordinated the groups and co-led them with Chris Friend from Alnwick Baptist Church. Without Claire's support and huge dedication to these groups they would have had to stop running. In September the young people started to meet at Andrew Duff's house in Alnwick and we decided to split them into two groups of about 10 each. So now we have one group for years 7 – 9 and one group for years 10-13. They both alternate on a weekly basis with the usual format of games, cake and some faith-based content. There is a strong mix of young people from different schools, denominations and areas.

Five and a half years on from starting our first group with 7 young people, it's such a blessing to see our eldest teenagers moving onto further education and university. Several of our original group are still with us, and there are lots of new faces, building friendships and exploring their faith together in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them.

Jessica McArdle
Youth and Schools Worker Ignite

Churchyard Report

The churchyard continues to be maintained on a regular basis by David Phillips. Weekly grass cutting and edging (weather permitting) during the summer months. Walkways have been cut regularly around the church. The council no longer cut the grass. The long church footpath has been renovated and the edging stones are clearly visible. Moles have been a problem digging up soil heaps however, the soil is being transferred to create a border down the new path. The hope is to plant out borders in the future. Wildflowers have spread around the church garden some areas growing better than others. The frame previously displaying the church banner advertising the website has been removed. Whilst a number of fallen or unsafe gravestones have been reinstated by the local authority. Eddie Givens also tends to the church yard when he is feeling up to it. Eddie has been helping David with weeding in the borders and paths as well as some cutting back of roses.

David Phillips