

The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Wickhamford

PCC Secretary Annual Report for the year

1st January – 31st December, 2021

2021 was the second year overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns, which placed restrictions on social interaction and opportunities for communal worship.

St. John's re-opened for socially distanced worship on the 13th of June 2021 and continued to offer morning service on the second and fourth Sundays of each month through the rest of the year culminating in a well-attended carol service on Christmas Eve.

The return of services was advertised via a flyer sent to the home addresses of all those on the church electoral roll. Posters and flyers were displayed around the village and a poster advertising the dates of services each month has been displayed on the church porch noticeboard and the noticeboard on the roadside at the junction with Golden Lane. Attendance has been good with an average congregation of between 10 and 12. There was a substantial turn-out for the Christmas carol service. It is hoped to continue offering two services a month for the foreseeable future.

From early August St John's was opened for visitors on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Key holders took it in turns to open and lock the building. Comments in the visitors' book showed that this was warmly received.

However, in October, plaster from the chancel ceiling started to fall down into the chancel giving a real safety concern for visitors and worshippers alike. Roping off the chancel and placing a warning notice at the gates allowed services to continue, but it was decided to close the church to visitors as visits could not be supervised.

The falling plasterwork has presented real concerns about damage to the monuments in the chancel and work continues to find a way to shore up the roof as an interim measure before full repairs can be undertaken. Identifying the exact nature of the work required and raising the funds needed presents a huge task to the PCC.

The PCC met 8 times in 2021, by Zoom, in the fresh air of the Churchyard, weather permitting, and in the Church:

Date	Method	Attendance
• 2/2/21	Zoom	80%
• 9/3/21	Zoom	80%
• 13/4/21	Zoom	80%
• 26/5/21	Church	89%
• 30/6/21	Churchyard	89%
• 4/8/21	Churchyard	100%
• 15/9/21	Churchyard	71%
• 3/11/21	Church	89%

Thus, overall attendance at the PCC meetings was 85%.

At the APCM in May a further 2 members were elected to the PCC, new member Alison Remes and returning member Jenny Tweney.

In June 2021 the PCC agreed to the digitising of the Parish Registers and films by the County and Diocesan Archivist.

Following lifting of lockdown rules coffee mornings were resumed on the first Saturday of the month in the Churchyard. These events give members of the congregation, friends, family and others from the local community to meet socially for refreshments either in the Church or Churchyard. Events were held in September and October with excellent attendance. Unfortunately, the ceiling collapse and the onset of cold weather curtailed further planned coffee mornings.

The PCC secretary attended 3 Deanery Synod meetings in 2021:

- 9/3/21 by Zoom, the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Pershore and Evesham Deanery.
- 20/7/21 at All Saints Church, to discuss the Parish Share and Reflections on the Way Ahead.
- 12/10/21 by Zoom, a presentation on Eco Churches.

Wickhamford PCC were invited to help with transportation for Bishop Martin's Pilgrimage of Prayer to the Deanery in November 2021. The PCC secretary drove the Bishop from his home in Bredon to St Michael's Broadway where Bishop Martin blessed the door and led a short service. Although the Bishop did not have time to visit St. John's he was interested in hearing about its history and state of repair and made some helpful remarks on a way forward.

In conclusion. 2021 was another year of social distancing and major concerns over the maintenance of the ancient, beautiful and much-loved St. John the Baptist Church. We pray for better times ahead with opportunities for the congregation to come together without restriction and work together to effect repairs to ensure the future of the parish church in Wickhamford.

Jackie Knight, PCC Secretary