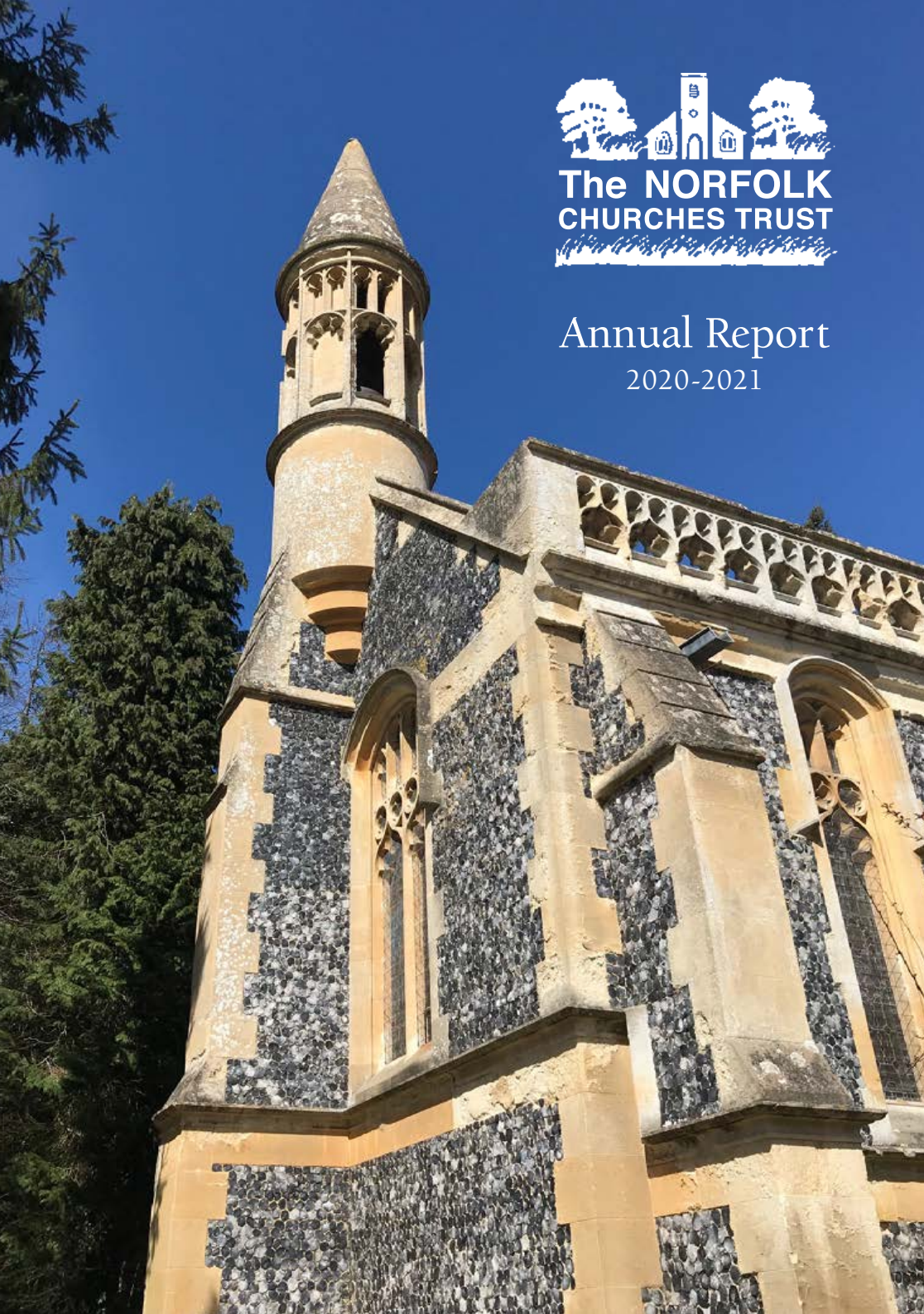




The NORFOLK
CHURCHES TRUST

Annual Report 2020-2021



Chairman's Report

As with most other charities, last year was an Annus Horribilis for the Norfolk Churches Trust. The Covid-19 lockdowns resulted in most of our fundraising events being cancelled or postponed. The Stately Car Boot Sale was the major casualty: the May 2020 date was put back to May 2021, which in turn has now been moved to Sunday 1st May 2022. Please put this date in your diaries! It was a bitter disappointment when the Holkham Operas had to be cancelled in July. Other events great and small fell by the wayside: the ever-popular tour of churches in the Stanta battle training area and the Summer Evening Broads boat trip to St Benets Abbey were two that had been eagerly awaited.

However, just when all appeared to be lost, the Annual Bike Ride in September organised by Charles Inglis and his team surpassed all expectations raising a staggering £175,000 almost doubling the previous year's sponsorship and a record amount. The sponsorship money is shared with the participant's chosen church. This success was in the face of gloomy predictions that potential participants would be put off by the fear of Covid or that churches would not

welcome the event. Improvements to signing up and paying sponsorship online through the Trust website contributed to the achievement but real thanks go to the hundreds of people of all ages who took advantage of a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the fresh Norfolk air by getting on their bikes in support of the Trust.

Patrick Lines (Events Chairman) and Han Yang Yap opened their garden at Elsing Hall to members of the Trust for several days over two weeks in June and raised over £4,000. Clare Agnew arranged with Colin de Chair to offer drone photography of members houses and gardens which raised £2,500. And in December, Rosabelle Batt and Caroline Egerton arranged an online lecture by Tom Duncan entitled 'Reimagining the Garden' which raised £3,750. This was a first for the Trust and attracted an audience from across the UK and overseas, demonstrating the potential for more online talks in the future. So in the end total fundraising income was £93,000 net, which was a remarkable result in what looked at first sight to be an uneventful year.

With churches closed for during the first lockdown and later only partially open, grant applications dropped and repairs



Shaun Quinn. Family enjoying the Bike Ride. Runner up.

ground to halt for a while but eventually things picked up and by the end of the year grants totalling £104,500 (£140,492 in 2019/20) were awarded to 27 churches. Grants totalling £112,378 were paid to 32 churches that completed their repairs and the total of grants offered but not yet carried out stands at £277,075. There were no major repairs on the Leased

Churches. The cost of their routine maintenance, minor running repairs and insurance for the year totalled £21,966.

Another consequence of the pandemic was that a number of companies within our investment portfolio reduced or cancelled dividends, with the result that our investment income fell by about a quarter. However, as the year progressed and markets could see signs of recovery, the capital value of the shares started to recover the losses incurred in the previous year, and by the year end our investment portfolio had achieved gains of just over £200,000 (compared to losses of £103,000 in 2019/20). The balance sheet is now showing investments of £1,533, 546 (2020 £1,339,925). Our net current assets stand at £356,192 is in accordance with our formal policy on reserves, and which we believe will continue to provide a buffer against economic downturns and also as a reserve in the event of major work becoming necessary at the leased churches.

Work continued on the new website under the chairmanship of Amelia Courtauld, advised by Ashley Spooner and supported Scilla Latham, Caryl Wright and Helen Evans. We hope that new design and

Chairman's Report *continued*

improved content will help to make it an indispensable source of information for members including news of upcoming events, repair projects and news, and also attract new members to the Trust. The new online payment system will make it easier to join the Trust, sign up for events and buy merchandise. The added advantage of online payments is to reduce administration time and costs related to processing cheques.

Membership remains strong with the total now standing at 1,411 members in all categories. The slight fall may reflect the lack of events to attract new members but is also due to time spent during lockdown checking our database and identifying duplicate membership records and removing records of members who have not paid their subscription for two years or more.

We are most grateful to the following Trusts for their generous donations this year: The Lady Hind Trust, The Charles Littlewood Hill Trust, The Antelope Trust, The Bedhampton Trust, The John Jarrold Trust and The J R Rudd Foundation as well as several anonymous donations. Donations totalled £50,327. There were two bequests totalling £4,000.

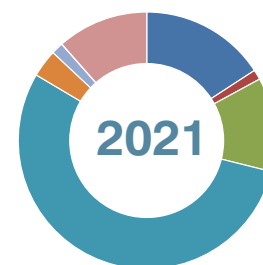
Jonathan Ellis who served as Hon Treasurer of the Trust for seven years and a further two as a Board member stepped down from the Board of Trustees but I am pleased to say we will continue to benefit from his wise counsel on the Advisory Council. We were delighted to welcome Rosabelle Batt as a Trustee in Jonathan's place. It is a pleasure to welcome Philippa Taylor to the Advisory Council as the Lord Lieutenant's nominee. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Trustees and Advisory Council members for their support during the year.

On reflection, the year turned out to be less of an Annus Horribilis than it might have been, largely thanks to the imaginative ideas for fundraising events to take the place of more familiar formats and the determination of the Bike Ride team to keep their event on the road. Churches did open again after the first lockdown and contractors got back to work on urgent repairs but above all the Trust demonstrated considerable resilience in the face of adversity.

Peter Sheppard
Chairman, 17th June

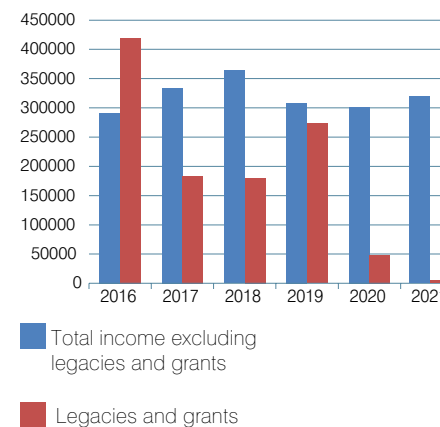
JARROLD
The John Jarrold Trust

Where does the money come from?

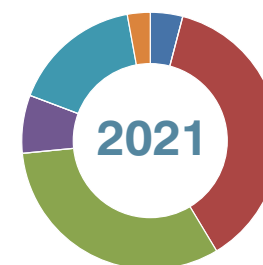


- Donations
- Legacies
- Subscriptions
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Sponsored bicycle ride
- Trust events
- Sale of goods
- Investments

Income 2016 - 2021

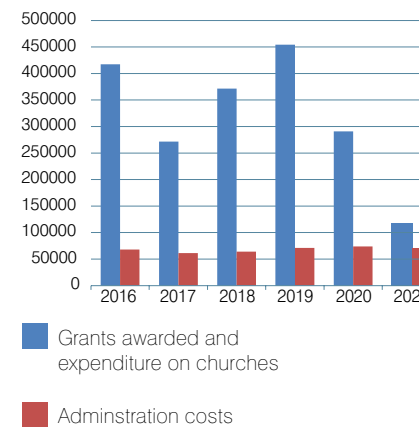


Where does the money go to?



- Costs of generating voluntary income
- Fundraising costs (incl. parish share of Bike Ride)
- Grants offered
- Expenditure on leased churches
- Support costs
- Governance costs

Expenditure 2016 - 2021



Financial Summary

Norfolk Churches Trust

Year ended 31 March 2021

Summary Statement of Financial Activities

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Income from:		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	48,555	50,439
Legacies	4,000	35,000
Subscriptions	37,898	41,185
Heritage Lottery Fund grants	-	13,667
Leased churches	2,157	2,067
Other trading activities		
Sponsored bicycle ride	175,066	94,257
Trust events	11,122	60,331
Sale of goods	4,833	4,001
Investment income	36,871	48,792
Total income	320,501	349,739
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds		
Costs of generating voluntary income	(12,268)	(12,267)
Funding costs incl. parish share of Bike Ride	(112,201)	(86,444)
Charitable activities		
Grants offered	(96,500)	(140,492)
Expenditure on leased churches	(21,966)	(150,194)
Support costs	(49,253)	(52,494)
Governance costs	(8,648)	(9,012)
Total expenditure	(300,836)	(450,903)
Net (surplus/deficit) for the year	19,666	(101,164)
Net gains/ (losses) on investment assets	200,687	(102,976)
Net movement in funds	220,352	(204,140)
Fund balances brought forward	1,667,614	1,871,754
Fund balances carried forward at the end of the year	1,887,966	1,667,614

Summary Balance Sheet

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Fixed asset investments	1,533,546	1,339,925
Net current assets	354,420	327,689
Net assets	1,889,738	1,667,614
The funds of the charity:		
Restricted		
Unrestricted	1,887,966	1,667,614
Total funds	1,887,966	1,667,614

TRUSTEES' STATEMENT

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of The Norfolk Churches Trust. For further information, the full audited annual accounts should be consulted. Copies are available from The Norfolk Churches Trust, Manor Farmhouse, Diss Road, Tibenham, Norfolk NR16 1QF.

The full accounts have been independently examined by MHA Larking Gowen and received an unqualified report. They were approved by the Trustees on 18 June 2020 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies.

David Missen - Hon Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT TO THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF THE NORFOLK CHURCHES TRUST

I have examined the summarised financial statements of The Norfolk Churches Trust.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.

My responsibility is to report to you my opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report. I also read other information contained in the summarised annual report and considered the implications for my report if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of The Norfolk Churches Trust for the year ended 31 March 2021.

GILES KERKHAM FCA DChA

For and on behalf of MHA LARKING GOWEN LLP
King Street House, 15 Upper King Street, Norwich NR3 1RB
8th July 2021

Grants 2020-21

During the past year, the Trust offered and paid grants from its General Fund to the following churches:

General Fund	Paid during the year £	Offered during year £	Unpaid at year end £
Acle, St Edmund	3000		0
Alderford, St John the Baptist		7000	7000
Aslacton, St Michael	2000	2000	0
Beachamwell, St Mary		3000	3000
Beeston Regis, All Saints	1500	1500	0
Beeston, St Mary	10000		0
Billingford, St Leonard		2000	2000
Blickling, St Andrew			10000
Bracon Ash, St Nicholas	0		10000
Bradfield, St Giles	5000		0
Breckles, St Margaret			4000
Brockdish, St Peter	5000		0
Burnham Deepdale, St Mary	0		4000
Caister on Sea, Holy Trinity		5000	5000
Carleton Forehoe, St Mary	0		0
Carleton Rode, Baptist Church		3000	3000
Cawston, St Agnes	4000		0
Colkirk, St Mary		2000	2000
Congham, St. Andrew	0		3000
Crosthwaite, All Saints	0	10000	10456
Deopham, St. Andrew	0		8000
Easton, St Peter			0
East Rudham, St Mary	1000		0
East Walton, St. Mary	0		0
Edgefield Old Church	0		862.37
Elsing, St Mary	1000	1000	0
Felthorpe, St Margaret	0		1000
Gateley, St Helen		2000	2000
Gooderstone, St George		2000	2000
Great Ryburgh, St. Andrew	1000		0
Great Snoring, St Mary		3000	3000
Great Walsingham, St Peter		3000	3000
Great Yarmouth, St Peter & St Spiridon	0		2000
Haddiscoe, St Mary	2000		0
Harpley, St Lawrence			10000
Haverlingland, St Peter			500
Heacham, St Mary		4000	4000
Helhoughton, All Saints			1875
Hethel, All Saints	1500		0
Hickling, St Mary	4000		0
Hindringham, St Martin			3000
Hunstanton, St Edmund	1000		0
Kelling, St Mary		3000	3000

Kirstead, St Margaret			5000
Little Cressingham, St Andrew			10000
Little Massingham, St Andrew	2000		0
Longham, St Andrew & St Peter	500	500	0
Marlingford, Assumption of the BVM	0		2000
Merton, St Peter	10000		0
Morston, All Saints			5000
Newton-by-Castleacre, St. Mary	8500		0
North Elmham, St Mary	7000		0
North Tuddenham, St Mary	8161.5		0
North Wootton, All Saints	2000		0
Norwich Heartease, St Francis	0		0
Norwich Mile Cross, St Catherine		7000	7000
Postwick, All Saints			500
Pulham, St Mary			10000
Reymerstone, St Peter		3000	3000
Ringland, St Peter		2000	2000
Saxthorpe, St Andrew		10000	10000
Scottow, All Saints			7000
Sloley, St Bartolomew			5000
Southburgh, St Andrew	2500	2500	0
South Lynn, All Saints			8000
Spixworth, St Peter	7000	7000	0
Surlingham, St Mary			7000
Swaffham, St Peter			5000
Swanton Abbott, St Michael	2000		0
Tacolneston, All Saints			750
Tasburgh, St Mary	0		2000
Terrington, St John		5000	5000
Thrigby, St Mary	216		2132
Thurning, St Andrew	0		7000
Tittleshall, St Mary			7000
Topcroft, St. Margaret	0		0
Tunstead, St Mary	5000		0
Tuttington, St Peter			10000
Twyford, St Nicholas	0		8000
Upper Sheringham, All Saints	1000		0
Walcott, All Saints	500		0
Wellingham St Andrew			8000
Wells next the Sea, St Nicholas	0		5000
West Walton, St Mary			9000
Wickmere, St Andrew	3000		0
Wilby, All Saints		7000	7000
Wiveton, St Mary		7000	7000
Wood Norton, St Nicholas	2000		0
Woodton, All Saints	1000		0
Wreningham, All Saints			5000
Wretton, All Saints	8000		0
General Fund total	112,377	104,500	277,075

4 grants (totalling £8,000) outstanding for more than 5 years which are on longer needed have been withdrawn

Supporting Churches

All Saints, Crostwight. £10,000. Conservation of 14th century wall paintings

The year has inevitably been unusually challenging for parishes across the county and meant we had to adapt how we offer advice and support to parishes when meetings in churches were not possible during lockdowns or due to the continuing need to observe social distancing. The first lockdown was notable for the number of phone calls from worried churchwardens and fabric officers many of whom were upset by their churches being locked. Others were frustrated at not being able to get on with planning urgent repairs because of the wider restrictions imposed and some just wanted someone sympathetic to listen to their worries. Anxiety was further fuelled by the increasing uncertainty over whether the VAT reclaim scheme through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme would be continued beyond March 2021. Some churches simply could not afford to start repairs but just as all hope was fading, the scheme was extended for a further year.

The first lockdown halted all church repairs for weeks: contractors have worked hard to catch up on lost time but there will continue

to be a backlog of repairs for some time to come. Additionally, restrictions on holding meetings has meant that PCCs have not been able to meet in the normal way to plan repairs, which has led to urgent work being delayed and further deterioration in the condition of churches, especially when the damage is caused by water ingress due to roof and rainwater goods problems. The restrictions on large gatherings for most of the year have had a serious impact on the traditional local fundraising events that are such an important factor in the routine care and repair of parish churches.

At the start of the year, it seemed likely the postponement of the Stately Car Boot Sale and cancellation of the Holkham Operas would mean the grants budget might be cut by 50% or more, but thanks to the extraordinary success of the Bike Ride in September our worst fears were not realised. Total grants of £104,500 (£140,492 in 2019/20) were awarded to 27 churches, down from 41 churches last year. The total grants paid out to 32 churches that completed repairs for which grants had

been awarded in previous years came to £112,378, down from £135,589 paid to 36 churches in 2019/20. Details of the grants can be found on the tables on the preceding pages.

Despite the reduced budget, grants of £10,000 were awarded to **All Saints', Crostwight** for the conservation of the nationally important 14th wall paintings in the nave, and to **St Andrew's, Saxthorpe** for roof repairs. Churches awarded grants of £7,000 ranged from the deeply rural medieval church of **All Saints' Wilby** to the imposing church of **St Catherine's Mile Cross, Norwich** designed by Caroe and Robinson and consecrated in 1936. Both of which required roof and related high-level



St Andrew, Saxthorpe. £10,000.
South aisle roof replacement.

repairs. **St Mary's Wiveton** and **St Peter's Spixworth** both suffered from unexpected shocking chancel ceiling failures. At Wiveton a major beam crashed to the floor in August 2019 and at Spixworth several large panels of plaster fell onto the sanctuary floor in October 2020. Both were awarded £7,000 towards the cost of repairs. **St John the Baptist, Alderford** was one of 27 Norfolk churches to benefit from grants from the Historic England Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund. The Trust awarded Alderford a £7,000 grant to ensure they

could complete the repairs without further delay. Almost half of the other churches that received these most expedient Historic England grants have previously been awarded grants by the Trust and are now in a position to undertake the repair.

Grants of £5,000 were given to **Holy Trinity, Caister-on-Sea** to tackle the cause of extensive damp due to defective rainwater goods and drainage identified in the latest QIR and to **Terrington St John** for north aisle roof repairs. Grants towards the cost of tower repairs were awarded to **St Mary's Heacham** (£4,000), **St Mary's, Great Snoring** (£3,000) and **St Helen's Gateley** (£2,000).

It is good to report that the number of applications linked to lead thefts continues to fall and those received this year all relate to thefts in past years; **St Mary's Beachamwell** £3,000 and **St George's Goodnerstone** £2,000).

Whilst a greater proportion of the grants than usual this year are relatively small, they reflect the number of applications where the shortfall in funds did not require a large grant to get the repairs under way. It has been a feature of the applications this year that there have been very few for major repairs that would usually lead to a major National Lottery Heritage Fund grant application. It is too early to know if this reflects the widespread feeling that the Lottery grants are becoming increasingly challenging for church repair projects due to the emphasis on developing community use of the building, or whether it relates to the difficulty of organising a major project whilst Covid-19 restrictions are in place.

At the end of the year, the Trust set up Maintenance pilot projects in two benefices (one in the Diocese of Ely and one in the Diocese of Norwich) to establish whether there is a need for a maintenance support scheme. We believe that this could prompt more effective care of the buildings and prevent or slow the development of problems that will lead to more complex, expensive repairs in the long run. It is expected that the pilots will identify which churches are having difficulties in either managing routine maintenance and small repairs, or paying for them. Grant applications frequently relate to problems which could have been avoided

by regular maintenance: in particular damage caused by faulty gutters and downpipes, damaged flashing or slipped slates and tiles. By working closely with two benefices in different parts of the county it is hoped we can develop a programme of support, training and in some cases financial aid which we could then roll out more widely if the need is clear.

It has indeed been an unusual year for us all but by adapting some of the ways we work and by using virtual meetings on a regular basis we have been able to continue Trust's vital work supporting churches across the county through advice and financial aid despite the deprivations imposed by Covid-19.

Making the Difference:

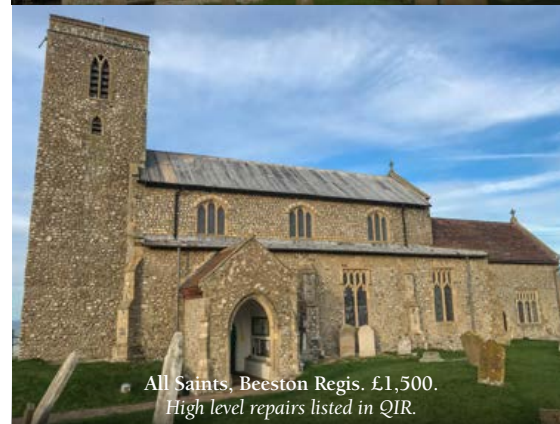
These photographs illustrate some of the churches offered grants this year, or where work is underway. There is more information about all the grants awarded on our website



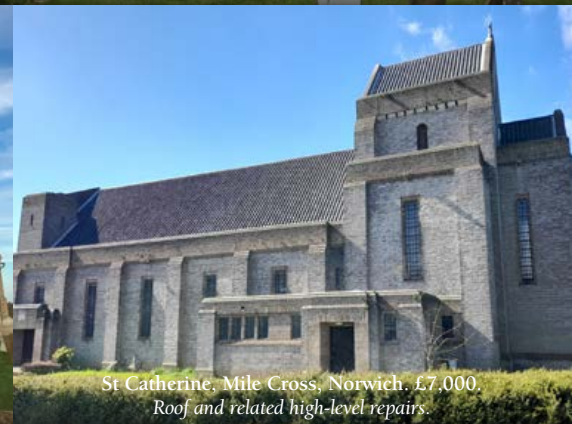
St Helen, Gately. £2,000.
Tower repairs.



St George, Gooderstone. £2,000.
Aisle roof repair following lead theft.



All Saints, Beeston Regis. £1,500.
High level repairs listed in QIR.



St Catherine, Mile Cross, Norwich. £7,000.
Roof and related high-level repairs.



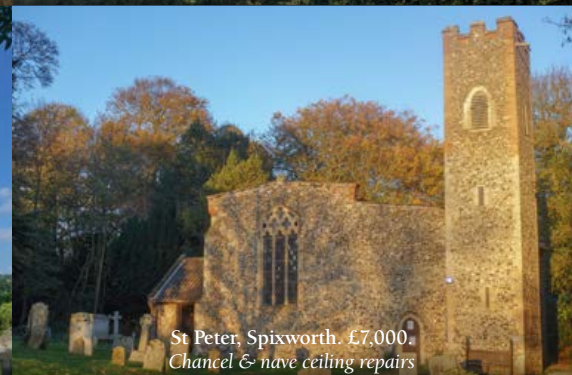
St Mary, Heacham. £4,000.
Tower repairs.



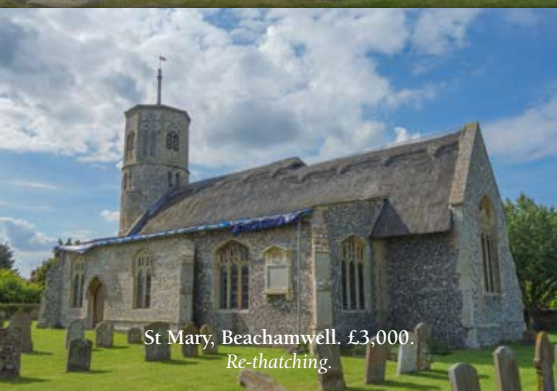
St Mary, Wiyeton. £7,000.
Chancel roof repair following collapse of major roof timber.



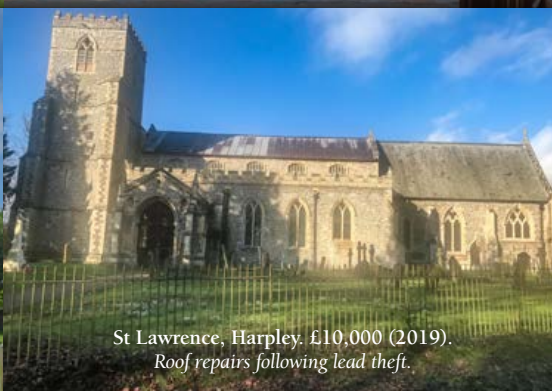
St John, Terrington St John. £5,000.
Roof repairs.



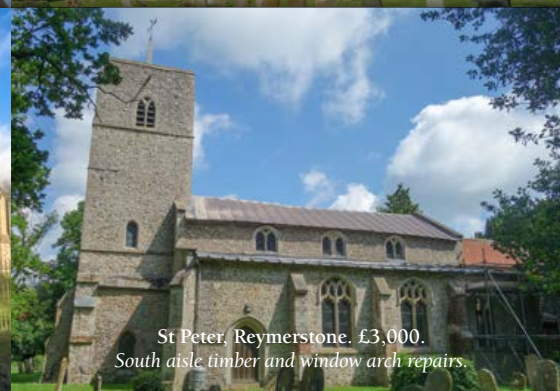
St Peter, Spixworth. £7,000.
Chancel & nave ceiling repairs.



St Mary, Beachamwell. £3,000.
Re-thatching.



St Lawrence, Harpley. £10,000 (2019).
Roof repairs following lead theft.



St Peter, Reymerstone. £3,000.
South aisle timber and window arch repairs.



All Saints, Wilby. £7,000.
Chancel ceiling & roof repairs.



Churchcrawls in Solitude

by Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch, Professor of the History of the Church at Oxford University.

St Andrew, Illington.

Join Professor MacCulloch on a visit to St Andrew's, Illington as he reflects on the enduring role churchcrawls have played throughout his life. We are most grateful to him for allowing us to print the full text of this essay which was the first of five episodes by him broadcast on The Essay on BBC Radio 3 in April.

Over the last twelve months of our various national lockdowns, I've only spent one night away from home in Oxford. In mid-summer 2020, I fished out my map of Norfolk, chose a vague end-point to aim for, and trawled the internet for the nearest pleasant-looking pub for dinner and B and B. I took a gamble on booking a couple of months in advance, for early September. It was worth the risk: the good effects might have to last me a long time. The trip would be solo, because no other sane human being, however fond of me, would tolerate being part of this particular plan.

But now is your chance to become my passenger as I drive you through a remote part of Norfolk, quiet, sandy-soiled country called Breckland, to the sound of Radio 3 Digital. I warn you that in a moment, we'll make a sharp right turn off

the main road. We're near the start of a **churchcrawl**, which is like a pubcrawl, only with churches, though pubs may feature if needed. This hobby has been a thread through seven decades of my life. I hope you'll see why when you join me on my second visit in sixty years to the medieval church of St Andrew in a hamlet called Illington.

Early one sunny autumn morning, I'd headed away from Oxford, driving nonstop for a couple of hours until the countryside started turning East Anglian. From the gates of Suffolk on into Norfolk, around 300 miles on rough country roads, I visited 35 medieval churches in 36 hours. In my churchcrawls, that's probably a personal best – though full disclosure makes me admit that three of those 35 churches were in one single churchyard. Supper, a glass of wine and bed in the Norfolk pub

pivoted the trip; next night I was back home. Six months later I'm still feeding off the adrenalin.

What was it: a pilgrimage, a spiritual experience, or just a slightly mad microholiday? Churchcrawls are something I've done from earliest childhood, though they didn't have such a snappy name when I began in the early 1950s. I cherish a blurry black and white photo that my mother took in Cyprus, when Cyprus was still a British colony and my father was an army garrison chaplain. The three of us loved exploring the city ruins of old Famagusta on the Cypriot coast, and my mother's snap shows my two-year-old self, engrossed by some private fascination, accompanied by my father, a palm tree and a ruinous Byzantine church.

Churchcrawls connect all the positive aspects of my seven decades of life, from a happy childhood onwards. They're a direct line from a tiny boy to his aged later self, like the scent of a flower or a taste on the tongue. Marcel Proust would approve. What are the rules of churchcrawls? Minimal. Rule One: Never plan too much; just set out, with one or two special trophies in mind and a resolve to bag as many churches as possible. Some of them may be revisits, some new experiences. That's not a problem in Norfolk. The county was hugely rich in the Middle Ages, and it ended up with around a thousand parish churches. Around 650 of the thousand still have a roof on, and I've still only visited around two-thirds of them.

Rule Two: Don't pore over guide-books beforehand; that can wait for a debriefing. Just set out with your wits about you, a map and a camera, and be prepared at little warning to turn smartly and elegantly down

a side lane with due consideration for other motorists.

And so I saw the roadsign off to Illington and it sparked a vivid mid-teenage memory. I had been to the church there once before, back in the days when my long-suffering mum and dad were still driving me around. It was March 1966 and late in the daylight when we spotted a distant church tower across fields, and after bumping along a farm track, we were pleased but a bit surprised to find the church unlocked.

Once inside, there was a different surprise; we found it bizarrely like Miss Havisham's dining-room in Dickens's *Great Expectations*, frozen in time and festooned with dried-up and decaying floral displays. They looked as if they had come from a big wedding some weeks before, but no-one had bothered to clear them away, even though it was only nine days before Easter.

I'd not been back to Illington since, but I had never forgotten its sadness. This was clearly already a church in trouble in 1966, and so it proved. By the late 1970s, the Church of England declared St Andrew's formally redundant, which can be a death sentence for a church building. During the 1980s they took the bells down from the tower before someone could steal them. At last, in 1997, a charitable body, the Norfolk Churches Trust, seized on the wreck, just in time to make it safe and presentable: many blessings on them.

When I saw the signpost to Illington again, I'd already learned of that story, and wanted to see for myself. I warn anyone tempted to follow in my tyretracks that the church is not easy to find. Ignore a second road-sign

marked Illington, as it will lead you down an even smaller lane scattered with a few cottages, until it peters out in fields and some really fearsome ruts in clay. Instead take your courage in your hands and drive down a different private road into a farmyard. I had a reassuring cheery wave from a man on a tractor, so I parked with all due consideration for a working farm, and set out walking on a field track. The medieval tower stands out splendidly in the flatness of Breckland, and you can tell that some fourteenth-century gentleman splashed out a lot of cash on it, probably demanding a specially showy western facade so he could admire what he'd paid for from his manor-house.

My hopes were not high pushing through late summer undergrowth around the churchyard fence. After all, across the nation lockdown had closed almost every form of public entertainment; would St Andrew's be any different? But the door opened, and I found a silent welcome – the floor swept, even a guide-book to buy. Quite a contrast with the Miss Havisham experience of 1966. Inside, it is very brown and white, wood and whitewash, with just a little coloured glass left in the east window, two St Andrew's crosses for the church's dedication. The furnishings are decent, serious, Victorian.

Frankly, many visitors might find Illington dull and hardly worth the walk. I could catalogue various nerdy churchcrawler things that excited *me* as I poked round; that's not really the point. This second visit of my life to Illington stuck in my mind more than all the other 34 victims of my two-day ecclesiastical orgy. Why?

The big thing was that it was still there. That rang true with various other East Anglian churchcrawls I've made in recent years: things are generally better with these buildings than they were half a century ago. Why?

In 1966 I caught the last gasp of Victorian Norfolk. For centuries, Breckland had been poor, marginal country, but the nineteenth-century squires brought high-yield farming and a gentry passion for field sports: new money. A rash of great houses lorded it over the heaths, the pine plantations, the wide stony fields. Illington was an estate church for the squire and his tenants; for a long while, one of the family from the big house was also the parson, and he made sure that his church was spruced up as he wanted. Parish life would be paternalistically benevolent: Sunday schools, probably a Mothers' Union, and a Rector's wife in a large hat, doing good works.

By 1966, it was all draining away. You might feel sad about this, or you might just record it; it's the flow of history. Farming needed steadily less manual labour. The ranks of the gentry who would have slipped a gold half-sovereign in the collection-bag were thinned out by two world wars and fairer taxation; the clergy grew older and their numbers thinned out too. The Anglican parish church was collateral damage, though in fact the rival Nonconformist chapels, that farm labourers had gladly paid for with their pennies, have suffered even more. In the mid-sixties, there seemed little way out. Energetic middle-class professionals were yet to arrive in deep country, and decades would pass before

farmers' markets with artisan cheese, let alone Zoom conferencing from your country cottage.

So St Andrew's stood abandoned. Now in the twenty-first century, there's renewed goodwill towards church buildings like this. It's often based on feelings more wistful and shapeless than the confident words of the Book of Common Prayer that structured my childhood. Yet right across the nation, preservation trusts guard the most memorable of the churches at risk, always struggling to find money and support, but doing a heroic job to keep places like Illington open, loved and still speaking of their past. I was cheered to read that the oldest and most precious of Illington's bells, placed in the church tower when it was newly built, now rings out for church services at another medieval village church, up towards the Norfolk coast.

In my wild wanderings round pandemic Norfolk, I noticed a paradox: I found the churches which were most used by a worshipping congregation were the ones most likely to be locked, for fear of COVID infection. It was the churches in retirement like Illington that were open and welcoming. The value of these silent and solitary spaces comes precisely from their silence and solitude. If your daily life has been cut down to staring at four walls and making most of your human contact through a small screen, you could still seek out this calm, accepting space, and be alone in a different and more positive way.

It does no harm to remember that around church buildings like this are centuries-worth of graves, visible and invisible. At Illington they are gloriously mixed up with

rampant grass and flowers and a bustle of wildlife. Past human generations have faded back into a broader story; what seems urgent and intense to one actor on the stage has had its little scene, and then the tale moves on. Illington church may present rather ordinary Victorian furniture and trimmings, no great spectacle, but take a closer look. The walls of the nave you see are actually nine centuries old, and as you pushed the gate into the churchyard, you were passing a Saxon burial ground, pushing the saga back a further half-millennium.

From the viewpoint of Illington church, my two journeys here are no more in its history than a fruitfly randomly landing on a sunny window-pane. Well, worse fates than being a fruitfly. My mad 36 hours in Norfolk reminded me of the purposeful silence in all my lone churchcrawling. I was given the chance for a two-day conversation with ancient buildings, with the stream of history, and with myself. Walking up the track to that confident flint tower built in Geoffrey Chaucer's generation, I stripped away layers of my own past spanning more than half a century.

First I'd arrived as the fourteen-year-old, in the midst of all the muddle that teenagers are in, perhaps a bit more muddle than most, for being a bewildered gay teenager. Now an ageing Oxford don returned in a fancy car, with time to enjoy the view down the years. This remote corner of Norfolk Breckland greeted us both and brought us together. Thanks to the fine folk who saved Illington from ruin, it's made it into the 21st century. Across the kingdom are thousands more ancient churches, each an individual personality. Over the next programmes, we're going to meet just a few more.



Leased Churches

Our Lady of Consolation and St Stephen, Lynford

The past year has been one of mixed fortunes for the thirteen churches which the Trust leases from the Diocese of Norwich and the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia. On the positive side, messages left in the Visitors Books unanimously expressed gratitude on finding the churches open, and for many visitors their peaceful atmosphere provided a welcome place of sanctuary during difficult times.

On the other hand, it is sad to report that two of the Leased Churches were badly damaged. In August, just as things seemed to be settling back into a more normal pattern, two chancel windows in St Peter's church, Dunton were smashed by children who were holidaying nearby. Then in late November one of the clerestory windows in All Saints' church, Rackheath was kicked in by a man climbing into the church at night.

In the days after the senseless vandalism at Dunton the outpouring of support from near and far demonstrated how even the most modest rural churches have great emotional significance to an unseen congregation across the globe. We are immensely grateful to the local keyholders and supporters at both churches who did so much to help in the immediate aftermath of the events. Whilst the cost of the repairs is largely covered by insurance, the most beautiful north chancel window



Dunton: North chancel window after vandalism

at Dunton can never be fully restored to its former state and the distress caused to everyone most closely involved will take a long time to repair.

In a year punctuated by lockdowns and restrictions on usual working practices, it was inevitable that the planned parapet and bellcote repairs at the church of Our Lady of Consolation and St Stephen, Lynford would be delayed. However, we had not reckoned on a pair of barn owls nesting in the church in late summer which meant the repairs had to be postponed again. The work is now programmed for early autumn 2021 which we hope will allow plenty of time for our barn owls to bring up their chicks again this summer. There is more information about the church on our website.

Work on the thirteen Leased Churches was limited to minor running repairs and routine maintenance. Total expenditure on them over the year, including insurance and roof alarm charges, was £21,961.

Scilla Latham,
Secretary of the Norfolk Churches Trust



Photo: Mike Dixon.



Dunton: repairs underway: glass fragments at the conservators

We are always in need of more people to support the work of the Trust by helping care for our set of 13 very special redundant churches leased from the Diocese of Norwich and the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia. Many of them have been in the care of the Norfolk Churches Trust for over 40 years, during which time the Trust has maintained and when necessary undertaken major repairs to keep them in good condition. Helping with these churches can take many forms, from opening and keeping the churches looking welcoming to visitors, to churchyard maintenance or carrying out research into their history. This is a wonderful way of meeting like-minded people and learning new skills, as well as having the satisfaction of playing a part in the preservation of our cultural heritage across the county. Each year a few people step forward to help us and we are immensely grateful to all of them. Could this be the year you take that step? If you think it is, please get in touch with me, by email: secretary@norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk, or phone 01379 677272.



Bike Ride News 2021

David Owen, Eric and Grannie - Sept 2020 - Bike Ride photo competition winner.

As I sit at my desk in June 2021 to write this article we are thankfully enjoying more freedom of movement with further improvements on the horizon. Everyone at the Norfolk Churches Trust hopes that you, your family, friends and local community have remained well and have managed to stay positive in what has been a very difficult time.

When there has been a shortage of good news it is especially enjoyable to report on the outstanding success of last year's Bike Ride, which **broke all past records** by raising £174,382, a staggering £79,345 more than the previous year. A huge number of our loyal supporters, who have been doing the Bike Ride for years, were joined by a new band of enthusiasts who all took to their bikes, feet and cars to help raise a phenomenal amount of money. We had some incredibly generous cheques but the vast majority was raised by lots of people donating what they could in difficult times. I found it cheering that there are clearly large numbers of people in Norfolk who appreciate the architectural, historical and religious importance of the churches and chapels to our county. I don't think it is an exaggeration to say their efforts saved the year

for the Norfolk Churches Trust, which was able to continue giving grants to churches and chapels when most of their fundraising activities had been cancelled. As the majority of the money raised is divided between the Norfolk Churches Trust and the church of the participant's choice, it was also very satisfying to be able to send out cheques to 331 places of worship. I know these cheques were gratefully received as so many churches lost their normal means of raising money.

I would therefore like to pass on an **enormous thank you** to everybody who took part either cycling, walking, driving or manning the churches. You make a fantastic contribution to the church of your choice and to the Trust.

Like many charities and churches the Norfolk

Churches Trust is going to lose out on many of its fundraising activities again this year and so I hope that we can make this another bumper year. Many people have been getting on their bikes or walking to take exercise which will be great training for this year's Bike Ride! I also hope that the new participants last year will have enjoyed their day exploring Norfolk's churches and want to do it again and bring some friends. We do ask that people keep an eye on the website and their emails for any last-minute instructions to comply with covid regulations.

I thought I would report a few statistics, highlights and results of the competitions that run alongside the Bike Ride from last year's event.

- **Mary Heather** was the winner of the **Prince of Wales Certificate** by raising an incredible £25,700. She will also receive a £1,000 cheque for her church as the most improved church compared to the previous year.
- The number of people taking part **increased** from **570 to 831**. About 400 were new to the Bike ride.
- **Susannah Towing** and **Amanda Marshall** were the top cyclists and visited 72 churches. Their names are on the **Wall of Fame**.
- Kate Smith was the top walker and visited 42 churches.
- **David Owen, Kate Griffin and Lucy Cubitt** won £50 cheques for their **photographs** and had their pictures published.
- **Burnham Thorpe, All Saints'**, raised £28,366 and was top church this year, and **Baconsthorpe, St Mary**, came second raising £6,695.

To give an incentive to churches and chapels to take part this year, the Norfolk Churches Trust are again offering a **£1,000 prize** to the most **improved** church from last year. i.e. the church which manages to show the largest increase in fundraising from last year's figures. This **£1,000 prize** potentially favours churches who did not take part last year.

We will be posting out packs again which should arrive in the parishes in early July with plenty of time to prepare for the **11th September**. We are pleased to announce that we have also created an alternative to the paperwork in the packs by putting a Bike Ride registration form on the Trust's new website for those who would like to sign up online. A lot of participants last year also used Just Giving as a useful way to help raise money from family and friends and there is a link on the new Bike Ride website pages. There are also copies of all the documents in the packs on the website.

The Bike Ride committee tries very hard to publicise the event with road signs, media, and contacting companies and organisations. We are also making a big push to keep people informed with our regular newsletters and using social media, so please do follow us on facebook, instagram and twitter (<https://www.facebook.com/NorfolkChurchesTrust/>). However none of this effort beats friends persuading more friends to take part and enjoy the day together. So please do try and encourage people to pump up their tyres, dust off their walking boots, pack a picnic and plan a route to visit as many of the most beautiful churches in Norfolk as possible on the **11th September 2021**. Don't forget to send in your photographs of the day. The three we like best will receive £50 and the chance to get your picture published in the *Eastern Daily Press*. Please see the website for more details.

Report of the Events Committee 2020-2021



Drone photography fundraiser – houses from a new vantage point.

The period under review started with the country under tight COVID 19 lockdown. This made almost all of our scheduled events impossible to run. The Trust's signature Stately Car Boot Sale was cancelled after much planning and preparatory work had already been undertaken. Fortunately all of the sponsors and many of the pitch holders agreed to roll the amounts they had already paid over until the event can eventually be held. The current plan is to hold it on Sunday 1 May 2022. Please keep an eye on the Trust website for updates. In addition the planned boat trip on the Broads from Ranworth to St Benet's Abbey was another COVID casualty. Again this is being rescheduled for a later date. And most unfortunately the kind offer of a talk by Julian Sands, the well known actor, also had to be aborted. The wonderful and ever popular Diva Operas at Holkham Hall also

had to be cancelled as was the STANTA battle area churches tour.

On a more positive note we were able to seize the opportunity of a last minute pop up garden opening between lockdowns at Elsing Hall. This proved a success raising over £4,000 thanks to the generosity of the many visitors. Technological



Elsing Hall open garden fundraiser – unfurling ferns.

innovation also came to the fore with an online live lecture attended by people from all over the world. The talk - entitled Re-imagining the Gardens - Colour, Painting and Plants - by Tom Duncan was both amusing and informative. Our thanks go to Lady Egerton and Rosabelle Batt for arranging this. The Talk raised a fantastic £3,745 for the Trust.

Another innovation for the Trust came with the kind offer from Colin de Chair to use his photography skills and newly acquired drone to photograph members' houses from the air. This proved highly popular and raised £2,657. Colin has kindly offered to continue the service if any members remain interested. Please contact the Secretary for details.

Looking forward, we all hope for better times ahead. As mentioned the Stately Car

Boot Sale should take place in 2022 and, in place of the popular House by the Church event, an Open Parks and Gardens event involving 8 of the best private gardens and parks in Norfolk throwing open their gates for a day to the Trust's members, is planned. We also hope to bring back the Diva Operas at Holkham Hall this summer.

Other events are also in the early planning stage. Please keep an eye on the Trust website for updates.

I should also extend a very special thank you to all the energetic volunteers who come up with creative ideas and organise events. People often don't realise how much work goes into the events and we certainly would not be able to put on anything like the quality and quantity of events without such enthusiastic helpers.

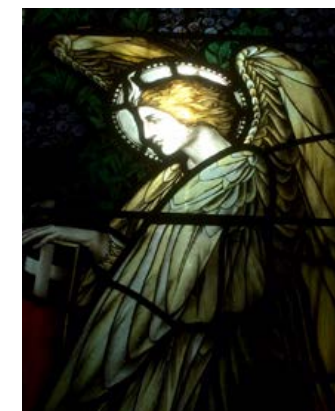
Patrick Lines, Chair of the Events Committee

Bike Ride Photo Competition Winners

Congratulations to the prize-winners whose photographs were published in the EDP and received a prize of £50



Lucy Cubitt. Honing church.



Kate Griffin. Stained glass angel. Garboldisham church.

Leased Churches cared for by the Norfolk Churches Trust

Whenever possible the churches are kept open during daylight hours. Keyholder details in case a church has had to be locked. Some postcodes are for the nearest house and a few of the churches are down farm drives and grassy tracks so access is not always easy.

Bagthorpe, St Mary: PE31 6QY.
Keyholder: 01485 578528

Barmer, All Saints: PE31 8SR
In middle of field off B1454
Keyholder: 01485 578220

Cockthorpe, All Saints: NR23 1QS
Keyholder: 01328 830202

Corpusty, St Peter: NR11 6QE
off Norwich Road.
Open on Fridays and Saturdays. Otherwise,
the key is available at village shop or contact
the keyholder: 01263 587014

Dunton, St Peter: NR21 7PG
Keyholder: 01328 853226

Hargham, All Saints: NR16 2JW
Keyholder: 01953 455553

Illington, St Andrew: IP24 1RS
Illington Road. Reached via farm drive and track.
Keyholder: 01953 498121

Lynford, Our Lady of Consolation & St Stephen:
IP26 5EL. Reached via forestry track 34, off West
Tofts Road. Hidden in trees. Currently closed due
to condition. Keyholder: 01842 878246

Morton on the Hill, St Margaret: NR9 5JS
Reached via farm drive from Ringland Road. (Locked
please contact the keyholder in advance)
Keyholder: 01603 880165

Rackheath, All Saints: NR13 6QT.
Brown heritage sign on Wroxham Road:
continue to Swash Lane. Visitors welcome but
currently locked and lane gated due to security concerns.
Please contact keyholder or Trust office in advance.
Keyholder: 07858 370400

Snetterton, All Saints: NR16 2LR
Keyholders: World Horse Welfare reception
(office hours) 01953 498682
or Keyholder: 07867 512084

West Bilney, St Cecilia: PE32 1XQ
Keyholder: 01760 337382

West Rudham, St Peter: PE31 8TE
Keyholder: 07584 122346

It is never too soon to consider leaving a legacy to the Norfolk Churches Trust

By leaving a legacy to the Norfolk Churches Trust in your Will, you will be investing in the long term future of Norfolk's churches and help to ensure the Trust can satisfy the continuing demand for grants for repairs to these precious buildings.

The Norfolk Churches Trust is a registered charity which means your gift will be exempt of inheritance tax. In the first instance we suggest you speak to a solicitor who can advise on the different types of legacy and the tax advantages of a charitable legacy.

We cannot afford to let down the work of previous generations and every penny you give will go towards grants that will help us protect our churches so they remain at the centre of their communities for future generations to enjoy.

The Norfolk Churches Trust Ltd.

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HRH The Prince of Wales

Vice Patrons

The Duke of Norfolk
The Bishop of Norwich
The Bishop of Ely

President

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Michael Sayer
(Chairman, Grants Committee)*
Mrs Amelia Courtauld
Lady Egerton OBE *
Jonathan Ellis
(resigned 9/9/2020)
Mrs Holly Gold JP, DL
Charles Inglis
(Bike Ride Co-ordinator)
Sarah Countess of Leicester*
Patrick Lines
Ian Lonsdale TD *
Dr John Maddison
(Vice Chairman)

Advisory Council

The Trustees receive advice from the Advisory Council, which comprises the Trustees and the following members:

Lady Agnew DL
Mrs Rosabelle Batt
Maurice de Bunsen
Peter de Bunsen*
Jonathan Ellis
Col. Tom Fitzalan Howard CBE
Fr Philip Gray (Hon Chaplain)
Christopher Hartop
Stephen Heywood
James Hickman
Mrs Scilla Landale
Mrs Jane Lane
George Lynne
Rev Canon Mair McFadyen
(Hon Chaplain)
David Missen
(Hon Treasurer)
Michael Pollitt
Matthew Rice*
Ashley Spooner
Mrs Philippa Taylor DL
(appointed 9/9/2021)
Frederique Baroness van Till
John Vigar
Mrs Alison Wakes-Miller
Rev. Ian Whittle (Hon Chaplain)
Michael Wingate
*indicates Vice President
Company Secretary:
Mrs Scilla Latham

Privacy Statement

The preservation of your privacy is important to the Norfolk Churches Trust. We treat all the personal data you give us with great care and we are committed to letting you know how we use your personal information and only making responsible use of your data.

The Norfolk Churches Trust (NCT) complies with the General Data Protection Regulation by keeping personal data up to date; by storing and destroying it securely; by not collecting or retaining excessive amounts of data; by protecting personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure, and by ensuring that appropriate technical measures are in place to protect personal data.

We use personal data for the administration of NCT membership records, promoting the work of the Trust; administering fund-raising events; the administration of grants to churches and the administration of subscriptions, donations and Gift Aid.

The full Privacy Policy Statement is available on our website: www.norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk

The Norfolk Churches Trust Ltd.

Vice-Patrons: The Duke of Norfolk, The Bishop of Norwich, The Bishop of Ely.

President: General the Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC DL

Chairman: Peter Sheppard

Secretary: Mrs Scilla Latham

Trust Office: Manor Farmhouse, Diss Road, Tibenham, Norwich NR16 1QF

45th Annual General Meeting

at the Parish Church of St Martin, Thompson on Wednesday 15th September 2021 at 5:30pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Presiding Chairman's opening remarks.
3. To confirm the Minutes of the 44th Annual General Meeting via Zoom, Thursday 9th September 2020.
4. Any matters arising from those Minutes.
5. To receive the Chairman's Report.
6. To receive the Honorary Treasurer's Report.
7. To receive the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021.
8. Election of the Board of Directors/Trustees.
The following retire and seek re-election: Sarah Leicester, Michael Sayer and Peter Sheppard.
The following seek election: Lauren Parker.
9. Election to the Advisory Council.
The following retire and seek re-election: Clare Agnew, Maurice de Bunsen, Revd. Mair McFadyen, David Missen and Michael Pollitt.
The following seek election: Revd. David Longe.
10. Propose the appointment of Larking Gowen as Independent Examiners and authorise the Trustees to agree their remuneration.
11. Any other business of which notice has been received of not less than two weeks before the meeting.

*The meeting will be followed by a talk "Saving St Martin's nave roof from imminent collapse."
Local historian, Brown Tyler will tell us about the complex repair project and what still needs to be done.*

Light refreshments will be available after the talk

Evensong will follow at 7:00pm

(We hope that Covid-19 restrictions will not force us to change the format of the AGM)

Minutes of the 44th Annual General Meeting of The Norfolk Churches Trust Ltd

held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 9th September 2020 at 5:30pm.

Present: General the Lord Dannatt (President and Presiding Chairman), Peter Sheppard (Chairman of the Board of Directors/Trustees, Scilla Latham (Company Secretary) and Directors/Trustees, Advisory Councillors and Friends of the Trust.

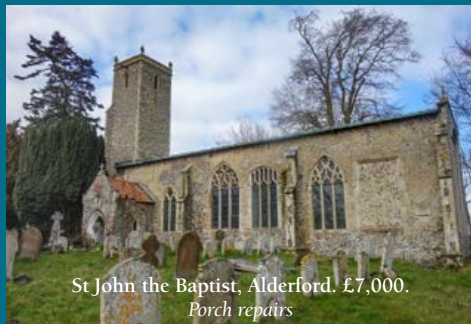
1. **Presiding Chairman's opening remarks:** Lord Dannatt welcomed everyone. He commented on the Church of England's rules relating to access to and use of churches during the pandemic. Although frustrating to many, it is not in the hands of the Trust to "do different" in this matter. He welcomed Philippa Taylor as the Lord Lieutenant's nominee to the Advisory Council and thanked the Trustees, Advisory Council and Scilla Latham for steering the Trust through a challenging year.
2. **To receive the Chairman's Report:** Peter Sheppard reflected on the past year which began so well and ended in the first Covid-19 lockdown. The main event of the year was the Conference which focused on the future of isolated rural churches: it attracted a capacity audience to hear an impressive line-up of speakers. He thanked Caroline Egerton and her Conference committee. Investments dropped due to Covid at the end of the year. Membership increased to 1,541 and events raised £154,000. Grants totalling £171,825 were awarded to 41 churches. Peter thanked retiring Trustees and Advisory Council members, with a special mention of Sara Foster, former Chairman and long-serving Trustee.

Charles Inglis reported on preparations for the Bike Ride. Advance online sponsorship raised hopes for a very successful day but it was difficult to predict how the event would go.

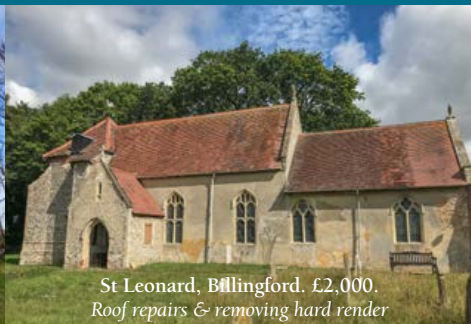
3. **To receive the Hon Treasurer's Report:** David Missen described the year as one of two halves. Until Christmas investments were buoyant and income from subscriptions, events, donations and bequests held up well. In the final three months Covid hit investments which resulted in a paper loss of £300,000. There were no questions.
4. **To receive the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020.** Proposed by Christopher Hartop & seconded by Ian Lonsdale. (Proxy votes 119 in favour, 1 abstention).
5. **To Confirm the Minutes of the 43rd Annual General Meeting,** held at St Andrew's Church Saxthorpe on Thursday 12th September 2019. Proposed by Ian Lonsdale & seconded by Christopher Hartop. (Proxy votes 114 in favour, 6 abstentions)
6. **Re-election of Directors/Trustees:** It was proposed by Charles Inglis & seconded by Michael Sayer that Amelia Courtauld, Holly Gold & Ian Lonsdale be re-elected as Trustees. (Proxy votes 119 in favour, 1 abstention)
7. **Election of new Director/Trustee:** It was proposed by Peter Sheppard & seconded by Michael Sayer that Rosabelle Batt be elected as a Trustee. (Proxy votes 116 in favour, 4 abstentions)
8. **Re-election to the Advisory Council:** It was proposed by Ian Lonsdale & seconded by Maurice de Bunsen that Fr Philip Gray, Scilla Latham, Matthew Rice, Ashley Spooner, Frederique, Baroness van Till & John Vigar be re-elected to the Advisory Council. (Proxy votes 119 in favour, 1 abstention).
9. **To propose the appointment of Larking Gowen as Independent Examiners and for the Trustees to agree their remuneration.** Proposed by David Missen & seconded by Colin Fordham. (Proxy votes 119 in favour, 1 abstention).

Any other business: Paul Marchant: "In the light of the grievous threat to church buildings, and widespread rumours of impending closures and redundancies, what steps are the Trust envisaging to bring this plight to wider public attention and make provision for it?" Michael Sayer, Grants Committee Chairman, acknowledged the plight of rural parishes faced with the Covid-19 restrictions. He addressed the problems of large rural benefices but stated this is for discussion within benefices and with archdeacons, as the Trust is not in a position to comment on individual parishes.

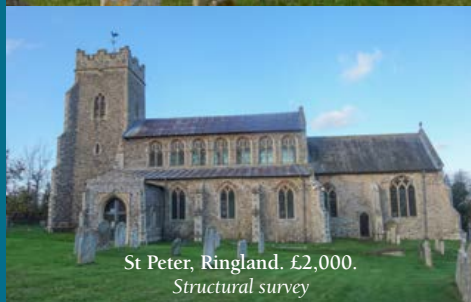
Lord Dannatt closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. The meeting ended at 6:15pm.



St John the Baptist, Alderford. £7,000.
Porch repairs



St Leonard, Billingford. £2,000.
Roof repairs & removing hard render



St Peter, Ringland. £2,000.
Structural survey



St Mary, Great Snoring. £3,000.
Tower repairs



'Supporting Church Buildings'

REGISTERED OFFICE:

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