



Rector's Report

to the five parishes of the Hulland United Benefice for 2019

NOTE: This was written as Covid-19 Lockdown was about to happen. Even though our APCMs are now many months later, the report only covers the original dates.

Some of the headlines:

Lent group - At home in Lent
Lent Lunches
Bradley roof
Hognaston handrail
Hulland re-ordering
Pastoral visitors
5 Village Fete
Stars
Tree Festivals
Youth Group

In a bit more detail:

- **"At home in Lent"** was a Lent course which looked at everyday objects around the house and used them to highlight various aspects of our faith. We had two groups - one in the afternoon and one in the evening. It was different to previous courses and very interesting.
- On six Mondays in Lent, we held **Lent Lunches** at Atlow Village Hall. These were well attended and those who came enjoyed copious amounts of homemade soup and bread. They were great social occasions as well as raising money for the Food Bank in Ashbourne and for Ace Youth Trust.
- On 23rd June, the day after a wedding, the remaining **lead was stolen from Bradley church roof**. The lead was eventually recovered by the Police, but the culprits weren't found. Permission has just been granted for a new roof of terne coated stainless steel. Fund raising is underway - including a 'gofundme' web page.
- Hognaston church now has a **handrail** leading from the gate all the way up to the steep path to the porch. The money for this was kindly donated by a local family.
- After much planning, the north west corner of Hulland church was re-ordered by removing the old (non original) font and creating a larger, carpeted welcome area. A new bookcase and oak font have been crafted by Simon Baker of Brailsford. There is also a low table and chairs for children to use and new display boards.
- The Benefice now has a team of **Pastoral Visitors**. They meet together as a group under the leadership of Rev Linda and they visit people in their parishes as and when the need arises.

- The **Five Villages Fete** was put on again in July. It clashed with three major sporting events including the cricket world cup, so attendance at Carsington reservoir was down a little on the previous occasion 2 years ago. A tug-of-war was held - the winning team being the Nag's Head from Hulland Ward. The next Five Villages Fete is booked for Sunday 23rd June 2021.
- Our theme for Christmas was the Church of England's "**#follow the star**" campaign. Residents of our villages were encouraged to make stars and display them on their property or car and to give them away as well. An impressive star appeared on the tower of Kniveton church, along with many others across the villages. It was wonderful seeing so many stars.
- Hognaston village held their winter festival again this year which included a **Christmas Tree Festival** in the church. Hulland also put on a '**Sparkle in Hulland**' event which also included many trees decorated by various groups in the village.
- Rev Phil and his wife Rachel began a **Benefice Youth Group** which meets in the Rectory on two Sundays in the month. They initially did the Youth Alpha course and are currently doing something called 'Table Talk'.

Other News:

Sunday and midweek Services:

Across the Benefice we have a variety of services on offer including Messy Church which meets every other month. Many people are 'crossing borders' to join other congregations which is great and helps us to feel even more like a United Benefice.

Monthly Hulland Home communion and Hognaston Mid Day Med, along with our weekly morning and evening prayer at Bradley and Hognaston continue to offer people opportunities for worship and prayer other than on a Sunday.

There are the two Hulland bible study groups which meet once a month.

Schools:

Our work in schools continues with the "Open the Book" teams, collective worship conducted by Rev Phil, Rev Linda and June Lomas, and there is a Christian presence on all of the Governing Boards. Do pray for our schools as they face the challenge of ever tighter budgets.

Hulland Hippos:

This group continues to meet a need for somewhere for carers/parents/grandparents to take their young children. It is a very friendly, welcoming group where children have fun, parents can chat and catch up with each other, and support can be found.

Baptisms/Weddings/Funerals

Across the Benefice in 2019 there were 10 baptisms, 2 weddings and 24 funerals (either held in our churches or conducted by our clergy).

Looking Ahead:

At the time of writing this report the **Coronavirus pandemic** is taking hold and we have decided to cancel things like coffee mornings and the lent lunches. It is uncertain how the situation will develop over the coming weeks and months but I would like to assure people that we will do all we can to assist you in your worship - be that at church or at home. It will also be vital that we all look out for each other and for our neighbours in our communities. The church can, I'm sure, take a proactive part in helping those who are unwell and having to isolate themselves.

Another great sadness is that our curate, **Rev Linda Webb** will be finishing her time here with us on 31st May. She will have been here for three years and has brought much colour, enthusiasm, humour to the Benefice along with her deep and obvious love of her Lord. We will all miss her hugely and we wish her and her husband John many blessing as they move to be nearer family in Halifax. Linda's last service with us will be on Sunday 31st May at 10.30am at Hlland Church and will be followed by a bring and share lunch.

One of the challenges we shall face in the coming years is an increase in the money we are asked give to the Diocese of Derby - called the **Common Fund**. It has gone up this year and will continue to rise in the next few years. In addition to reviewing what we ourselves can give personally to our churches, we will need to think creatively to find ways of plugging the gap between what we have been giving and what we will need to give.

Any thoughts or ideas, please share them with PCC members or church wardens.

Final Comments:

Pray!

- It is vital that we continue to pray for God's work here in our villages.
- Have we been blessed by the ministry of our parishes? Then we should give thanks to God.
- Are we disappointed with aspects of our ministry? Then we should bring those things to God in prayer - and have a conversation with the clergy about it!
- Do we want to know where God is leading us as a Christian community? Then we should wait on the Lord and seek his guidance.

Contribute!

- Time? Talents? Money? We all have some of each of those to give in the service of God. Many people already give generously - and it is much appreciated.
- How do you personally support the ministry of the churches in our Benefice?
- Do you have skills that you would like to offer? Perhaps a bit of spare time here and there? Is there a need in our communities that you think we could meet?
- Have you considered moving your giving onto a monthly standing order? Speak to your church treasurer if you are interested. There are many benefits of doing so.

Thank you!

I would like to finish by saying a huge **"thank you"** to you all for your support over the last year and for all that you do throughout our five parishes. Many people give a lot of their time to enable our regular services and events to take place, along with the many one off events and all those who contribute to care and maintenance of our buildings.

May the Lord, by his Holy Spirit living in us, continue to bless us, and bless others through us.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21