

## Annual Report of Mulbarton Parochial Church Council - year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

The primary function of the PCC is to co-operate with the Rector in promoting the whole mission of the Church in the parish.

### PCC Membership:

- Rector (ex-officio), Adrian Miller
- Churchwarden (ex officio) Tim Hayward
- Lay Representatives (6 positions)
  - Trevor Hutley - (Vice Chair)
  - David Melling - Secretary
  - Sue Mellows - Assistant to Treasurer
  - Heather Wells - Data Protection & Environment Officer
  - Stephen McLeod - (Treasurer for part of year)
  - Tim Hayward – also elected to PCC in a laity position.
- Vacancy for 2 Deanery Synod representative (ex officio Vacancies)
- All members of the PCC are also members of the PCC Standing Committee

The PCC was and remains very stretched, busy and under strength, battling a large number of actions.

**Other officers:** We thank Lynne Lambert who remained Parish Safeguarding Officer and Christine Melling who took over the post of Electoral Roll Officer, for Mulbarton Church and thank outgoing officer Teresa Burrell for all her work.

### Worship

The church has remained open from early morning to dusk throughout the year.

We have maintained the previous year's service pattern:

- All Age services on the first Sunday of each month including 'Wild Church' every 2 months on the first Sunday, which seeks to meet with God outdoors through nature and the bible.
- Morning worship on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays;
- Communion on third Sundays;
- Morning Worship at 10.30am in Hanover Gardens on fourth Sundays and mid week Church @ Hanover on second Thursdays at 2.30
- "Together" meal and short service thereafter in Church on 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays
- Meditative service when there is a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday.

We thank Adrian, Derrick, Sarah, Bev, Rachel, our musicians, those who welcomed worshippers, our readers & intercessors, those on the sound desk, and those who cleaned and decorated the church with flowers, and especially Sally Hayward in that regard. And thanks of course, to Tim, our warden. Morning Prayer continued to be well supported on Thursday mornings in Harvest House. Sarah also introduced 'Brunch and Prayer' sessions periodically through the year to pray into church life and particularly into the benefice's strategic aims. A new service was introduced for Good Friday this year. The church was decorated with the Stations of the Cross and in the service, Adrian introduced each station with a reflection, and prayers. A Procession of Witness then took place around the Common, concluding with a short time of prayer. Hot cross buns were then served in Harvest House. We held a Lent Course based on a resource from [www.theworkofthepeople.com](http://www.theworkofthepeople.com) In March, Harvest House was open for a full day to support Gather 25, with Christians around the world meeting online for worship & prayer. Sadly our

youth group (YOMMIES) has ceased meeting due to low numbers and scarcity of helpers, but we especially thank Eve and Sarah for their love and care over many years. We also thank the leaders and helpers of the various 'small groups'/'home groups' which meet at various times during the week to explore faith together. Sadly, Jill Wright declined to extend her AWA licence and stood down from leading services in March. We presented her with a card and book of memories and a monetary gift in appreciation of her service to the benefice. We welcomed retired priest Rev Di Rowlandson, and she began taking services in the late autumn and we continue to be grateful to her for all she is doing during the interregnum. Bev Theobald was finally licensed as an AWA, also in the autumn, having led All Age and Wild Church services during the year. Mulbarton Village Choir created a glorious sound when they joined us for our Carol Service.

### **Mission**

Four baptisms and twenty five funeral services were delivered, but sadly no weddings this year. A 'Bereavement Journey' course was held in March and feedback indicates that this was excellent, helpful and well received. We again welcomed the 'Pilgrim Cross' walkers in April for an evening meal in Harvest House and overnight accommodation in the Scout Hut on their Easter journey to Walsingham. The Holiday Club team again ran a successful club over Easter at the primary school, for all children in the village. Around 40 children attended. Thank you to all who helped and to Bev who led it. We again provided, free of charge, 55 copies of the Rainbow Good News Bible for pupils at Mulbarton Primary School. A substantial round of hardship grants, especially over the winter, were distributed from the Hardship Fund helping several families in the parish. We continued to have a presence at the rebranded "Mind, Body and Spirit Fairs" in Mulbarton Village Hall. The food bank/community pantry in the church porch continued to be very well used. Thank you to all who have donated items to it and to Sarah who has managed it. We continued to support missionary work in Nepal and Bukavu and indeed increased our giving to Nepal by £500 in 2025 due to various hardships it had faced. We made progress with environment and safeguarding policies, noting where further explorations and actions were required. All DBS vetting checks across the benefice were up to date, and we enjoy a high level of safeguarding training compliance. David has continued to try to keep the church website current, accurate and topical and we thank Sarah & Chris for producing Mardle. We thank Heather for her administration support relating to weddings, funerals, memorials and baptisms and Tracey for her support with church emails. Finally, a special thank you to Sarah, our Church Assistant, for all her tremendous work in helping with engagement & administration across the benefice.

### **Community engagement**

We continued under Sue Mellows' leadership, to sponsor & help 'Mardlers' who provide opportunities particularly to gather and socialize in the Village Hall and on outings, and 'Mulbarton Community Choir' which provides opportunities for all in the village to sing & socialize, regardless of skill or singing experience. We had a long and positive discussion this year about the Community Choir's governance, clarifying responsibilities and arrangements and seeking to strengthen the church's partnership with the Choir in its great community work. The church continued to offer volunteers and coffee machines for the "Warm Space" / "Community Hub" initiative run by Mulbarton Village Hall Charity in the Social Club, which has gone from strength to strength.

### **Eco Church**

As part of our journey to become an 'Eco Church' we seek to respond faithfully to the climate and nature crises, gently pursuing a formal silver level EcoChurch award, and also becoming a "Fairtrade Place of Worship". A Conservation Area Display Board/Norfolk

Wildlife Trust ('NWT') sign was put up. Five bird boxes and an owl box were installed. Grass has been allowed to grow longer in designated NWT areas; a new NWT sign has been put up there. Two graves in the designated NWT zone are still visited by families. It was agreed to mow paths to these to allow safe and easy access to the graves. A 'Churches Count on Nature Week' event was held in June with guided identification sessions to understand & celebrate the variety of wildlife living in our grounds. The annual mow and grass rake off of the conservation area was held in August. Following advice from Lucy Seely, Norfolk Wildlife Trust Wilder Communities Officer, the conservation areas now get a final mow late in the autumn and a three-year rotation for cutting back hedges following more significant hedge cutting last year. Forty people attended a moth count in the churchyard in September where 10 species were identified. A further brown garden waste bin was purchased. A Benefice Christmas card was circulated around the 4 parishes during Advent with people encouraged to sign the card and donate to charity, which again this year was Embrace the Middle East. We especially thank Heather who has been the driving force for Eco Church on the PCC.

### **Electoral Roll Report**

The new total remains 35. We thank Christine for again managing the refresh process.

### **Deanery Synod Report**

We did not have a deanery synod representative throughout the year and so no report is available.

David Melling - PCC Secretary