

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

## THE PARISH OF SOUTH WEST GOWER

in the Gower Ministry Area





I hereby certify that this Annual Report for 2020 was adopted by the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of South West Gower on Tuesday 16 March 2021.

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*Priest in Charge:* Rev. Justin Davies,  
The Rectory, Knelston, Swansea SA3 1AR

## **REPORT TO THE EASTER VESTRY MEETING OF THE PARISH OF SOUTH WEST GOWER**

In 2020 we closed churches, we stopped meeting as a worshipping community, we sheltered in our own homes - a list that can be added to many times over. Our Christian landscape changed fundamentally, and for all that I think in many ways it's proved to be a rewarding experience.

In 2020 the United Parish of South West Gower became exactly that - united in worship and witness on Sunday mornings meeting as one parish. New friendships have been formed, new collaborations commenced, talents shared and enjoyed. Out of the pandemic has come a sense of unity and bond which I hope is not lost into the future however our physical church life resumes.

I for one do not wish to return to being in a freezing cold church with a tiny congregation early on a Sunday morning asking the question 'why is nobody else attracted to this?'

Equally we have beautiful places of worship that have served the community for generations and are a powerful witness to Christ. I long to be able to welcome visitors into our congregations and sing praise to God. So that means the future needs careful consideration and planning to retain all that is powerful and also to sing a new song.

The Parish has been outstanding in its generosity to those in need beyond our landscape with donations to the Parish of St Thomas and the Welsh Refugee Council as well as the

Bishop's Lent Appeal. My thanks go to everybody who has in any way contributed to those donations, and other requests such as the Salvation Army, and the benefits they bring to those beyond our parish boundaries.

The only way that worship and witness has continued in 2020 and into 2021 has been by the hard work of many people. I must mention Peter Davies for his production of weekly services, Mary and David Attwell for the musical contributions aided more recently by Anne and David Pope, Rebekah Davies for her Sunday Morning assistance, Carl Johnson and Mairwen Kirk for their musical contributions. Caroline Johnson has proved to be an excellent treasurer replacing Peter Davies and thanks must also go to our Wardens Alan Glass and Hugh Dunthorne as well as all our sub-wardens who have done a sterling job in opening churches when that has been possible.

2021 and beyond is going to present the Parish with new challenges. We will have a new spiritual leader when a replacement for Archbishop John is announced, and I for one will miss his personality, spirituality and encouragement.

There are those in our own Parish we have not seen at communal worship for over twelve months, to welcome them back will be a joy and we also think of those who have been materially affected by the periods of lockdown and isolation.

Our churches will need to continue evolving. St Cattwg's will be the home of the steel drums, it is now connected to the internet, and I look forward to the café opening again. The role of St Mary's in the worldwide community requires careful planning, while the emergence of the charity Tir Dewi in Gower affirms the role of St David's. The St Andrew's lectures have been vital to its continued role and may they return soon. St George's has plans for some reorganization and St Illtyd's will have new seating to welcome locals and visitors alike.

If the Parish stands still then there is one certainty and that is a rapid reversal in fortunes. In Micah 6.8 can be found these

words: 'And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?'

Wherever our journey takes us in the future, if those words are our watchwords we cannot go far wrong.

Many blessings

Justin

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

In accordance with the requirements of the Church in Wales, the Electoral Roll for the Parish has been revised and at the end of 2020 had 102 names entered on it.

## **BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS**

During 2020 one baptism, three weddings, one blessing of marriage, nine funerals and two interments of ashes took place in the Parish.

## **NUMBERS ATTENDING SERVICES**

Figures for 2020 in this section reflect the fact that churches were closed for much of the year because of the Coronavirus pandemic and worship took other forms:

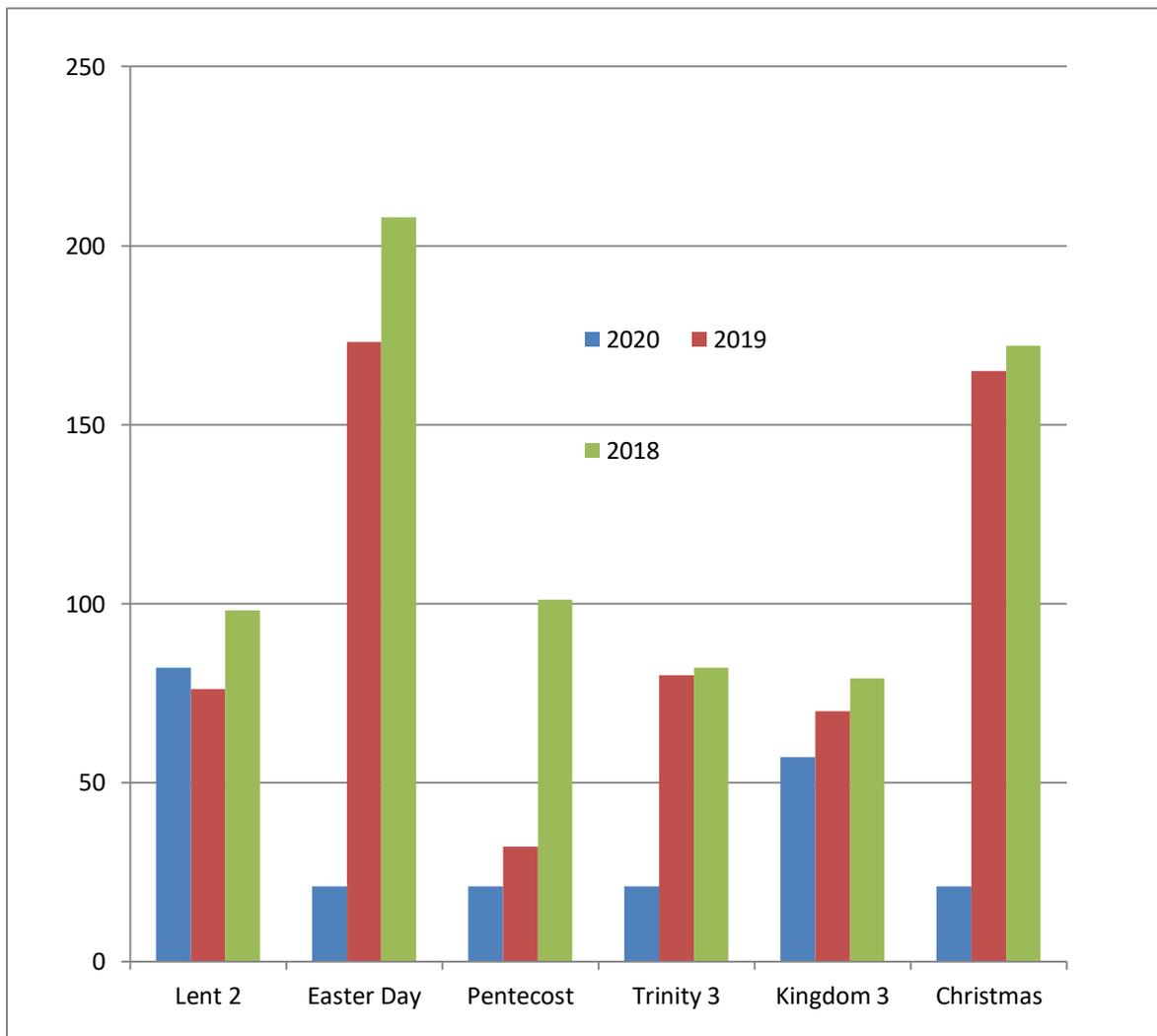
- A **service & readings sheet** was delivered each week to 85 households in the Parish.
- **Online Zoom services** attracted solid numbers weekly:
 

Wednesday Morning Communion	21
Thursday Evening Compline	16
Sunday Morning Worship	65
Christmas week	153

## Communicant statistics

	2020	2019	2018
Lent 2	82	76	98
Easter Day	21*	173	208
Pentecost	21*	32	101
Trinity 3	21*	80	82
Kingdom 3	21*+36	70	79
Christmas	21*	165	172

\*Communion service on Zoom



## **REPORT OF GOVERNING BODY CONFERENCES**

2020 marked the centenary of the establishment of the Church in Wales, and special events were planned and then abandoned, including Dr Rowan Williams giving a talk in Gower and Archbishop Justin Welby attending Governing Body in May. It was also to be my third and last year on GB. Unfortunately, due to Coronavirus it was an anti-climax. The May conference was cancelled at short notice, and then reorganised as a virtual event in September. The autumn conference was delayed until November and organised as a virtual event from the outset. In September, technical issues (mainly around registering votes) meant a lot of time was wasted terminating a session and reconvening later.

Before these virtual conferences could take place, in order to be legally compliant, the constitution needed to be amended to make provision for not being able to have all the delegates in the same room, indicating their voting intentions by a show of cards of different colours. This required a short meeting with the minimum number of attendees to be quorate. It also had to allow for social distancing, so a large meeting room was needed. None could be found in South Wales, so it was carried out at a large conference centre on the edge of Bristol. Rev. Justin drew a short straw to make up the quorum. He had to drive alone to Bristol for a meeting lasting only a few minutes, and then drive back, without even the opportunity of a coffee and a chat with colleagues.

One of the best aspects of GB, for me, is the opportunity for the cross-fertilisation of ideas, and much of this happens over meals or in the bar, talking to delegates from all the other provinces of Wales. This is greatly curtailed by attending a webinar where the numbers are so great that only speakers are seen and heard. Understandably, the virtual events were trimmed to focus on essential business, which is mainly pretty mundane, approving and adopting reports and amending standing orders, some of which were to permit work to be done virtually, to reflect the need to adjust to life during and after the

pandemic. If future meetings are done on-line, gained technical experience will hopefully mean that these events can be closer to real-life ones.

Alan Glass, Churchwarden

## **REPORT OF THE AREA DEAN, GREATER GOWER DEANERY**

Dear Friends,

2020 has in so many and varied ways been a 'different' and 'challenging' year for everyone and I am going to keep my report as brief as possible as there will be enough to read elsewhere in your Parish Report.

First I want to congratulate all of you on your efforts during what has been a time of discovering new ways for each and every one of us to be 'church', and I know that under Justin's leadership South West Gower has risen to that task. As an Area Dean this year, much of my work has been in facilitating the way that the Parish Share relief was disbursed but also how the 2021 share was calculated. This work is not finished and shortly you should know what relief and help may be available from both the Diocese and the Representative Body in Cardiff. Ministry never stays the same and I was pleased when the Ministry Area of Gower was able to access funds to allow it to develop its digital outreach and also the way that the Gower magazine has continued as well.

There are now many challenges that face us in the future. Not least of which is what will the new 'normal' look like and how will the Deanery and more importantly from your point of view the Ministry Area and the churches of South West Gower respond to this. The challenge is partly 'Do we want to go back to where we were?' or are we brave enough and bold enough to look to a future that we may only yet glimpse to see how all churches in the Deanery may best serve their communities?

You remain as always in my prayers in your endeavours.

Many thanks and blessings,

Peter

Rev. Canon Peter Brooks, Area Dean Greater Gower Deanery.

## **REPORT OF GOWER MINISTRY AREA FORUM**

You do not need me to tell you that the past twelve months have been a time unknown in living memory and let us leave the pandemic at that point.

Our joint journey as the Gower Ministry Area continues in line with the national church, the agreed strategy of the Bench of Bishops and endorsed by the parliament of the Church in Wales - the Governing Body - to structure in such a way that talent, lay and ordained is shared across geographical areas to further the Kingdom of God.

In what now turns out to be an inspired move, the Ministry Area Council was replaced in 2020 by the smaller Ministry Area Forum. I say inspired as the ways of meeting electronically which we are currently using would not have sat easily with a large meeting and these strange times have called for nimbleness of foot in changing and adapting to new circumstances. The forum, which consists of the Readers and Clergy, lay and ordained, in the Ministry Area (MA) plus Peter Townsend as Treasurer, has met monthly, apart from in December 2020. We worship together, talk together and seek to act together. What are the fruits of the labours?

Here are some examples. The MA bid successfully for funds to equip three churches with internet and equipment for live streaming. This has taken a time to deliver for many reasons - mainly technical - and the usage has been in a variety of forms reflecting the different ways our communities have gathered in recent months. Electronic worship will undoubtedly have a place in future patterns of witness so it is good that our MA is well-equipped for this development.

There is now a single Gower MA website, and our thanks go to Peter Townsend for developing that. Input and ideas for its development are welcome.

Our next moves will be to develop a more coherent social media strategy across the MA, remembering that seekers and searching don't understand boundaries as we do. Our worshipping communities meet across Gower; we have a footprint in every part of the peninsula, which is a great strength. Combining that with a digital presence that enhances the MA's visibility and communication, particularly to those who think, see and experience the world differently to us, is essential.

In 2021 the faith-based charity Tir Dewi will extend its work into Gower partnering with the Gower MA. Originally born in the Diocese of St David's, Tir Dewi seeks to provide support to the whole farming community and complements other charities working in the sector. A range of material for distribution and information will be made available in the next few months.

I hope that as 2021 develops these activities can be complimented by a sense of community learning about God and learning together so it can grow together. We are called to be inquisitive and discerning about our faith, to hear stories in new ways and to increase knowledge. That is something I'm personally passionate about and I hope programmes can be developed that excite and interest many people.

The *Gower Ministry Area Magazine* is in good financial health thanks to the teams who work with Nigel King and the generosity of our printer Jim Harford. This year the magazine has become available in electronic format, extending its reach to new markets.

2021 and 2022 will bring many challenges for the MA, not least that we will have a new Bishop at some time. Change is never easy yet is often refreshing, and the fruits of change take a

while to appear. Enlivened by the Spirit and blessed by God's grace, our journey into the future will be a renewal of the Kingdom here on Gower.

Blessings

Rev. Justin

## **PARISH OF SOUTH WEST GOWER**

The Parish of South West Gower is in the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon within the Church in Wales. The Church in Wales is a Province within the Anglican Communion and, as such, exists to advance the Christian religion through world-wide mission. The object of the **Parochial Church Council** is to ensure that the life and work of the Church within the Parish helps to fulfil that mission, both locally and more widely. The PCC is not a body corporate. Its composition, procedure and powers are regulated by the Constitution of the Church in Wales, as amended from time to time by its Governing Body, set up under Section 13(1) of the Welsh Church Acts 1914. Elections are held at an Annual Vestry Meeting which must take place on or before 30 April. All persons whose names are entered on the Electoral Roll are entitled to vote and to stand for election. Before assuming office, every member of the Council must sign a declaration that he or she will be bound by the Constitution.

The Representative Body of the Church in Wales has oversight and holds the land and property of the Church in Wales, including the churches of St Andrew Penrice, St Cattwg Port Eynon, St David Llanddewi, St George Reynoldston, St Illtyd Oxwich, St Mary the Virgin Rhossili, their contents and church grounds. The Representative Body is an exempt charity and was set up under Section 13(2) of the Welsh Church Acts 1914. It acts on behalf of the Province in matters appertaining to the life of this Province of the Anglican Communion.

The PCC is responsible inter alia for promoting the mission of the Church, the parochial budget and all expenditure thereunder, the care and maintenance of the churches' fabric and of the churchyards, and for action on any other matters referred to in accordance with the Constitution. The Council is also the normal channel of communication between the Parishioners and the Bishop of the Diocese.

## **PARISH OFFICERS 2020**

### **Ministry Team**

Rev. Justin Davies (Priest in Charge)

Mrs Penny Henderson (Lay Reader)

Mr Peter Davies (Lay Reader)

**Parish Churchwardens** Mr Hugh Dunthorne, Mr Alan Glass

**Parish Treasurer** Mrs Caroline Johnson

**Safeguarding Officer** Mrs Claire Glass

**Health and Safety Officer** Mrs Val Fuller

**Diocesan Conference Representative** Miss Valerie Beynon  
(Mr Hugh Dunthorne, supplementary)

### **Gower Deanery Conference Representatives**

Mr Alan Glass and Mrs Rosemary Wigley

(Mr Mike Barnett and Mr Peter Davies, supplementaries)

### **Gower Ministry Area Council Representatives**

Mr Hugh Dunthorne, Mr Alan Glass

## **Members of the PCC**

The Priest in Charge, Lay Readers, Parish Churchwardens and Parish Treasurer are members of PCC ex officio, as are the Sub-Wardens for each church listed below:

St Andrew's, Penrice	Mr Thomas Methuen-Campbell
	Mr John Tucker
St Cattwg's, Port Eynon	Mr Hugh Dunthorne
	Mr Robert Dyer
St David's, Llanddewi	Mrs Penny Henderson
St George's, Reynoldston	Mrs Sheila Williams
	Miss Valerie Beynon
St Illtyd's, Oxwich	Mrs Rosemary Wigley
	Mrs Diane Workman
St Mary's, Rhossili	Mrs Gill Wales
	Mrs Anne Morse Jones

## **Nominated members** of PCC for each church:

Mrs Mary Attwell (Port Eynon) Mr Michael Barnett (Penrice)  
 Mr Nigel Clarke (Llanddewi) Mrs Val Fuller (Reynoldston)  
 Mr Alan Glass (Oxwich) Mrs Caroline Johnson (Rhossili)

## **Treasurers** who have right to attend PCC but not to vote:

Mrs Jennie Clements (Reynoldston)  
 Mrs Phyllis Edwards† (Penrice)  
 Miss Madeleine Gill (Port Eynon)  
 Mrs Susan Hutson (Llanddewi) Mrs Caroline Johnson (Rhossili)  
 Mr David Workman (Oxwich)

**PCC Secretary** Mrs Heather Laurie

**PCC Lay Chair** Mr Hugh Dunthorne

## **PAROCHIAL INSURANCES**

The Churches are insured under the block insurance scheme negotiated between the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, Gloucester.

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The Parish of South West Gower recognizes its duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults as part of its Christian ministry. It adheres to the Church in Wales Safeguarding Policy 2020. **All Parish officers are strongly urged to complete the online Safeguarding Awareness Course administered by St Padarn's Institute of the Church in Wales.** The course is available on St Padarn's website: <https://www.stpadarns.ac.uk/en/courses/safeguarding/>

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW 2020**

The year 2020 has been an exceptional time for everyone, not least the Parish of South West Gower. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic our six churches were closed from mid-March through to the end of July and then only one church was open for worship each Sunday. Toward the end of the year, we were again forced to close our buildings for Sunday worship and this situation continues up to the time of writing this Review.

However, it is not all doom and gloom, as during this period we have seen the strong growth in our 'online' ministry both on Sunday, when our online service attracts sixty or more participants each week, and in our mid-week Eucharist services and evening Compline which are attracting around twenty participants to each service. The enforced closures have brought about a significant improvement in the cohesion of the Parish and in our relationship with other Christian communities in the area.

The impact of these changes on the financial situation in the Parish has been mixed. Regular giving held up well with only a 7.5% fall compared with 2019. This was achieved because of the high incidence of digital giving within the congregations of our churches. Loose collections on the other hand fell by almost 60% compared with 2019. Income from money raising was also hit hard falling from £15866 in 2019 to just over £3000

in 2020. Fees from weddings also showed a major fall which is not unexpected in the circumstances.

On the positive side three of our churches were successful in applying for grant funding from the Welsh Government to assist in the maintenance of their operations and in the preparation for life after the Pandemic. These grants have enabled us to cover a significant element of our running costs for the period from 1st April 2020 to the year end and will bring a continuing benefit for the first quarter of 2021. The Parish also received a grant of £3000 from the Austin Bailey Foundation that will be used to set up a new Ministry to the farming communities in the Parish in conjunction with the Charity 'Tir Dewi'.

Financial assistance was proffered by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and administered through the Diocese by way of a 35% reduction in our Ministry Costs (Parish Share) from the original charge of £60830 down to £39570.

It is encouraging to note that despite all that occurred in 2020 the Parish continued its support for mission increasing its giving to outside charitable bodies from £6500 to over £10000 in the year.

Overall, the out-turn for 2020 was highly satisfactory with an excess of income over expenditure on Unrestricted Funds of £27610 in the year compared with a deficit of £4370 in 2019.

Restricted Funds increased greatly in the year thanks principally to a Bequest of £193287 under the Will of the late Alan Walters which was received by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales for the benefit of St Illtyd's Church Oxwich. Discussions are ongoing with the Archbishop of Wales with regard to the ways in which this bequest may be best used.

The financial health of the Parish going forward is robust.

Caroline Johnson, Parish Treasurer

## Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 Dec 2020

	2020	2020	2020	2019
	£	£	£	£
	General Fund	Restrict ed Funds	Total	Total
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES / RECEIPTS</b>				
Voluntary income : Planned giving	27315	0	27315	29554
Voluntary income : Loose collections	5040	161	5201	12564
Voluntary income : Donations	15270	240	15510	16964
Voluntary income : For mission	5336	0	5336	3089
Voluntary income : Tax refunds	13794	0	13794	10849
Voluntary income : Legacy gifts received	0	193287	193287	0
Voluntary income : Grants Other	29262	11028	40290	11150
Generated income : Money raising	3328	0	3328	15866
Generated income : Fees	4984	741	5725	11438
Investment income	1759	237	1996	2841
Other Incoming resources	1422	0	1422	2838
	107510	205694	313204	117153
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED / PAYMENTS</b>				
Support for Ministry : Parish share	39570	0	39570	56324
Support for Ministry : parochial expenses of clerics	3956	0	3956	4692
Support for Ministry : Other	471	0	471	576
Parish Activities : Maintenance of services	3800	0	3800	3846
Parish Activities : General Parish Expenses	2995	0	2995	2599
Church Property : Maintenance of churches	12249	0	12249	18509
Church Property : Maintenance of other property	5133	2495	7628	8317
Church Property : Exceptional Expenditure	0	12394	12394	6390
Grants and Support for Mission : Parish	145	0	145	125
Grants and Support for Mission : Home	10097	0	10097	6571
Other resources Expended : Capital payments	1236	0	1236	2891
Cost of Money Raising	248	0	248	888
	79900	14889	94789	111728
<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	27610	190805	218415	5425
Unrealised Gains on Restricted Fund Investments		11239	11239	6667
Realised Gains on sale of Investments		0	0	205
Transfer from Restrictrd to Unrestricted FundsFunds	0	0		0
Release of Provision no longer required	0	0	0	14000
	27610	202044	229654	26297
<b>FUND BALANCES at 1st JANUARY 2020</b>	158269	116704	274973	248676
<b>FUND BALANCES at 31st DECEMBER 2020</b>	185879	318748	504627	274973

## Balance Sheet at 31st December 2020

	£	£	£	£	£	2020 £	2019 £
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>							
Accumulated Surplus 1st January 2020						158270	
Surplus Income over Expenditure 2020						27609	
Accumulated Surplus at 31 December						185879	158270
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>							
	<u>Chancel Repair Funds</u>	<u>Church yard Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>	<u>Design ated Funds</u>			
Balances 1st January 2020	12074	30268	65226	9134	116702		
Surplus Income over Expenditure 2020	235	2602	0	-8317	-5480		
New Bequests	0	0	193287	3000	196287		
Realised Gains on Investments	0	0	0	0	0		
Movement in Unrealised gains	729	0	10511	0	11240		
Transfer to Unrestricted Funds	0	0	0	0	0		
	13038	32870	269023	3817		318748	116702
						504627	274972
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>							
Investments at market value						268451	77214
Bank Accounts						227851	197874
Cash in Hand						1537	1437
Debtors (prepayments etc)						14440	1001
						512279	277526
Creditors (unspent grants etc)						-7653	-2554
						504626	274972

## **TUESDAY CLUB AND RELATED ACTIVITIES AT KNELSTON SCHOOL**

Tuesday Club met in Knelston Primary School for a little more than half a term during 2020. Following the pattern of the previous year, the Tuesday Club team met weekly during the lunch break with pupils mainly from the infants' classes, to engage with them, tell them Bible stories, then do some simple crafts and prayers to encourage faith in God and care and respect for everything in God's world. The team comprised members from churches in the Parish including Reynoldston Methodist Church, led by Rev. Justin and Helen, the Youth, Children's and Families worker. We said farewell to Helen, who retired in March.

'Open the Book' is a means of presenting the stories from the Bible, using drama. Team leaders represent characters from a Bible story and pupils are invited to participate in the presentation. The story is read from a text, and the actions and dialogue come out of that. 'Open the Book' was presented every fortnight in assembly and was attended by all classes of Knelston School, until lockdown closed schools in mid-March. It was led by the Tuesday Club team plus additional members from the churches.

A presentation of the nativity was prepared by members of the local churches, with the encouragement of headteacher, Mr Phil Jenkins, and recorded to be virtually presented to the school pupils before Christmas. We appreciate being able to have this contact with the school, and the welcome we receive from Mr Jenkins and the staff.

Penny Henderson

## **ST ANDREW'S, PENRICE**

The pandemic closed St Andrew's for the year. Our plans for the four Penrice Lectures, and our large-scale Music for a Summer Evening in August, were abandoned. But the year will be remembered for the passing of Phyllis Edwards, our

Treasurer, at the grand age of 103 on 12th October 2020. Her funeral and the laying of her ashes next to her husband George at St Andrew's were modest occasions but memorable. Her presence in the life of the church will continue to be manifested by her absence.

Perhaps the only project that survived the pandemic in the year was the outstanding gardening achievement of Cathy Dorran in raising funds for the Welsh Refugee Council. Although the usual Parish plant and cake sale didn't take place in May 2020 because of the pandemic, Cathy nevertheless did a huge amount of work purchasing thousands of seedlings, distributing them to people across SW Gower to brighten up their gardens, and collecting charitable contributions from them. It was largely thanks to her efforts that the Parish was able to make a donation of £1,400 to the Welsh Refugee Council at the end of the year.

Through the year the fabric and administration of the church has been secure in the hands of Mike and Angela Barnett. We all long to come together again in person.

John Tucker

## **ST CATTWG'S, PORT EYNON**

In common with others making their reports, there is little to say this year about physical events in St. Cattwg's. Most worship became technology based, which, thankfully, gave back some sense of togetherness and belonging and also allowed the congregations of the South West Gower churches to get to know each other better. We even had worshippers from way outside the area.

The year began with the usual laying of plans, the only expected disruption being a few weeks when the church was to be redecorated inside and our congregation intended to worship at other churches occasionally and perhaps meet in our Village Hall at other times. Caffi Cattwg was also to be held

there. We were leaving our annual spring-clean to the redecorators, when they finished.

In January and February, things were more-or-less as usual regarding services, with special attention being paid to hygiene around Communion and the sharing of the Peace. Then came total lockdown. Rev. Justin Davies trudged round the Parish delivering printed service sheets to be read at home, which were welcome but not the same as meeting others and hearing the vicar's voice, nor any music. Many kind people, those who were not self-isolating, set up delivery services to the housebound and checked on their welfare; free books were stacked in the church porch for some months.

The wonders of Zoom, notwithstanding technical hitches, brought us into welcome contact again. Unfortunately, it couldn't help those without computers or those who simply disliked the strange new ways. Rev. Justin resurrected the name of a vanished church, St. Taurin's, from where the services purported to come, and we were able to join Sunday Matins, Wednesday Communion, Thursday evening Compline and a Friday morning coffee session; there were also opportunities to attend discussion groups and prayer meetings. Music came courtesy of just one performer at a time, to avoid the inevitable time-lags and cacophony on Zoom.

In the meantime, the decorating inside the church went ahead and during one of the brief let-ups in restrictions villagers were able to admire the completed work. We also had three real services in church during the break between lockdowns. Villagers responded handsomely to an appeal for funds, appreciating the loss to church income of revenue from collections, the café, concerts and weddings. Very grateful thanks to all who contributed, also to all who did flowers when there was a chance, saw to church maintenance, played, sang or read at services, distributed the Ministry Area magazine and even rang the bells on Easter Day. Though there was no service, the sound of the bells cheered local people and brought them to their doorsteps to clap. When the Christmas

carol service was also cancelled, locals gathered anyway to sing near the Christmas tree in the churchyard. The tree was a gift from Port Eynon Community Council and was much appreciated by everyone.



*A Christmas angel, by Pam Parry:  
a contribution to Port Eynon's 'stained glass window' project.*

The Church Committee met – socially distanced – to discuss several projects: the installation of a heater above the main door, the acquisition of wi-fi so that services could be streamed from the church and the building in of a cupboard at the back to house a set of steel pans (drums). The latter were to be used for interested parties, particularly children, to learn to play and, it is hoped, become more familiar with church surroundings than they presently are. The plans were in process of being implemented at the time of writing, suitable permits and funds having been secured.

During all the turmoil, early in October, Rev. Justin took on the role of Ministry Area Leader, for which we congratulate him. During the year, there were eight physical Communion services, with an average attendance of 14. Rev. Justin reported an average attendance of 21 at the combined Communion services online. One funeral took place in October, that of Pat Davies, for many years a faithful member of our congregation. Pat's friends in Gower will remember her with affection.

Susan Morris

## **ST DAVID'S, LLANDDEWI**

St David's has shared the impact of Covid in the same way as other churches under regulations set by the Welsh government and more locally following the guidelines advised by the Archdeacon. The priority was to worship safely, and this meant observing stringent precautions. Consequently live services under lockdown were deemed not viable for St David's Church. Given the effort required to properly clean and manage the space and with our limited numbers, we could not offer the welcome we would wish.

Our pattern of Sunday services on the first Sunday of the month was met only in January. Meantime our new pattern of weekly mid-week Communion continued into mid-March, attracting a regular congregation of people from the wider church community. These thirty-minute gatherings around the Lord's table were encouraging for St David's people and others in establishing a sense of authentic Christian fellowship, felt in the periods of silence as well as through meditation and prayer sensitively led by Rev. Justin. After lockdown, when some of our churches re-opened, we had a service on the fifth Sunday of November, which had a capacity congregation. We celebrated Harvest Thanksgiving in the new barn opposite the church, grateful for this shelter from the weather and delighted to be joined by local farmers and friends from neighbouring parishes. The collection at the service was given to Tir Dewi, an organisation that supports farmers in partnership with the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, whom we supported last year. We did not hold a Christmas service. Most of us were able to worship regularly online, and in this way have continued to share in the regular mid-week Communion service and Sunday Worship, as well as Christmas services. Paper copies of reading and services were delivered to everyone by Rev. Justin, so those without the technology had access to shared worship resources.

Our social and fundraising events have also been impacted by Covid, but we did hold a Coffee Morning in February, which was a success in both social and fundraising respects.

Maintenance of Church fabric and furniture has been undertaken while the church was closed. Some floor-boards were replaced, and fumigation against woodworm was carried out. A damaged memorial plaque was beautifully repaired by Philip Chatfield and its inscription was restored – now clearly legible as a moving testimony to the faith of the lady remembered. Rev. Justin secured funding from the Gower Society to cover this work, and also arranged the purchase of padded chairs to replace some of the wooden ones. We are grateful to him and to the Gower Society for these improvements: the church will be more beautiful, more comfortable and safer as a result.

Rev. Justin has recently arranged a partnership between St David's and Tir Dewi, recognising the location of the church within a farming community and our interest in supporting farmers. Ring-fenced funds given by outside sources for the operation of Tir Dewi in Gower will be operated through the accounts of St David's.

The church has been closed to visitors throughout the year, but we hope that next year it will be open daily between Easter and October, when Covid regulations are lifted. We express our grateful thanks to Suzanne Walters, who for many years locked and unlocked the church through the summer, and worshipped with us, while she was living at Llanddewi Castle. She and Alun have moved away, and will be much missed.

We are aware that the way the church has operated in the past is unlikely to be the same in future, with Christian worship and living being more widely practiced outside church buildings. The places of gathering and worship will retain their value, but we will need to adapt to meet the needs of our communities by more effective use and sharing of resources. We hope that St David's church will be renewed as a place of Christian worship

and community, open to meeting, friendship and service in the wider community.

Penny Henderson

## **ST GEORGE'S, REYNOLDSTON**

2020 was a fog, Coronavirus-Covid19 induced. Sometimes it lifted slightly, but inability to see what lay ahead guaranteed uncertain church life. Happily, the Rev. Justin Davies shone light through it, guiding the entire Parish into continued spiritual life in a new digital way and also, when safe, re-opening churches for Holy Communion services by exercising strict conformity to regulations. St George's held two. The experience magnified our appreciation of our beautiful building, or 'locus iste', consecrated for worshipping God on consecrated ground: David Williams's rendition of Anton Bruckner's eponymous hymn was especially moving.

A packed church bade farewell sadly to Peter Glover in February. This popular, amusing, impeccably mannered and dressed gentleman (with eye-catching socks) founded both the Reynoldston Ramblers and Reading Group. He strongly supported St George's Church, the Gower Players, and Film Club. His widow, Sheila, a St George's floral decorator of note, micro-biologist and authority on Italian art and architecture, died in September after protracted time in a nursing home. By sharp contrast with Peter's funeral, only a small band of mourners was permitted outside the church to pay tribute to Sheila's passing cortege.

Whilst St George's was dormant, our Sub-Wardens, Sheila Williams and Valerie Beynon, Treasurer, Jennie Clements, and 'Fabric Man', Paul Lloyd-Davies certainly were not! We thank them for their conscientious care of the building, its contents, and finances. The latter were constrained by tiny incomes, exaggerated by the total loss of funds from social and fundraising events, although we were still able to raise £192 for the Salvation Army from generous collection takings at the

Christmas Tree lighting. We are especially thankful to Sheila, Jennie and Caroline Johnson, our Parish Treasurer, for securing a grant from the Welsh Government's Cultural Recovery Fund to underwrite our project for some pew removal to create space for a coffee making and child's play area. Thank you all, and Hugh Jones for organising the excellent Information Board that now graces our church entrance.

Our debt of gratitude to the Rev. Justin is enormous: for his creative church services, his practical advice on mental and physical wellbeing during the pandemic, his selfless energy and care in personally calling on homes of the unwell and distributing service leaflets he has authored. His activity for our benefit throughout the year was above and beyond the call of duty. Thank you, Justin, for bringing us through an extraordinary year with aplomb and panache.

Heather Laurie

## **ST ILLTYD'S, OXWICH**

Despite the closure of our church since March 2020 all but one member of our congregation have been able to access and are accessing the online services. We thank Rev. Justin Davies for the range of services and inclusion of music that he has managed to arrange as they have been invaluable. Members of our congregation have been happy to help with the preparation and delivery of service material and music. Particular thanks go to Peter Davies, Rosemary Wigley, David and Ann Pope and Mairwen Kirk.

Our thanks go also to Ian Williams for offering the use of the Oxwich Bay Hotel marquee for a Christmas Eve service, which had to be cancelled due to a last minute lockdown. However it meant that the one marriage held this year could be fitted in due to the perseverance of Rev. Justin.

The fabric of the church has been well maintained and particular thanks go to John Coates, Alan Glass and David

Workman for their diligence.

- A new notice board has been installed outside the church. Thanks go to the Gower Society for the partial donation and to Ian Williams of the Oxwich Bay Hotel for allowing it to be installed on his ground.
- A new memorial bench has been installed outside the church.
- New chairs have been paid for, though their delivery has been delayed due to restrictions on movement during the pandemic.
- A full electrical survey has been conducted.
- PAT test has been conducted.
- A fire safety survey has been conducted.
- Fire extinguishers and lightning conductor have been tested.
- Estimates are awaited for new heaters to be installed along with a new circuit board.
- A condensation problem was discovered in the lower part of the tower staircase but was quickly addressed.
- All necessary signage and safety equipment has been bought and installed in the church to guard against Covid-19 when people can be admitted.

Alan Glass and Diane Workman have undertaken the Safeguarding Awareness course and achieved the certificate. Several of our members attend the online coffee morning to maintain fellowship with other church members.

Against the odds of being able to achieve any outreach, from what will be my limited knowledge, members of our congregation have been sewing scrubs for NHS staff, transporting food for the food banks, counselling people in distress due to the pandemic, and contributing to community efforts for the welfare of others.

A video of the church bells being rung and a poem read at Easter reached 293 people on social media. The church facebook page has had a large number of people viewing and 'liking' it and they must be a possible source of future outreach. And we were blessed that on the last day we were in church we were able to celebrate the 80th birthday of Miriel Smith with cake and bubbly.

The members of our church have been diligent in their financial support and not only maintained this throughout the year but have arranged direct payment through the bank. As such the church committee felt it possible and so essential to maintain our charitable giving. We have been able to make monetary charitable donations of £2285.65.

Diane Workman

## **ST MARY THE VIRGIN, RHOSSILI**

In a year when so much has changed and many of our plans have altered it has been heart-warming to see the community rally round and adapt to these new circumstances. We miss the fellowship of attending church in person and opening St Mary's as a haven of peace and comfort, however the new virtual parish of St Taurin's has been a welcome alternative and we are very grateful to Rev. Justin for establishing this and creating a venue for both worship and fellowship.

We have enjoyed joining together with the other churches for services on Sunday morning, Wednesday Communion and Thursday evening Compline. There have been some wonderful contributions from around the community as everyone has played their part with beautiful music, singing and readings. The Christmas concert was a particularly enjoyable celebration.

During Advent Rhossili households participated in a Living Advent Calendar with new scenes lighting up around the village each night at our homes, shops, cafés and even the bus shelter. This started with St Mary's and the Chapel on December 1, culminating back at St Mary's on Christmas Eve with an illuminated crib scene outside. This reminded us that although we cannot meet we are there for each other and there is light ahead to cheer us.



*Images from Rhossili's 'Living Advent Calendar' project.*

We are very pleased to report that Rhossili's charitable donations for the Parish of St Thomas's Christmas lunches topped £600 as part of the total £3,750 which was passed to Revs. Steve and Rachel Bunting enabling them to provide for families and individuals who would otherwise go without. Gill Wales also knitted 50 Christmas stockings for the children, which were filled with stocking fillers by Rev. Justin. It is important that we continue to look out for those around us in need at this time as the pandemic makes life harder for so many, and we are extremely grateful for the ongoing donations to the food bank based at Middleton bus shelter and delivered weekly by the volunteers.

Sadly visitor numbers to the church have by necessity fallen from over 9,000 in 2019 to almost zero but we are very fortunate that whilst our income has fallen significantly we have received some generous and unexpected donations which have offset this and enabled us to meet our expenses. The ongoing support from Bowen Richards Trust and Rhossili Community Council is also hugely appreciated. Planned work to improve the church interior are on hold and we intend to get both projects underway just as soon as life is less restricted.

There have been some happy events to celebrate this year, in particular the wedding of Gage and Danielle who met at Swansea University and proposed and married in Rhossili; the christening of Harri Davies whose parents had also married in St Mary's. Roger and Eira were congratulated on their 50th wedding anniversary in September, marked with a socially distanced garden reception replacing original plans.

Sadly there were goodbyes as well, with the funerals of two longstanding members of the community and church supporters, Margaret Dixon and Olive Beynon and the untimely passing of Steve George.

Overall 2020 was a year to test us all, and it has been good to see the church and village pulling together and looking out for each other as we have adapted to these strange times. We look forward to and pray for a safe and happy 2021.

Vicky Charles



# **PARISH OF SOUTH WEST GOWER ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

Thursday 22 April 2021 at 7pm  
either at St Cattwg's Port Eynon or by Zoom online.

## **AGENDA**

1. Prayers.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Chairman's Welcome.
4. Minutes of the last Annual Vestry Meeting, 3 September 2020 (attached).
5. To receive Annual Report 2020 from the PCC:
  - a. Report of Priest in Charge.
  - b. Treasurer's Report.
  - c. Other reports.
6. Elections:
  - a. Nomination of the Priest's Warden.
  - b. Election of the People's Warden.
  - c. Election as members of the PCC of nominees from Congregational Meetings of the six churches of the Parish.
7. To appoint an independent Examiner of Accounts.
8. With the consent of the Meeting, to consider any other business of which notice has been given.

Note: Any person living in the Parish is entitled to attend this meeting but only persons whose names appear on the Electoral Roll are entitled to participate in any voting.

