

PCC News

The newspaper for all PCC members to help support your church



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The Rt Revd Graham Usher
Bishop of Norwich

I want to begin by thanking so many of you – parishioners, PCC members, churchwardens, lay ministers, clergy and others – for the incredible way in which you are continuing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect it is having on our local communities. So much has been stripped away from us, yet you are truly living out Jesus' call to love your neighbours.

I have heard so many good news stories, not least about how our church communities are caring for those who need to self-isolate, those who have lost work and livelihoods, and those for whom the last few months have been a serious challenge to their mental wellbeing or sense of safety.

I have taken part in imaginative online worship and am in awe of those who have learnt so many new skills and are reaching out to their communities with Christ's message of hope.

Many clergy are telling me that more people are attending online worship, whether live-streamed or pre-recorded messages, than attended church physically. Perhaps we are reaching people who, through ill health, age or infirmity have had to 'self-isolate' for years. Some good things are coming out of this. Thank you for all that you are doing

Sustaining generous giving and Parish Share

The challenges before us as a nation and world are immense. When I've been asked what I'm most concerned about I've not hesitated in replying, "the income of the diocese":

- The effect of the pandemic on Parish Share is being keenly felt, with a number of parishes reducing bank transfers, cheque payments, direct debits and standing orders to the diocese.

- Parish Share income to the end of May had reduced by over £250,000 compared with the same period in 2019.

- Parochial fee income from marriages and funerals has also naturally reduced or stopped. Rental income from the small number of 'vacant' properties has reduced, and dividend income from investments is reducing given the impact of the lockdown on industry.

- Our monthly out-goings amount to £890,000, of which the largest expenditure is funding our frontline clergy. With Parish Share contributions reducing cash flow is a very significant concern.

- We have put in place significant cost savings, including furloughing 50% of the staff team at various times over these past few months, to help us ride out this storm.

- The majority of clergy housing quinquennials, interim repairs, major repairs and boiler replacements have all been put on hold, but council tax, water rates and buildings insurance continue.

- We are urgently exploring what financial support the national church can provide at this time of need.

I have also asked Bishop Alan to lead a review about our expenditure and priorities so that we can plan how to sustainably fund the mission of God's Church in Norfolk and Waveney in the coming years.

Thank you to all of you who have sustained your giving and see parish share as a priority. Where parish share comes in our PCC's budget priorities is, to me, a key indicator of the value we place on the living, serving ministry of the church. When I was a parish priest in one of this country's lowest economic communities parish share was always at the top of the list. That community was often described as 'deprived', but they had a rich understanding of why supporting ministry was important and worked hard.

I ask that PCCs do all they can to encourage generous giving by direct debit and standing order, and in turn continue to contribute towards parish share as much as they are able, to continue to support the ongoing ministry of your parish and help us to sustain the vital frontline work of our clergy. Thank you.

This edition of PCC News contains important information about how you can develop online donations, set up standing orders and more.

"The Church is the Church only when it exists for others"

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Some of our poorest communities are being hit very hard at this time and being brothers and sisters in Christ means that we share our resources. The church of Acts certainly lived this out:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

What might our life together be like if PCCs who had more resources shared generously with those that had less? My prayer is that this time can be one where we inhabit lives of generous shared thanksgiving so that more people become followers of Jesus Christ.

In these strange times we will continue to learn what it means to be called upon to proclaim afresh the Gospel in each generation and, whilst the Gospel message is unchanging, how we proclaim God's love in Jesus in this generation will need us to reimagine our future as well as responding to the immediate. That can be daunting, yet ours is a task to live Pentecost lives, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to turn from being hidden away from any sense of fear, so as to tell the greatest story ever told of hope and love to others.

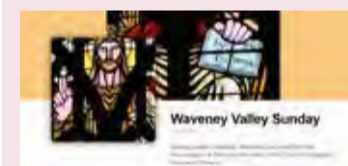
Thank you for your part in that. With every blessing.

+ Graham Norris

Stories of hope

Waveney Valley Sunday podcast

The Raveningham and Waveney benefices launching their first podcast 'Waveney Valley Sunday' which includes their local news and notices, updates on COVID-19 church guidance as well as Bible readings, a sermon and prayers each week.



Working together in King's Lynn

Over the last year, the congregations of St John's, King's Lynn and North Lynn Methodist had been asking themselves how they could work "with" their community and not just "for" them? The lockdown has, quite unexpectedly, helped them to explore this question.

Sprowston connects on all frequencies

Sprowston Parish have been making the most of technology to keep in contact with their community - even taking to the radio!



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Editorial

Robert Culyer
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Please note: Image taken before lockdown haircut!



It is so lovely to have this opportunity to be with you in your homes again. I feel in a really privileged position to be the editor of your newspaper and bring you news of the great things happening across our Diocese.

The past few weeks have given me a big insight into the great things that have come out of this awful period. It has been quite amazing to see how communities are staying connected and 'doing' church in a whole new way. Talking to people at virtual coffee mornings, I have heard stories of how people who do not normally attend church have been attending Zoom worship. I have also found it interesting how much more people are engaging with prayer and church at this time. I hope that it will continue and make many people think a monthly service is not enough when we come out of this; and will see travelling to other churches as the norm. I think we can now all appreciate the comfort of attending worship. I could not bear the thought of not worshipping with others at least once a week and listening to beautiful organ music.

At the time of writing this it looks like it will be a long time until it is safe for life to return to any sense of normality, but when it does happen, we need to be prepared to grow The Kingdom. At this time, we are making contact with new people;

whether it be a stranger delivering our food or prescription, or somebody we are speaking to on a community phone network. When we get back into church buildings, we need to invite these people to join us in our churches. Start making a list of these people and, when we resume services, invite them to a church service: perhaps a benefice service when there is a larger gathering. So many people at this time are finding solace in God's love and we need to support and encourage this. During lockdown, with the introduction of online services, we have seen a re-engagement with housebound parishioners who have been unable to access church in the past. We must not now forget them. Unfortunately some people who do not have internet or technology in their homes are still not being easily included, although I did hear this week of a benefice that is putting the service onto a CD and delivering it; and of course we do have churches that have services that you can phone into. We need to still focus on these people after lockdown finishes.

I think when The Diocesan Mission Strategy was developed no one ever imagined what was about to happen, but surely "more than we can imagine" is so very apt now. We need to come out of this stronger, possibly with a slightly different form of Church but we will all meet again and worship the Glory of God.

Moving with the times

I am afraid that I am not a keen fan of technology and have reluctantly accepted the world of virtual meetings. They are no substitute for meeting in person but when you consider the alternative of being isolated, this

is an ideal solution. Although I have stories from parishes relating their experiences about virtual coffee mornings I felt that to be able to comment I should also attend a virtual coffee morning. Accordingly, I recently gate crashed a coffee

morning at King's Lynn. I had a really great time, met some really lovely people and was made to feel very welcome. Also, being nosy, it was a great opportunity to have a snoop in other people houses! So why not have a go?

Rich tapestry of church

The Revd Veronica Wilson
Vicar of Heacham

After a few weeks of COVID-19 lockdown, we realised how much church family members missed seeing each other, so we set up a 'Church, Coffee and Chat' for those on our church email list and invited everyone by email. Help was offered to those who needed it. It's been a steep learning curve, as each person got to grips with the technology, but so worth it to see and hear others.

We have had three coffee mornings so far, with over 30 people attending and ranging in age from 12 to 95, who live in Heacham or locally. Owing to the joy of technology we were once also joined by Herbert and Rachel, one of our mission links in Nepal!

As people join it's chaotic and noisy as we say "hello!" "Can you

hear me?" "Can you see me?" or, "I like your wallpaper," etc. We then mute ourselves and each person has the chance to speak.

We have shared prayer requests, joys, ideas for surviving lockdown, family news and seen some examples of what people have been doing, all while we drink our teas and coffee and some of us eat cake!

We then finish with a prayer of blessing, with words put on the screen so we can join together. A small oasis of fellowship during isolation.

There was lots of anxiety when we suggested it, but it's been great. A part of the rich tapestry of ways we as church are keeping in touch with people; both in the church and village community in this season. Here are some quotes from those who came:

"It's not as scary as you imagine - (once you've learnt to mute and unmute) - and it's well

worth it because it gives you the opportunity of seeing people's faces rather than just listening to their voices (as in a phone call)"

"Mum loved the coffee morning, really cheered her up seeing people." "Brilliant!! Loved it!"



Anyone for coffee?

The Revd James Stewart
Rector, Thorpe St Andrew

One of the many new experiences, in these COVID-19 times, are the proliferation of socially-distant coffee mornings online.

In Thorpe St Andrew, we have opted to offer online worship on Facebook Live, which has gained a lot of interest, but wanted to have some opportunities to talk with and check in on one another online, using one of the video conferencing platforms. We realised early on, with all that is being provided online, the familiar Anglican adage, "All may, some should, none must!" We now

follow each Sunday service with 'After Church Coffee' via Zoom.

We trialled it midweek - with our first Zoom coffee morning on St George's Day. Over 20 members of our community entered the Zoom room. It was great fun! No two of our coffee mornings have the same group of people. People 'drop by' to see if they will enjoy it. Others are regulars.

We were delighted that, at the first coffee morning, we welcomed brothers and sisters from other denominations and also from our wider community. During our time together I very gently 'host' things, and in the absence of being able to pour the coffee,

I go around the gallery of people gathered asking them to say how they are and to perhaps give an example of one thing they have done new during this time of restrictions. Some are keen to show flowers that they have picked from the garden or something that they have crafted or a book that they are reading. It's a slightly clichéd comment now, but it has taken a global pandemic to help our communities connect with one another - even if we are apart.

Of course, the great sadness of it all, is that we don't get to eat one another's cakes! If I say so myself my chocolate and ginger cake (a la Mary Berry) was pretty delicious!



Age has been no barrier

The Revd Sarah Quantrill
Interim Priest in Charge,
St Luke's, New Catton

St Luke's Church, on Aylsham Road, Norwich has been running both a Sunday morning service

and a virtual coffee morning every week since the middle of April, using Zoom.

A member of the church commented, "having started using Zoom for our Sunday services, we quickly realised how much people valued the opportunity to socialise at

the beginning and end of the service so decided to create another space where fellowship became the focus."

One of St Luke's AWAs paid for Zoom pro (£11.99/month) which allows for up to 100 participants and means there is a 24-hour limit on a meeting (though neither the service nor the coffee morning last that long!). She 'hosts' the coffee, participants then download the Zoom app onto their PC, tablet or phone and join via a link on the Facebook page or website.

However, it's not all plain sailing. One of the leadership team notes, "while Zoom provides a

useful platform to host events like this, with lots of people involved it can easily become quite chaotic and it takes some management to ensure that everyone is included in the conversation." They went on to say, "age hasn't necessarily been a barrier - our eldest participant is 91! However, some of our less technologically aware folk have needed some help to be able to join." Fortunately, we have a number of people in the congregation who have been able to provide the necessary IT support.

The virtual coffee mornings run every Saturday morning from

11am-12noon and people join for some or all of the hour. Among other topics, participants enjoy sharing jokes (both good and not so good), comparing the size of sunflowers planted as part of a Lenten challenge and swapping recipe ideas. One congregation member says, "I miss my church family so it is a very special time, full of giggles and coffee. I enjoy it!"

The coffee mornings have also gained an international flavour as using Zoom has enabled members of the wider church family based in the Philippines and Uganda to join in too.

How to create a podcast: step-by-step guide

A podcast is an audio file made available online for downloading or streaming. Even before COVID-19, the rise in number of people listening to them had been growing significantly with 18% of UK adults listening to a podcast regularly each week. In the articles below we hear from people who are creating them to help inspire you and give practical tips.

Gordon Darley
Director of Communications

Some top tips about how we create the weekly Sunday Hope podcast:

Recording audio:

- We use the free Voice Memos app on an iPhone. Similar apps are available on other devices.
- Download at DofN.org/voice
- How to use at DofN.org/vmi
- When recording, using the

standard headphones which include a microphone can be fine. Having the microphone close to you (as headphones offer) increases the quality of the recording. Investing £20 or more in a lavalier clip-on mic or desktop mic is worthwhile to improve sound quality further.

- Remove any ticking clocks from your room and close any windows so the tweeting birds don't become more interesting for the listener than what you have to say!
- Choose a room which has an abundance of material. Keep curtains drawn; cushions or a duvet are good; open the wardrobe door!
- Email the recording to yourself or the person who will be editing the podcast together.

Editing audio:

- We use Audacity which is free audio editing software (www.audacityteam.org)
- Import the audio (File > Import > Audio...). You might need to amplify the audio



(Effect > Amplify...), then do noise reduction (Effect > Noise Reduction...) to remove any background humming.

- You can simply select and delete any audio you don't need, e.g. the very start or end of the recording.
- If a few people have recorded audio, you can import multiple files and copy and paste the sections into the order you want.
- Once finished, you can save the new file as an mp3 (File > Export Audio...)

Including music:

- You can import music files into Audacity in just the same way as voice recordings, but make sure you have permission to use the hymns or music in your podcast.
- Through the A Church Near You Resource Hub (DofN.org/hymns) every Thursday the Church of England offer a number of hymns and choral music for use online.
- Your benefice will need the CCLI Streaming License as well (uk.ccli.com/streaming).

Making it available:

- We use Buzzsprout (www.buzzsprout.com) which is free for up-to 2 hours of audio per month. Up-to 3 hours is \$12pm and 6 hours \$18pm. There are many other providers, but Buzzsprout is very easy to use and crucially let's you submit your podcast to all the major podcast apps at just a click, including Apple Podcasts, Google Podcast, Spotify, Alexa enabled devices, Overcast and many more.
- Click 'Upload a New Episode' and 'Choose a file to upload'. Then give the podcast a name and description then click 'Publish'.
- To include the podcast on your website, click on the 'Players' tab and 'Copy embed code'. If you paste this code into your church's website, it automatically shows the latest episode and past editions, and gives a nice visible play button so it's one-click to hear it.
- Statistics are included, so you can see how many people have listened and if they listened on your website or via a podcast app.

And relax... the voice

The Revd Derek McClean
Rector, Hethersett Benefice



When the lockdown began, I knew it was vital to find ways to try and keep our community together. One of the things I decided to do was to podcast my sermons. Podcast is a version of radio, but it doesn't require a licence, and is hosted by a provider.

After a little research, I decided upon Anchor (www.anchor.fm).

Anchor is completely free, and there are no limits on how much content you store on it unlike some other providers.

I found that I could record straight onto the Anchor app on my phone, which would then put it in the cloud, and I was able to access it on the website in the account I had created. Unfortunately, I found my normal earbuds gave poor sound quality, so I bought a microphone which connected to my phone for £17.

The website has a fairly straightforward editing area. Most Anchor users agree using the website is the best way to do

it. As part of editing it, I used the free music which comes on the website which is royalty/copyright free. This gave me the opportunity to create various sections (intro, prayers, Bible reading and sermon).

Once finished, I can schedule the podcast to go 'live' at a time and date of my choosing; usually a Sunday morning.

As part of what they do, Anchor allows me to connect to Facebook, Twitter and Spotify. The only 'speed bump' being that Spotify wants 48 hours to check that everything in the podcast is either owned by me or free to use. If I want to

connect to other platforms (e.g. iTunes) then the options are there. On the webpage which people see, they can play the episode there or go through to Spotify, and the Facebook link takes them straight to the Church Facebook page. The final place I put a link to Anchor was on A Church Near You.

I use a full script and, once recorded, I email the script to others who may not be able to access the podcast.

There are many 'how-to' videos out there, and the Anchor app has a series of episodes on putting a podcast together. The main difficulty is learning to relax your voice. I'm still working on that!

It's been a fun learning experience, and I may well keep recording my sermons after lockdown is lifted.

One listener, Ken, commented: "These sermons have been challenging, encouraging and thought-provoking, leading me to a greater awareness of God and to a deeper appreciation of what Christ has done for us. Given that it's more difficult to be engaged as a mere listener rather than a participant in interactive worship, a preceding hymn and a following pause for responsive prayer round the theme might make one incorporate all the more."

Another listener, Kate, said: "It's been a comfort to be kept in touch in this way. The familiar structure of daily worship and weekly sermons has given us continuity and held us together when it would have been so easy to drift apart."

You can listen to the podcast at: www.anchor.fm/derek-mcclean

Dig down into the scriptures

Jason Baldry
Head of Media & IT
St Thomas', Norwich (STN)

We have always produced a podcast at STN, predominantly featuring our Sunday talks, as a way for those who wish to engage from a distance or catch up on Sunday. These talks were not always recorded to the highest quality and before COVID-19 we were already moving to improve our output via podcasts, with a view to featuring audio and video interviews (for YouTube) and making the podcast more conversational with in-person interviews and recording these over distance via video chat.

In response to lockdown, we

quickly put this plan into action (in a way that lockdown allowed) to create a daily podcast with one of our curates, PJ Brombley. These are short 8-10-minute episodes for people to dig a little deeper into scripture during what could be a time of isolation and, perhaps, loneliness or anxiety.

We made an investment into some high-quality mics and some USB adaptors to allow those mics to connect into a computer for recording. We then add some music to the start and end of each episode ready for distribution via Spotify, Apple Music, Google Podcasts, etc. A video version is released on our YouTube channel for people who prefer to watch.

We advertise the podcasts

through our social media channels and direct people to our website for all the info. We also do regular emails to our mailing list subscribers and mention the podcasts at Sunday 'gatherings'.

We recently started a second podcast with Matthew Hutton, taking a tour of the whole Bible over 18 weeks. This is a 'course-based' podcast which people are encouraged to follow along.

Top tips for a podcast:

- a quality microphone
- consistent imagery, branding and language when communicating it
- be concise in saying what it's about and how people can use it
- keep things fun, light-hearted, approachable and clear.

A prayer about the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

Reflections and survival tips in the current situation



Jane Keeton
Diocesan Counsellor &
Adviser in Pastoral Care

Drawing on the conversations I've had, both individually and in group Zoom rooms, here are some reflections and survival tips.

Adapting

■ We are all creatures of habit and we mostly prefer life to be predictable and normal, but the current situation is a disruption to our normal way of life. Don't worry if life feels odd and strange: as time passes we all naturally adapt to the temporary 'new normal'.

■ Establishing a routine, and revising it as the lockdown is evolving, will help you adapt. A routine gives a sense of control and helps reduce uncertainty by building a pattern into the day or week.

Ministry and worship

■ A wise nun once said to me, "if today is a day I don't believe in (or

feel close to) God, the Sister next to me is probably doing ok and her belief will carry me through". This is also true in our congregations and churches: our times of doubt and uncertainty can be helped by being with other believers. If we're used to being uplifted and fed by collective worship, we may sometimes struggle on our own. Find other ways of being fed; for example, join in with a streamed service, or sing hymns / worship songs, or spend time with nature.

■ It is natural to be competitive, to compare ourselves with others, and sometimes to feel inferior as a result. We now have a huge number of streamed services and resources for worship available to us online, as well as examples of good and loving community support. These can be a blessing and inspire us in our worship and our works, but can also leave us feeling our own offerings are inadequate. Try to play to your strengths and do what you do best, and not compare yourself with others in this way.

Anxiety and low mood

- It's ok to not be ok. At times your emotions may be all over the place.
- It is normal to be feeling stressed in the current situation. Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that you or your faith are weak.
- It is normal to feel vulnerable and overwhelmed by what's going on. This is especially true if you've previously experienced trauma or have a mental health problem, or a medical condition which makes you more at risk of complications from coronavirus.
- It is normal to alternate between almost forgetting what's going on, and feeling it is awful.

Self-care

- Pay attention to your own needs and feelings, especially when you're feeling stressed.
- Prioritise healthy activities which you enjoy and find relaxing.
- Try to have your daily outdoor exercise, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food.
- Limit your exposure to the news. A near-constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Access the news at specific times during the day from reputable websites or broadcasters and avoid listening to or following rumours. It is good to remain informed and educated but aim to do so in a controlled way.
- Use social media wisely. Seek out those you want to follow; and try to avoid mindless scrolling through updates as this can cause low mood. Active use of social media, rather than passive, can help.
- Take breaks from your work or other tasks. Managing the current situation and the pace of change

is intense and tiring, so be sure to take regular breaks during the day. You may be finding it difficult to have uninterrupted days off, especially if you are in a leadership role or are involved in a community response to vulnerable people in your area, so it is important to take chunks of time throughout the week instead.

- Holidays will be different. Many of us go away for a holiday, and we may feel we can't fully unwind if we have to remain at home. Ask yourself which aspects of holidays you value most, and try to replicate these at home: e.g. if you need a lie-in or a leisurely start to the day make sure you get these and tell all who may contact you that you won't respond until the afternoon; or if you value hours with your family or a good book then put boundaries round any work you may need to do.
- Know what feeds you, and spend time doing it. Time spent in nature, with family, in online socialising, with books, films, or music can all feed us and give us a much-needed breathing space from the current situation. Spend time in a comfortable place within your home: have an early night or re-read your favourite book or watch your favourite film.
- Avoid overuse of alcohol or food, which are common comfort strategies.

So near and yet so far away...

- Everyone needs space of their own sometimes. Many children will have their own bedroom to hide away in, but most couples will need to talk about where each will find their own space.
- Don't sweat the small stuff: back away from potential arguments sooner than you normally would, and bite back the sharp response. Remember everyone may be struggling with being at home most of the time, and tensions can easily rise.
- Keep connected with others by phone or video call or social media; this is especially important if you live alone.

Stories of hope

Visit www.DofN.org/COVID-19 to read these and other stories from across the diocese about how people are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and sharing God's love in their local communities.

Looking after Ludham

Churchwarden Ken Grapes and Authorised Worship Assistant Christine Wall tell us about the creation of the volunteer group 'Looking After Ludham' and of the services of worship that are taking place whilst their lovely old church is closed.



Surprised by God

The Revd Canon Catherine Dobson, Rector of the Coastal Group, shares her reflections on leading her group of churches through this pandemic.



Delivering food to families

St Cuthbert's, Sprowston is offering to deliver food to local families facing a desperate shortage due to the current COVID-19 restrictions.



Good neighbours in Wroxham

The Rector and Curate share their churches' responses and experiences from reaching out practically and pastorally in the Wroxham Benefice.



Dial-a-Sermon: church where we are

Joanna Fisher
Communications Officer

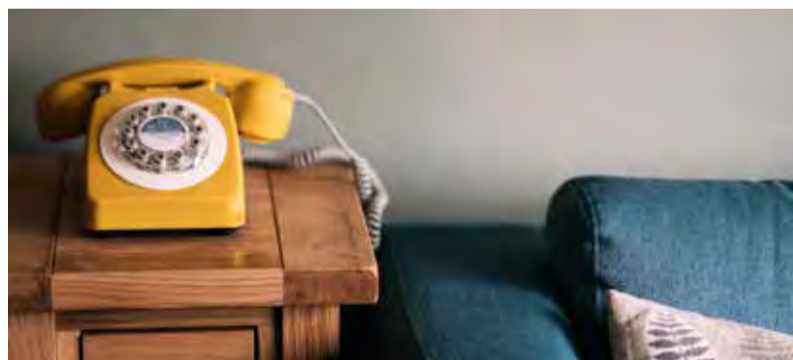
In these days of self-isolation, when we are staying in our homes and not able to go to church services as normal, there has been a surge in the use of online streaming services to connect our communities together.

With so many people in Norfolk and Waveney living in rural areas where broadband signal is less reliable or who simply feel uncomfortable using the internet, however, live streaming is not the be-all and end-all of getting

church services to all church members. In instances such as these, there is a need for an alternative that makes use of the available tools: like a phone.

The idea for the Dial-a-Sermon service at Cromer came when the vicar, the Revd Will Warren, saw that another church was giving people the option to phone a local number and hear a pre-recorded sermon over the phone. This gave them the ability to reach vulnerable people who did not have access to the internet and bring them into the community of the church in its current form.

Before long, Licensed Lay Worker



Simon Fenn had the system up and running; the sermon is live streamed on Sunday via their YouTube channel to those who wish to access it that way, then the recording of that sermon gets turned into a podcast by Simon and uploaded to the Dial-a-Sermon service. Anyone with the number can then hear the same service as their church community.

Simon Fenn said: "We did it because we recognised people in our congregation who were vulnerable, being without internet

in this time of isolation. It is really important to us that we can be church wherever we are. We wanted it so that people still felt connected to a community, to us, and to God."

To listen to Cromer Church's weekly Sunday services, call **01263 801991** from any landline or mobile – calls are charged at a local rate.

If your church is looking to branch out into this method of engaging people in the life of the church, please contact me on **01603 882376** or email me at news@dioceseofnorwich.org

Supporting those who are housebound

This article highlights just one of the many initiatives happening across the diocese led by members of our churches. Be encouraged and challenged!

Laura Neale
Director of YouBelong
www.youbelong.org.uk

I am Laura and founded YouBelong, an organisation aiming to connect and support people with chronic illness and/or disability through the online community. I was introduced to the concept of online church at university but was sceptical as I didn't believe church could be done online.

I am sure there will be readers who will be keen to return to the traditional format of church ASAP. However for some who are too ill to leave their home or have found churches to be inaccessible – not just the buildings but the language, traditions and theologies – this alternative provision will remain important.

I started YouBelong by creating a Twitter page, advertising it using hashtags #OnlineChurch #ChurchOnline #OnlineCommunity and

#YouBelong. Others then found the page and started following and sharing their own thoughts and experiences with me.

At the end of last year, I won a Premier Digital Award for my blog, and this year I have been nominated for a National Diversity Award for the community aspect of YouBelong. Each person who has nominated YouBelong for this award has sent in a reason why they voted. I have included a couple here to show why online church, and especially community, is so important:

"It's a great organisation that has impacted me - through positively supporting me and inviting me to be part of their community."

"Such an important cause reaching those who often miss out due to a variety of reasons. Belonging is fundamental to human nature, so through YouBelong creating a platform for those who may find it harder to belong to a wider community, in turn, it is improving lives countryside!"

In the past few weeks I have seen churches offering great services and resources such as:

■ **Online worship** - either pre-recorded or done live via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube (ensure you have appropriate licenses);

■ **Online home group** - done over Zoom or closed Facebook group which ensured that their discussions were kept private;

■ **Online Bible studies** - done using Zoom etc;

■ **Prayer gatherings** - done via Zoom or other service enabling multiple people to hear one another's voices;

■ **Alpha online** - evangelism is very difficult at the moment but the resources have just been released on the Alpha website to enable churches to run Alpha online via Zoom, using social media to invite people to join.

Although it is great to include God in our time together, community is important and that can be achieved better by fun informal activities including:

■ **Online coffee mornings** - using Zoom to bring people together to chat informally with others they would have previously met in person;



■ **Quizzes** - there are many ways to do this but I would recommend doing this live as it brings the community together in real time!

In the same way that some people are excluded by the church meeting, there will be people who cannot access online church, perhaps due to finances or lack of knowledge of technology. It is essential that we cater for them.

Two ways I have found to be very helpful are:

■ **Twilio** - which enables individuals to hear a recent sermon by dialling a phone number.

■ **Telephone befriending and penpal schemes** - both of which enable individuals to connect with others and check in on others who have little or no other communication with people.

Telephone befriending schemes are really good at connecting people, but it is important to remember that some people cannot hear enough for a phone conversation so if possible, also offer them communication via letters (i.e. penpal scheme).

Please contact me if you need advice on types of provision, resources or advice in general at info@youbelong.org.uk

■ **Ready Steady Cook-style competition** - gather names of people who would like to be involved, (this can be done via email, social media and/or phone), provide them with the same list of ingredients and challenge them to make something tasty out of it and send in a photo to be judged;

■ **Book clubs** - send out a text message/email each month with a book name (if possible, send out copies of the book either in the post or as an ebook) and meet (via social media or Zoom etc.) at the end of the month to share thoughts;

St Mary Magdalene
@saintmarymags

Has lockdown left you asking the big questions of life? This could be just the ticket! @vicaronthemag would love you to join him for this new group on Zoom #bigqs #nostupidquestion #informalchat #nocommentbanned

Martham Parish Churches

Martham Blessing Trail We have hidden 11 painted rocks around the village. Here is a map. If you find a rock, look at the picture and write down what it is. The first letters will spell a phrase. Message us the phrase (or text it to the number on the Map) to be in with a chance of a chocolatey prize! Picture clues in the comments. PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH THE ROCKS - Stay safe!

Kessingland CofE Primary Academy
@AcadKessingland

Every week over 70 families collect food hampers. Inside the hamper last week were ingredients to make pizza. Look at these fabulous results!

Sprowston Parish Churches

Join us for an online cuppa!

www.facebook.com/sprowstonchurch/

Be with us for a Tuesday Break

Tuesdays 10.30-11.30

Sprowston Parish catch up and chat bring your own coffee

Join Via Zoom Meeting ID 750-607-3092 Password 1780 or call in on 01203-460119

Cliff Park Community Church

Got lots of questions? Find answers at Alpha. Join the online conversation cpcc.org.uk/web/en/left/alpha/

St Francis Church Heartsease

Thank you again to everybody who produced pictures for the residents of Woodside Care Home. We would now like to invite you to produce more pictures for other people in the community in need of cheering up. There are still plenty of books for children who have not already received one.

A prayer for those who are worried

Loving Jesus, you are compassionate to those in need and heal the sick in body and mind. Look kindly on those who are fearful at this time. Help us all to put away all thoughts and actions that separate us from you and from one another. Give us grace to live our lives confident in your promise that you are with us always. Amen.

A prayer for one another

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to care for the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake. Amen.

The greatest sacrifice of all

Robert Culyer
Parish Funding Support Officer

By the time you read this article Easter may seem but a distant memory, even Easter celebrated in such extraordinary circumstances due to the restrictions imposed by the virus. However it is observed, Easter remains the most important event of our faith. It reminds us that what God has generously offered us is nothing short of new life through Jesus Christ.

As Christians we give in response to God's love for us, and just because we are in lockdown this love does not falter. Indeed, our belief is that God is with us whatever we face. It is at this time we appreciate how important our faith is to us and the fact that we

know that God won't abandon us.

I genuinely believe that a lot of people in lockdown who are not practicing Christians will come to realise that there is something missing in their lives and will turn to God now for his support. Hopefully this will provide us with a great opportunity. When we come out of lockdown we need to stay engaged with these people and grow our churches. To do this we need to ensure that our church is properly funded and that we are in a good position to surge forward with this goal.

The Bible is quite clear about this. In the letter from St Paul to the Ephesians we are told of the need "to equip the saints for the ministry, for building up the body of Christ." As Christians we need to ensure that we maintain our

giving to ensure the growth of the Kingdom. After all, we give in response to God's love for us and what we give must be a true representation of the value we put on that love.

In these hard times there may be a temptation to think that we don't have any personal spare funds, but again in the Bible we read in Corinthians of how the Macedonian churches, despite extreme poverty, welled up in extreme generosity. Some of our poorer parishes will fall short during this period and it is the responsibility of us all to help and fund the work across the whole of the diocese to ensure the growth of the Kingdom.

Our financial support is funding the most amazing support network. We have seen the great things that



our church communities are doing in caring for each other: everything from helping to feed those in need to providing emotional support via various methods of befriending. Besides all this our clergy have grappled with technology and are providing a plethora of online worship.

So, in summary, our giving

is more important than ever. Each and every one of us needs to support the growth of the Kingdom and we have a wonderful opportunity to realise this. Let us as a Church be ready. Are you able to say that what you give is a true value of God's love for you? A true reflection of the sacrifice that he made for you?

An example Gift Aid form

Please send to:

Write your church office or parish treasurer's address here

This is an example of a Gift Aid form you might like to use when encouraging people to give single gifts, regular gifts or set up a standing order. Download the template at: www.DofN.org/giftaid

Your Personal Details

Surname

Title

Forenames

Address

Postcode

Email*

Telephone*

*Optional - These contact details help us in case of queries

For a Regular Gift

Frequency and amount Monthly £ Quarterly £ Weekly £

£ First payment date (allow at least two weeks)

DD / MM / YYYY

For a Single Gift

Single Gifts I wish to make a single donation of £ _____ and enclose my cheque payable to: (Parish name)

Declaration for Gift Aid Tax Reclaim Purposes

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signed:

Date: DD / MM / YYYY

Instructions to your bank or building society to pay standing order

To	Bank/Building Soc
Postcode	

Reference Number (Office use only): XXXXXX

Please pay to: Parish name here
the Regular Gift amount specified above, from the account detailed on this instruction, into

Bank name	Account no.	Sort Code
XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XX-XX-XX

Bank/Building Society Account no. and sort code

		-			-		

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

--

This instruction supersedes all previous instructions to this payee

Signature(s):

Date: DD / MM / YYYY

DO NOT SEND TO YOUR BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY

We know just how much churches are doing for the communities they serve. Informing them that your income has dramatically reduced will encourage them to give. Have a look at Aylsham's social media post below. Is this something you could consider?



Aylsham Parish Church
[facebook.com/Aylshamparishchurch](https://www.facebook.com/Aylshamparishchurch)



We Need Your Help

Aylsham Parish Church has, throughout its long history, always been open and here for everyone in our community.

COVID-19 has forced us to close our building to the public, probably for the first time in 750 years, but the church has remained active serving our community and those who are most vulnerable in this difficult time.

Like so many other organisations though, the closure of the building has meant that we have lost much of our normal income. Our weekly church collections; the Monday Sale; year-round schedule of concerts and events; along with our cafe and shop all usually help to support our beautiful medieval building and our community work but now this vital work is lacking the financial support it once had (despite dramatically cutting our outgoings, at the end of May we had a £4000 hole in our budget).

As such we are appealing to our community to help us continue our work and ensure that, when it's safe to do so, we can open our doors once again.

If you would like to support our work financially you can do so by going to the 'Giving' section of our website by clicking on this link below: <https://pay.churchdesk.com/LXmUSzOag>

You can also support us by shopping online. Every time you shop online via easyfundraising at one of the 3,300 retailers including John Lewis, Aviva, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer and Booking.com, a donation will be made to us, and it won't cost you a penny extra. It's really simple to get started, just click on the link below and sign up for free: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/cau.../aylshamparishchurch/>

THANK YOU so much for all of your support. It will ensure that we can keep serving our community for many years to come.

#community #loveaylsham Just Aylsham The Aylsham Community Trust - Families

Are you responsible?



As a PCC you are:

- collectively responsible for the maintenance of the church buildings and churchyard;
- the employer of any paid workers;
- entitled to be consulted about major changes to forms of worship used in the parish and advised about the appointment of a new incumbent.

It is also expected that as a PCC you are consulted about any pastoral schemes affecting the parish. One important thing to note is that one or more members from the PCC should be a member of the Deanery Synod to act as a link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. PCC members are elected for a period of three years and then can stand for re-election.

I appreciate that time is limited but as a PCC you sometimes need a health check to ensure that you are operating as an effective body. In the booklet produced by the Archbishops' Council and Charity Commission they list seven marks of good governance to ensure that you are an effective PCC. I would recommend having a look at this check list and see how many of the boxes that you can tick.

Further bedtime reading can be found on the Parish Resources website, and in particular the eight-page booklet entitled, 'Trusteeship... An Introduction for PCC Members'. Download for free at www.parishresources.org.uk/news/trusteeship or contact me for a copy on **01603 882326**.

The PCC is a charity by virtue of its objectives, namely the advancement of religion and making provision for public worship, and as a member of the PCC, you are a trustee of the charity. All individuals on a PCC have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of their PCC.

Responsibility includes:

- Ensuring compliance – both charity and church law;
- Duty of prudence – ensuring that the PCC remains solvent; that funds and assets are used wisely; and avoid undertaking activities that might place the PCC's property, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk;
- Duty of care – as trustees you must exercise reasonable care and skill, using personal knowledge and experience to ensure that the PCC is well run and efficient.

Robert Culyer Parish Funding Support Officer

As PCC members, I wonder if we know the history of them and what they are required to do?

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the administration and finance of the parish were the legal responsibility of the incumbent and churchwardens. Parishioners had little say in the running of the church other than the electing of the churchwardens.

In 1919 PCCs were introduced, and, since then, a number of acts have defined and refined the composition, functions and rights of the PCC. The rules governing the PCC are set out in the Church Representation Rules. The PCC is a corporate body, a separate legal entity, and is separate from the members of the PCC.

Take the test...

Robert Culyer Parish Funding Support Officer

In the adjacent article I looked at the responsibilities for individuals as PCC members. I appreciate that when a PCC meets, time is normally very limited. Whilst in lockdown why not have an online meeting and examine how effective you are as a PCC? Personally, as chair of governors at two church schools we have audits of our governing body to establish if we are working effectively, because we are accountable if our schools do not perform well. To help you establish if you are an effective PCC, the Archbishop's Council have identified the following seven points for a PCC to consider.

An effective PCC:

1. Is clear about its purposes, mission and values, and uses them to direct all aspects of its work. PCC members always act in the best interests of the PCC, making balanced and informed decisions, and thinking long and short term.
2. Has adopted structures, policies and procedures which enable it to achieve its mission and aims and meet its objectives efficiently.
3. Sees sound governance as an important part of its stewardship. It has appropriate procedures in place and manages any conflicts of interest appropriately.
4. Manages and uses its resources (including finance, skills, knowledge, experience and assets) so as to achieve its potential. It plans and budgets effectively, including periodic review.

5. Views accountability and transparency as key values and recognises that it is accountable to wider constituents. It communicates effectively, explaining its activities and decisions in an open and transparent way whilst maintaining confidentiality where appropriate.

6. Is flexible enough to adapt to change appropriately. Avoiding complacency, the effective PCC will want to increase its effectiveness in meeting its core object of promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church.

7. Acts with integrity, and in accordance with its values. As I said at the beginning of the article, I appreciate that you are always short of time at PCC meetings but putting this item on your agenda or having an extra meeting might just help you see where your areas of strength and areas of weakness are.

If you are streaming your service online don't forget to invite people to give online during the broadcast. One church we know of had the vicar's five-year-old daughter appearing on the screen holding up the giving notice, explaining the methods available to donate.

If you set up online giving, make sure that you promote it at every opportunity. For example: on your Facebook page, Twitter or Instagram. Also promote the methods of giving in the parish magazine. We are a charity like many other charities and we must not be afraid to ask for support to help carry out God's wishes.

A spirituality of walking: Bishop's new book

Barbara Bryant Communications Officer

'The Way Under Our Feet - A Spirituality of Walking' by the Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich was published recently by SPCK.

In a time of uncertainty and upheaval, Graham Usher urges us to walk ourselves back into life. "Walking is one of the simplest things we do as humans. It's how most of us experience life."

In 'The Way Under Our Feet', Graham Usher conveys how exhilarating it is to walk into the depths of our humanity. We become more ready to recognize the needs as well as the joys of others; we sift our thoughts; we seek to heal our battered world, even as we glory in the beauty of nature; we find ourselves accompanying with our three mile an hour God.

"I love to get out walking and I've come to realise that walking

is very much part of my spiritual life. I was intrigued to find out more, so I started delving more into the subject and thinking hard. The book kind of walked itself into being during a three-month sabbatical as I walked on the Mount Athos peninsula, in the Troodos Mountains in Cyprus, and in the Judean desert. I met some incredible characters along the way and learnt so much – not least about myself.

"As I wrote the final part of the book, knowing I would be the new Bishop of Norwich, a prayer the Diocese had issued became part of my daily reflections. I was particularly drawn to the line, 'in your mercy give your Church in this Diocese a shepherd after your own heart who will walk in your ways.' Walking seems important in this new calling."

This is Bishop Graham's second book. He wrote another outdoor-focused publication, "Places of Enchantment: Meeting God in



Landscapes" also published by SPCK, in 2012.

You can read a question and answer session with Bishop Graham on the book here: www.DofN.org/TheWayUnderOurFeet

The book is available from Revelation Bookshop in Norwich as well as the usual online outlets.

A prayer for the world

God of love and hope,
You made the world and care for all creation.
But the world feels strange right now.
The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.
Many people are anxious because of it.
Many people are anxious that they might get ill.
Many people are anxious about their family & friends.
Be with them in their worries and help them
to find some peace.
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists
who are working to discover the right medicines
to give hope to those who are ill.
Thank you that even in these strange and worrying
times, you are with us.
Help us to look for the signs of your goodness
and love towards us. Amen.

Financial guidance for PCCs



Susan Bunting
Director of Finance

Support and guidance for parishes

The Parish Resources website, a site maintained by the National Stewardship Team, has a section covering COVID-19 financial guidance which is being continually updated. At the time of writing, this page covered guidance on:

- APCM's;
- Government Support Measures;
- Templates to enable donors who cannot give through their weekly envelopes to set up standing orders;
- Advice and support on using alternative giving methods, including resources for online giving.

This guidance can be found at this link www.parishresources.org.uk/coronavirus/ and we would recommend checking this page on a regular basis.

Handling statutory parochial fees

Due to social distancing, it has become difficult for cheques to be countersigned as people are told to stay at home. This presents difficulties when administering statutory fees. We are therefore offering the following suggestions

as to how parochial fees could be handled in the current circumstances.

Where there is a service in the churchyard

Where there is a proportion of the fee due to the DBF and this fee is due to be paid by cheque, the PCC may consider requesting two cheques, one being for the PCC proportion of the fee (plus any extras) and a separate cheque for the DBF proportion of the fee. The DBF cheque can then be sent directly to Diocesan House for banking. If the PCC choose to proceed with this option, they should ensure that this is recorded on their quarterly fee return to ensure that the fee can be reconciled with diocesan records in case of cheques being lost in the post.

Alternative to sending cheques

If a PCC currently has a direct debit request lodged for Parish Share, we are considering offering the option to parishes for their fees to be collected in this manner. Initially, we are gauging whether there is sufficient interest to proceed, and if you feel this would be of benefit, please email James South (james.south@dioceseofnorwich.org)

south@dioceseofnorwich.org) who will monitor interest and contact you in due course.

Where the services are held in a crematorium or cemetery

In terms of services at the crematorium, since 1 January 2020, the full statutory fee is now legally due to the DBF and if they wish, funeral directors can send the payment directly to us by bank transfer.

We have found that some, but not all funeral directors are able to do this. If they wish to proceed with this process, could you please ask them to provide a remittance advice to Ben Tooke (ben.tooke@dioceseofnorwich.org) with details of the service (date and name of the deceased) and the parish in which the deceased lived. If the funeral director does not know the parish, then if they could provide the address of the deceased's usual place of residence, we can determine the parish in which they lived. This ensures that, per the decision made earlier this year by the Bishop's Staff and DBF Executive, the amount of £30 for these services can be credited to Parish Share for the correct

parish. The bank account details for funeral directors to use are as follows:

*Account Name: NDBF Ltd
Sort Code: 20-62-61
Account Number: 30674508
Reference: Either parish name or reference used on remittance advice.*

To ensure that we receive any fees that are to be paid directly, I should be grateful if you could also send Ben an email advising him of the funerals which you are expecting funeral directors to pay directly us so we can reconcile these to the funds received.

Grants for parishes

The Heritage Emergency Fund has been launched offering grants of £3,000 to £50,000 to support charities which would include PCCs within its scope. Of the grants available, this one may be of the most benefit for PCCs to consider. Full details and criteria can be found at the following link:

www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/heritage-emergency-fund-launches-help-sector

In response to the Archbishops' and Bishops' call, many parishes have responded to the current challenge to work with their community in new ways. In turn, grant making bodies are coming forwards awarding grants to support this work.

Whilst the list of grant making bodies providing support is growing, a regularly updated list of bodies can be found in this link www.grantsonline.org.uk/coronavirus.html

Although some bodies have geographical restrictions or focus on particular areas of need, there may be opportunities for outreach work to be supported. Understandably, the grants are focussed very much in supporting charities where the work is focussed on the current crisis rather than usual church activities.

Excepted charity statements

Most churches are 'Excepted Charities' and are therefore not registered with the Charity Commission. However, when completing online forms, churches are often asked to prove their charitable status.

'A Church Near You' editors can log into their account and download their church(es) certificate in PDF format. Click on 'Edit' next to your church, then select 'More information' and

scroll to the bottom of the page.

This statement can serve as a certificate for churches requiring proof of their charity status when registering for online and card-based giving or completing grant applications. You can watch a useful video guide showing how to download your statement: <https://vimeo.com/413174091>

Please remember though that if your income is over £100,000 that you have to apply for your own charity number.

How does the Gift Aid Small Donations scheme (GASDs) work during lockdown?

GASDs rules have been relaxed for weekly giving envelopes from non-taxpayers as a result of church closures due to the COVID-19 crisis.

During the COVID-19 crisis HMRC would accept separate weekly envelopes containing £30 or less given when the churches reopen as eligible for GASDs.

Alternatively, one envelope with an accompanying letter/declaration which clearly states how much was being donated each week would also be eligible.

For example, if a donor sends £40 "to cover the next four weeks" then this would be eligible as £10 per week, provided it is made clear (with dates provided for the weeks covered) that it is four separate donations in the same envelope.

Are you eligible for a Government COVID-19 grant?

Susan Martin
Diocesan Board of Finance
Executive Committee Member

A property in England and Wales that is a "place of public religious worship" is wholly exempt from business rates under Schedule 5 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended. It qualifies if:

1. it 'belongs to' the Church of England or the Church in Wales, or;
2. it is registered and certified as a place of worship under the Places of Worship Registration Act 1855, or;
3. it is a church hall, chapel hall or similar building used in connection with a place of worship.

Here's the BUT! Many churches rent office space, or for various reasons, have premises that are

registered for Non-Domestic Business Rates, these are often set at zero after Small Business rates Relief is applied.

If your hall, office or another building comes within this category then under the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) all eligible businesses in England in receipt of either Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) or Rural Rates Relief (RRR) in the business rates system will be eligible for a payment of £10,000.

Under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant (RHLG) eligible businesses in England in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for a cash grants of £10,000 or £25,000 per property.

Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000.

Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000.

These are administered by each District Council and full details can be found by following the link on the Council's website. To make this easier the links are to the right. If you run into trouble with this or need assistance, your District Council or Councillor should be able to help you. Full details of the scheme and links to your local District Council are at: www.DofN.org/govgrant



Funerals in COVID-19 times

The Revd Simon Ward
Team Rector, Great Yarmouth

When my dear uncle died in early March, my cousins and I set about preparing his funeral, scheduled for 23 March. It soon became clear that what we planned and what we could do were very different. By the time I took the service in church it was just me and immediate family. A few days later, we would not have been in church at all.

It can be a stark discomfort to attend a funeral in the current times. Numbers are restricted. We cannot go into church at all. Those who have known a particular church as their spiritual home (perhaps all their life) will never make their final journey through its door. However, there are things we can do to adapt and help people be comforted by God's all-encompassing love. Indeed, our challenge as Christians is to help people know God's love, even in trying circumstances.

With that in mind, here are some suggestions for all church members to remember:

- Be mindful of those who will have not had opportunity to say



farewell to a loved one. This is especially hard so bear this in mind and offer a listening ear.

- If people cannot attend a funeral, remind them to pray at home at the time of the funeral. Lighting a candle, being still, saying the Lord's Prayer, reading Psalm 23 may be comforting.

- Encourage families to write cards, emails or send text messages to those who can't attend. If you cannot attend a funeral let the family know you're with them in prayer and in spirit.

- It may be possible to record or livestream a funeral service. Some crematoriums offer this.

- Clergy may be willing to print and share their words along with other tributes used at the service.

These can be emailed or posted to those who could not attend.

- Encourage bereaved families to think about a suitable memorial service at a later date. This could be a big, grand, full service or something very simple.

There are some really useful resources to be found on the Church of England website: www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals

We must remain committed to supporting the bereaved through their journey of grief. We must acknowledge that it's always tough but made more so in the current times. We must endeavour to guide people to the light and peace of God's comforting presence.

When we were deciding what to cover in PCC News, I was initially hesitant about covering bereavement but it is a fact of

life. Hopefully the stories on this page will provide solace or help you support someone who has recently suffered a bereavement.

Grave Talk

The Revd Lydia Avery
Priest in Charge, Upper Tas Valley

"Isn't this a bit morbid? Shouldn't we be trying to lift people's spirits?" may be your first response when you hear that churches are offering Grave Talk every week on Zoom.

There are so many uplifting things on the media to raise our spirits and it's likely that we are all going to them for escapism. However, it doesn't change the reality that our way of life is currently shaped by the fact that we are mortal and trying to deal with a pandemic that has already claimed thousands of lives. So, it wouldn't be at all surprising to find ourselves, from time to time, reflecting on and wanting to talk about death, dying and funerals.

Back in 2015, the Church of England recognised that it isn't easy to talk about death and related issues, and so developed Grave Talk. It offers a range of conversation starters, broken down into various subjects such as

life, society and grief, to be used informally in a relaxed, café-style.

Some of the questions the Upper Tas Valley churches have already discussed include: What is your most memorable death in a film or a book? What would you like to do before you die? What music would you like at your funeral and many more besides...

Grave Talk in the Upper Tas Valley can be accessed via Zoom at 11am on Tuesday mornings. It runs for a month and then begins again as a rolling programme. You will be very welcome to join in – everyone is very welcome – all you need to bring is a cup of coffee!

For more information or to access the Zoom codes, please get in touch with me at vicar.utvb@gmail.com or ring **01953 788227**.



Bereavement continues...

The Revd David Hagan-Palmer
Norfolk Mortality Pathway
Coordination Group

Losing a loved one in 'normal' times is upsetting enough, but the church is currently having to support and guide people through a different landscape of care for the deceased due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Processes for the registration of death have changed and even the very look of a funeral is different. Our churches currently closed mean that burials are graveside only, but even when open again it is likely restrictions on mourner numbers will remain for a while.

In this new landscape, the care and support that the church offers is as important as ever, and remember it is not just about COVID-19 deaths as the natural cycle of life and death continues.

The role of bereavement support

is a specialist one and care should be taken with what is said to those who are grieving. Although a listening ear can still be offered it must be done without comment or trying to 'fix' the grief.

But there are things that the PCC can do to help those who are bereaved and those who support them. It is important that the PCC is aware of the additional challenges that ministers are currently facing and support them through understanding what they are dealing with.

Death registration is currently via telephone, and funeral services held as soon as possible. This means that ministers have less time to prepare for a funeral and of course are unable to visit to support the family.

To keep funerals simple both at the crematorium and graveside, and because mourner numbers are reduced, it is being recommended that families consider a basic

service and then have a fuller memorial when lockdown is over. This will have a later impact on our churches as they meet the needs for an increased number of memorials.

There is also the financial aspects of funerals as the Diocese have confirmed that any minister's and church fees for a reduced funeral and a subsequent memorial service, should be no more than the fee which would have been charged for a single service under more normal circumstances (excluding additional costs such as musicians and church bells). In that way families should not suffer financially by needing to have two separate services.

Once COVID-19 is over the church will be needed to continue to support the bereaved and enable them to grieve properly for their loved ones. This will take time and resources which, as usual, the PCC need to be aware of and be helped with by their church community.

An appreciated role

Some of you may have seen the letter that Bishop Graham sent to funeral directors about how much their role is appreciated at this time. Responses included:

- "Thank you so much for the letter. We really appreciate the kind words and your understanding of what we are facing."

- "It was a much welcome surprise to receive the letter and it has made me feel validated and valued in a way I hadn't realised I needed. This situation is taking its toll on everyone, but I think few

understand the emotional trauma and distress we have to face; it can sometimes feel I am juggling six balls whilst standing on Lego!"

- "How lovely it was to receive this letter from the bishop. Please pass on my thanks to him. We are in extraordinary times, and that he has taken the time to consider us is very much appreciated."

- "When I read this this morning, it melted me. It was greatly appreciated. It was a massive boost to know someone got what we are going through. Got me a bit teary eyed when I read it. At this time, we all need to be there for each other."



Light a candle

Robert Culyer
Parish Funding Support Officer

Lighting a candle can be a helpful way to pray for someone.

An online candle will help you think about someone who has died and pray for all those who miss them.

You can do this by accessing the Light A Candle site: www.dofn.org/candle, but if you don't have computer access you could still light a candle at home. Either way, you can then take a moment to think of the person you knew, and reflect on the memories you have of this person and say thank you to God for their unique life.

Now remember their family and friends, and all those who miss them. Ask God to comfort them and surround them with his love.

A prayer for those who are ill

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Guilt free

Robert Culyer
Parish Funding Support Officer

As we approach summer, we realise that this is the time when churches usually hold many fundraising events such as summer fêtes, afternoon teas and open gardens.

These events usually take months of planning, hours and hours of toil to pull together, and then on the big day the weather lets us down!

Sometimes at the end of a less than successful event, we sit down and say why didn't we all just put £20 in the pot and have saved ourselves all this hard work! I readily admit that the idea behind these events is the sense of community that they build, but in these difficult times perhaps we need to consider just putting the money in the pot for a change this year. Why don't all of us give what we would usually spend at our church fête to our church's fundraising account?

I also wonder how many times we say we would pay not to have to attend an event? Well now you don't have to attend and you can contribute without feeling guilty!

The more ambitious of you could set up 'non-events' from home. Why not give people the chance of not running a marathon? You could draw up non-sponsor sheets! How much would you pay not to run a marathon? How much would you pay not to run the white elephant stall? You could get the whole community to take part, and the best part is that it will relieve the boredom of being at home.

When holding fundraising events in 'normal times' I usually advocate partnering with another good cause. Although you are halving your funds you can usually connect with many more people, and also fulfil our Christian beliefs of serving others.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Below are some examples of the amazing fundraising taking place.



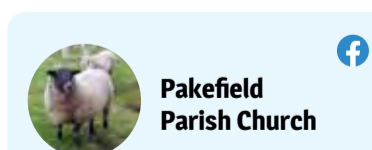
St Mary's Church
@attleboroughch

Our churches continue to work for the good of our community while our buildings are closed. If you're able to give a one-off donation to help with our work please visit <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/ec6fa41a-1875-4866-ba5c-7cacbcad601d> Any amount, however small, is gratefully received!



Norwich Cathedral
@Nrw_Cathedral

Our choristers have each been doing something sponsored in aid of the @FcmRecruit Cathedral Choirs Emergency Fund. Their efforts so far include litter picking, mask making and marathon running! Donate here: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/norwichcathedralchoristers



Pakefield Parish Church

Having had to postpone or cancel our fund-raising events this year may we ask you to consider helping us with a church jar? Any spare change you would have given at our coffee mornings, fetes or events perhaps you could pop in there.



Advertorial

A long-term solution for live-streaming in church

Keith Morris
Network Norfolk

When the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions came into force, audio and visual specialist Darren Butler, owner of south Norfolk based Audio Electronic Design (AED), knew straight away that many churches would be facing a big problem. For over 30 years, AED has supplied audio and audio-visual systems to literally hundreds of churches across East Anglia.

As soon as churches were forced to close their doors in March and live streaming became the hot topic in church circles, Darren started thinking hard about what he could see was going to be an urgent need to provide a more professional, and permanent solution, for churches across the region, and created a cost-effective twin camera system that he says can be adapted to churches big and small. Once set-up, it can provide multiple camera views and angles, yet be controlled simply with a small remote control device and no other operators needed to replicate what much more expensive systems offer.

"The beauty of the system is that it provides up to 16 different shots from just two fixed cameras," said Darren. "They can zoom, pan and tilt and are fully controllable from a small hand-held radio-controlled remote control, that the priest or



a member of the congregation can easily operate. There is no need for camera or control desk operators as all the shots from the cameras are pre-programmed and transition automatically at the press of a button.

"I see this system being a simple long-term solution for those churches which want to stream services but want to do so with as little involvement as possible. It offers a sustainable solution which is both cost-effective and much more engaging for the viewer.

"We use two high-definition cameras in fixed positions, one close-up to the altar and the other one further back in the church to ideally give a wider view of as much of the church as possible. We can include a small TV monitor so that whoever is controlling the system can see what is being broadcast and also a small computer to control the system,

with a joystick if required, unless a church already has one which we can adapt."

Darren says the system can be adapted to suit the needs of everything from a cathedral to a small chapel and, because of his good connections with suppliers, can provide and install it at a very a cost-effective price. He is also working on a smaller single fixed camera solution which can be upgraded at a later date if required. Years of experience means he is also used to installing the equipment discreetly and in line with any historic buildings regulations.

The system can broadcast live online and be recorded and, Darren believes, will also come into its own for events such as weddings.

Contact Darren Butler on **01953 860074** or darren@edsound.co.uk and via their website at audioelectronicdesign.co.uk



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We work on glass dating from the early 14th century to the present day, the repair of casements and ferramenta, supply and installation of window protection. Many of our commissions come direct from PCC's whilst many others are initiated by architects.

To discuss conservation, repair, protection or commissions of stained glass to church windows please contact our studio **01379 677111** www.devlinplummer.co.uk

Receiving donations online has never been more crucial

Gordon Darley
Director of Communications

Being able to receive donations online giving has never been more crucial. Thankfully, it's simple to set up an online giving account, and once you've set up your account you will be able to link it to your church website, A Church Near You profile and social media page making it easy for people to give.

Step 1 – Register with a payment platform/company

Visitors will need to enter their credit or debit card details for you to receive their donations, and so choosing a company who will take those details and process the payment on your behalf is the first step.

Common terminology you may hear and read is that you need a 'payment gateway' and a 'merchant bank account'. You need both, and historically these would have been two different companies, often one an internet-based company and one a financial institution. However, these days most providers offer both elements in one package and to simplify matters the language may not refer to either, instead calling themselves a 'payments platform'.

There are many providers to choose from including:



SumUp (www.sumup.co.uk) who are recommended by Parish Buying (www.parishbuying.org.uk/categories/giving-and-payments/online-giving) – they charge 1.95% per donation and no annual charge up until 31 December 2020. From 1 January 2021 they'll charge an additional fee of £10 per month or £108 paid annually.



Stripe (www.stripe.com) – they charge 1.2% + 20p per donation (if you use the account primarily for donations and not sales) and no annual charge. Their advertised rate is 1.4% + 20p, but once you've registered you can tell them you'll be using them primarily for donations and they'll reduce the rate.



GoCardless (www.gocardless.com) – they charge 1% + 20p per donation, capped at £4. For transactions of £2,000 or more, they charge an additional 0.1% fee on the portion of the transaction above the £2,000 threshold.



If you use **iKnowChurch**, **ChurchDesk** or **ChurchSuite** to manage your church's administration, these platforms offer online giving so I would recommend setting up online giving through them so you have integration between your online giving records and your regular members' information.



MyGivingOnline (www.datadevelopments.co.uk/mygivingonline) from Data Developments – they charge 1.9% + 20p and an annual charge of £15 per month (with a free 30 day trial). Similar to ChurchSuite, MyGivingOnline is a complete online donations management system designed specifically for churches.

The set-up process for each of these is relatively pain free. You will normally need to:

- complete the online application giving your contact details to create the account;
- provide proof of ID from one or more of your PCC members;
- some ask you to provide proof that the bank account you want the donations to be paid into belongs to the church (normally a copy of the bank statement is sufficient) and;
- some may require a link to your website or a copy of your annual accounts.

Once they have completed all of their due diligence checks your application will be approved and you will be able to start taking donations.

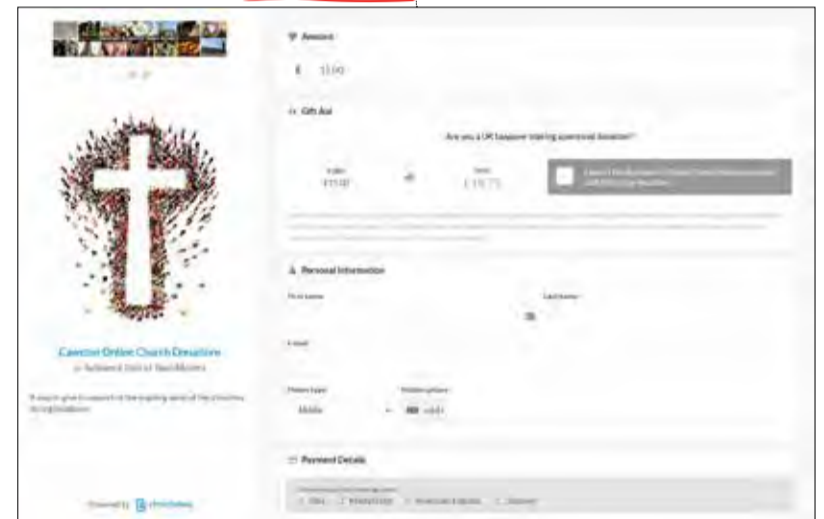
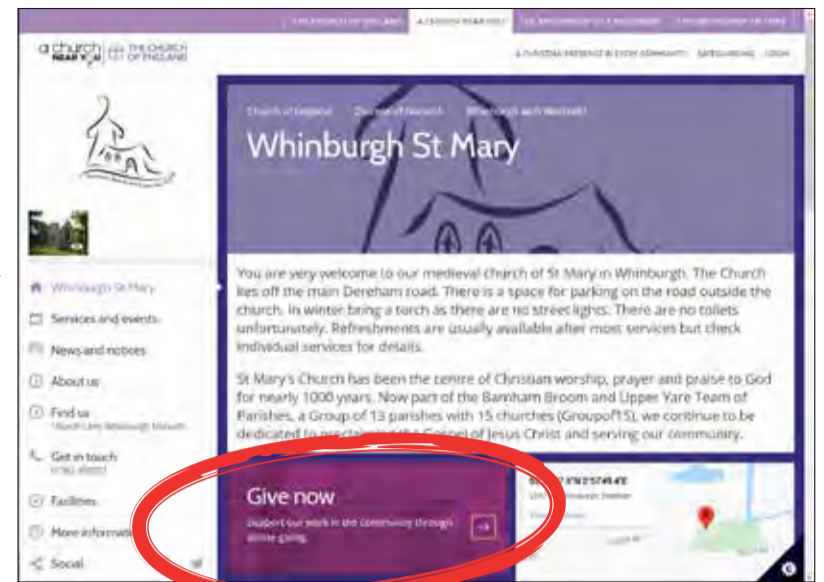
Step 2 – Create an online giving page on your website (optional but worthwhile)

How to create a new web page on your existing website will be different depending on the website system you use, but it should be as simple as clicking 'add a new page' or similar and giving it the name 'Give now' or 'Donate here' for example.

Write some text explaining why you are looking for online donations. Below is some suggested text from the Church of England digital team:

During this difficult time when our church buildings are closed, we are still a church; meeting virtually for prayer services and fellowship, loving our neighbours by offering practical support to the vulnerable, and caring for our communities. The work of our church is reliant on people's generosity, a generosity that is a hallmark of a lived-out faith and a testament to it.

We give to our church in a variety of ways, but with the closure of all our buildings we cannot receive all the gifts that we usually would, so we really need your help now. If you are able to give more at this time, please visit our online donations page by clicking here.



You might also like to record a short video of 30 seconds which will engage visitors in hearing why their donation will make a difference. You can also include the pre-made graphical video created by the national giving team at www.parishresources.org.uk/encouraging-giving-online

Step 3 – Add a giving button to your A Church Near You pages

When logged in to your ACNY church page, click on the pencil by your church name on the left-hand side, then scroll down to the bottom of the 'Edit your Homepage' screen and you will come to the Charity and Donations section. Tick the 'take online donations box' (this will switch on the donation button on your ACNY page) and then complete the boxes in the form. Once done, click 'save'.

More details and a step-by-step guide are at <https://achurchnearyou.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360007655378-Receiving-Donations-on-A-Church-Near-You>

Step 4 – Tell your church members and the local community they can give online

Tell your regular church members and your local communities that they can give online to support you. If you don't spread the word many won't think to look, and I've heard many encouraging stories of those who've printed something in a village magazine or posted to social media and received donations as a direct result.

Why not take a look at what Aylsham Parish Church wrote on their Facebook page? See page 7.

If you'd like to talk about setting up online giving on your benefice website, contact me on **01603 882349** or gordon.darley@dioceseofnorwich.org

A helping hand

Gordon Darley
Director of Communications

As a diocese we want to make online giving as easy as possible for every parish. For some, we're aware that the steps above may be too much. We're also conscious that the Diocese of Norwich website receives many thousands of visitors each month and currently there has been no easy way to give to every church through it.

With the diocese facing a significant drop in Parish Share

income, funds are needed to ensure we can continue to pay clergy.

We've been working behind-the-scenes to set up a diocesan-wide giving platform which will enable anyone to give to any church through the diocese website, in addition to and to compliment what parishes are already doing.

Launching from the beginning of July, the website will have a donate button clearly visible in the top-right which will let visitors select your church, parish or benefice and make a donation. It will be clearly communicated that the money

will go towards your Parish Share contribution – just like when so many gave to your Parish Share via the Archdeacon's Charge fun-run. Any donations we receive will directly reduce your outstanding Parish Share amount and be visible via Parish Share Online.

The button will also appear on your church page on the diocesan website, as well as your page on exploringnorfolkchurches.org

More details about this new functionality will be communicated on our website and in eNews when it launches.

GIVE NOW

Make the most of A Church Near You

Every Church of England church in the country has an A Church Near You (ACNY) page. ACNY is run by the national Church of England digital team and if you search on Google for your church its ACNY page will show near the top of the listings. Last year, ACNY received more than 38 million page views, and more than 80% of ACNY visitors are looking at the site for the first time. This is a huge evangelism

opportunity!

The Church of England digital team are running a one-hour webinar which will take you through key steps to making the most of your ACNY page, including personalising your home page; how to use tags to make your church more visible; creating pages; and more. At the end of the session, there will be an opportunity to ask questions, which will be answered live.

These webinars take place every fortnight during June and July. Visit www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-webinars to book a place.

Well we did not expect that!



Richard Butler
Diocesan Secretary

It was around Wednesday 4 March when my thoughts turned to what might happen to us. I was in Lambeth Palace for a presentation and the only thought of the virus was hand sanitiser. At Diocesan House we introduced that, as well as notices saying 'wash your hands' – how life changed in two weeks.

In that time, we planned how we could have staff working from home to ensure that we could continue providing services to our parishes and priests. Within a very short time all was in place and I hope that you have found that you have still been able to contact us as telephone calls and emails have been forwarded on. The mail has been scanned and sent to staff and Zoom meetings have become the daily norm. I would like to pay tribute to the staff team who have gone above and beyond to ensure it all works for the customer... you.

We have taken advantage of the Government's furlough

scheme and 50% of the staff team have been put onto this Job Retention Scheme at various points which repays the diocese 80% of the staff costs. Savings are being made where we can and projects not started, will now not happen this year. We are indeed not leaving any financial stone unturned to ensure we try and cut back on our expenditure. We still expect we will have a sizeable deficit by Thursday 31 December, but we will do our best to address this as the year goes by.

I smiled when I read a quote which said, "I didn't think the apocalypse would have this much

admin". Accordingly, we have had to adapt how we manage the workload and Zoom has entered our lives in a big way. Nine weeks ago I had never heard of Zoom! The national Church is being asked to help and together we will work towards ensuring that God's work continues across the diocese.

The year will be very demanding and I am delighted that so many parishes have risen to the challenge by keeping the share money coming in; knowing we have the priests' stipends to pay and housing costs to cover.

THANK YOU and bless you for all you are doing.

Here to help...

To speak to a member of the Diocesan staff team contact:

01603 880853

info@dioceseofnorwich.org

Useful websites

Church of England COVID-19 guidance

Read the regularly updated guidance for all churches including links to resources, liturgy and prayers

www.DofN.org/coronavirus

Previous editions of PCC News

Download and read previous editions in PDF format

www.DofN.org/pccnews

Grant Finder

A free online funding website for local parishes to help you find grants and funding

www.DofN.org/grantfinder

Diocesan Registry

For advice on legal matters

www.DofN.org/registry

ChurchCare

Lots of information on caring for church building, contents, churchyards and developing your church building

www.churchcare.co.uk

Church Legacy

Quick and easy access to essential information for individuals considering leaving a gift in their Will to their local church

www.churchlegacy.org.uk

Parish Resources

Information from the National Stewardship & Resources team: resources to support all aspects of stewardship, administration and church management

www.parishresources.org.uk

PCC News is sent to all PCC members in the Diocese of Norwich. In addition to stories and top tips from parishes, it highlights information you need to be aware of in your role as a church charity trustee.

To unsubscribe contact data@dioceseofnorwich.org or 01603 882322.

Maintaining youth and children's work online

Jonathan Richardson
Children, Youth & Families
Development Officer

In these unprecedented times it is maybe the young who are most able to adapt to the forced use of technology to stay connected. The challenge comes when we think how we as adults can connect and support young people in their faith at this time. We have spent so long avoiding connecting online through social media because of all its safeguarding pitfalls that we might now be in a position where we have no way of connecting. For many of the groups I have spoken with the main challenge has been finding ways to contact young people to let them know what resources and activities are available to them – for many it has involved sending handwritten cards, dropping activities through the door or trying to connect through parents – but they have been bombarded with emails from schools and organisations trying to get their



attention so we often get lost in the long list of unread emails.

It is encouraging to see how many churches have been able to adapt and adopt online tools for streaming services via YouTube and Facebook or doing church via Zoom, Teams or Google Hangouts – all of these methods are familiar to young people and many will find it easier to engage online than maybe they did physically in your buildings. As we come out of the

lockdown we need to make sure we hold on to some of these new ways of working. One of the great things about streaming is that other people can catch up later – and that includes seeing what others are doing to borrow ideas. Here are a few you might want to check out.

Kidz Klub at home

Mid Norfolk Kidz Klub have gone online with regular live streams and recorded sessions with activities,

challenges, Bible stories and reflections for young people on their YouTube channel.

www.youtube.com/channel/UCcxdQIPDuETRF6wDdqvIKrw

Sports Factory

The Diocese of Norwich's Sport Ministry team have been busy putting together all sorts of prayer, reflection, Bible study and fitness activities that can be used with all ages: www.sportsfactory.org.uk

Here are just a few the other resources we think have been most helpful:

Church of England:

guidance for the safe use of video-calling with young people. www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/Video%20Calling.pdf

Messy Church at home

www.DofN.org/messy-church

Prayer Spaces at home

www.DofN.org/prayer-spaces

Youth for Christ – Youth Work Online

A collection of resources covering safeguarding, best practice and resources, including video discussions, downloadable resources and ideas.

www.yfc.co.uk/youthworkonline

Bringing a smile to people's faces

Here is a really lovely story of someone supporting their local community. Even when life starts to return to some form of normality there is no reason why you could not do something like this in your parish. This is a great opportunity for our parishes to build and be the centre of their local communities.

Barbara Worsley
Mundsley

In these unprecedented times of self-isolating this simple idea helps us to nurture a feeling of belonging.

I erected four boards around our village with the permission from our parish council. Each board has four A4 posters, which include a riddle, quiz questions and positive/

inspiring quotations, which I change daily.

Following its success, I wanted to share the idea with others in the hope that it may help us all to feel more connected. This is a way of showing that although we may not meet, people do care and want to reach out to each other.

The aim is to provide a welcome break from the daily COVID-19 information in the hope that it will

bring a smile to people's faces and particularly help those struggling to cope by letting them know that they are not alone.

Another aim is to bring a little bit of fun whilst walking. Not everyone is online or has a smartphone, so this is more accessible.

If you would like any help or advice in doing something similar, please feel free to email me: barbaraf.worsley@gmail.com