

ST GEORGE'S URC, MORPETH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7th April 2019

1. OPENING DEVOTIONS

These were led by Teresa Benkhabebe-House, Church Secretary. The meeting was chaired by Lorna Anderson, Elder, who welcomed 54 members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Carol Dixon, Donald Dixon, Morag Stead, Linda Glascott, Nancy & Hamish Rennie, Laurence Benkhabebe-House, Margaret Brock, Stuart Brock, Patricia Gatherum, Aline Baldie, Julie Vermaas, Margaret Miller, Ossie Dennis, Freda Pagan, Madeline Cleverley, Adele Elkin, and Elizabeth Rowlands.

3. AOB

There was one item from Gillian Irvine.

4. NEWS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

News was exchanged about Linda Glascott's daughter, Margaret Miller and Freda Pagan. Revd Alison Mills thanked all those who have been visiting her mother, Freda.

All those mentioned and their families were remembered in prayer.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM HELD ON 15th April 2018

The minutes of the last AGM held on 15th April 2018 were agreed and signed.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

7. REPORTS

Stephanie Robson was thanked for her work collating the reports and producing the AGM booklet.

Questions were invited for each report.

Church Secretary	No comments.
Church Lettings Report	No comments.
Managers' Report	No comments.
Social Convenor's Report	No comments.
Junior Church Report	Sue Elliott, Junior Church Leader, thanked Rev Dr Carla Grosch-Miller and Rev David Grosch-Miller for preparing Josh and Martin Benkhabebe-House for baptism and confirmation. And thanked all the Junior Church leaders for their work during the year.
Midweek Service	Sue Elliott encouraged people to come forward to lead worship at the Midweek Services. She reported that Roy Barrel, who is mentioned in her report and regularly attended the Midweek Services, had died suddenly last Sunday. Members were asked to pray for Roy and his family.
Cradle Roll Report	No comments.

St George's Church Orchestra Report	No comments.
Ladies Coffee Club	No comments.
Lunchtime Concerts	No comments.
Knitter, natter, Craft and Chatter	No comments.
St George's URC Ceilidh Band	No comments.
Tea Time Talks	Jared Johnson commented that his report stated that donations and numbers for the Tea Time Talks were down last year, however he shared the encouraging news that audience numbers for the talks had recently picked up, i.e. 60 plus in attendance.
Badminton Reports	No comments.
Table Tennis Club	No comments.
Afternoon Bowls Club	No comments.
Evening Bowls Club	No comments.
Morpeth & Mitford Churches Together – Refugees and Asylum Seekers Support	No comments.
Christian Aid Representative Report	No comments.
4 th Morpeth St George's Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers	No comments.
Morpeth Baden Powell Scout Group	No comments.
St George's Community Players	No comments.
Bible Fellowship Group	No comments.

The annual reports were formally agreed by the meeting.

8. GENERAL MATTERS
9.1 Church Membership

Josh and Martin Benkhabebe-House will be baptised and confirmed on Easter Sunday (21st April). Both Josh and Martin also wish to become church members. The Elders have agreed to them being received into church membership. The Church Meeting was asked if they wish to welcome them into membership; this was unanimously agreed.

9. APPOINTMENTS

These are listed below. The following Elders to be re inducted were proposed by the Chair, having been endorsed at the Elders Meeting held on 11th March 2019: Vivien Bennett, Chris Rowlands and Karin Jackson. These nominations were accepted and carried by the meeting.

Christine Richardson has served as Elder for five years and wishes to step down. Christine was thanked for her service as Elder.

Other appointments, as follows, were agreed.

Appointment	Officer
Elders	Re inducted for a further term: Vivien Bennett Karin Jackson Chris Rowlands
Church Secretary	Teresa Benkhabebe-House
Treasurer	David Calcraft
Clerk to Managers	Andrew Hamnett
Social Convenor	Gillian Irvine
Catering Team	Joan Cooper, Stephanie Robson, Patricia Gatherum and Sarah Cleverley
Gift Aid Secretary	Linda Glascott
Freewill Offering	Linda Glascott
Property Manager	Neil Robson
Stewarding Rota	Andy and Sarah Cleverley
Hall Lettings Officer	Joann Evans
Heating Officers	Robin Cooper, Andy Cleverley, George Brown
Liaison Rep to Managers	Andy Cleverley

Auditor	Linda Glascott
Junior Church Leader	Sue Elliott
Crèche Organisers – ad hoc basis	Patricia Gatherum and Margaret Brock
Sunday Tea and Coffee Rota	Laurence and Teresa Benkhabebe-House
Flower Committee Convenor	Dorothy Luke
Orchestra Co-ordinators	Christine Oakes and Andrew Hamnett
Ceilidh Band Co-ordinators	Jared Johnson and Gillian Armstrong
Transport Officer	Vivien Bennett
Organists	Ken Irvine and Andrew Hamnett
Newsletter Editor	Stephanie Robson
Church Fair Organisers	Lorna Anderson and Patricia Gatherum
Health and Safety Consultant	Ken Anderson
Christian Aid	Margaret Johnson
Commitment for Life	Sarah Cleverley
Prayer Handbook	Sarah Cleverley
Housekeepers	Joan Cooper, Sarah Cleverley and Mary Kelly

10. **A.O.B.**

11.1 **Notice of forthcoming social events**

(a) Sunday 14th April at 6pm Early evening concert, in aid of Church Funds, to be given by Iona Brown and Alexandra Raikhlina – tickets £8 each and include tea or coffee and cake served during the interval.

(b) Murder Mystery Evening, Saturday 11th May. Tickets are available now.

(c) Plant Sale, Saturday 25th May

There being no further business the meeting closed with prayer at 12.50pm.

Date of next meeting: 14th July 2019

CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2019

At 31st December 2019 the Annual Return to the URC head office and Northern Synod showed our membership to be 114. There were four losses during the year, made up of two deaths, one member who moved away and one member who transferred their membership. The following deaths were recorded: Hamish Rennie and Elizabeth Rowlands. The death of Ann Harper, an Adherent, was also recorded, as was the death of Isobel Rutherford, a friend of St George's. Thanks were given for their lives and witness.

We welcomed the following into church membership: Doreen Hunt, Katherine Smailes, Rev Matthew Previtt, Joshua Benkhabebe-House and Martin Benkhabebe-House.

The number of serving Elders is 14. At last year's AGM Vivien Bennett, Karin Jackson and Chris Rowlands were re-inducted for a further term.

Junior Church has five children who regularly attend. During the year there were two infant baptisms: Theo James Ireson and Chloe Victoria Matthews. Two Junior Church members were baptised and confirmed at Easter: Joshua and Martin Benkhabebe-House.

There are 94 children and young people across all age groups in the uniformed organisations, comprising of Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers.

At the end of August we were delighted to welcome Rev Julian Sanders as our new minister. We also welcomed Julian's family – Louise, his wife, and their three sons Elliott, Ollie and Noah. As well as St George's, Julian also serves Widdrington and Great Bavington URCs, and the South East Northumberland Ecumenical Area (SENEA).

***Teresa Benkhabebe-House
Church Secretary***

Minister's Report Annual Church Meeting

At the time of writing this report I have just passed the 6th month anniversary of my ministry with you. In that time I have tried to balance the demands made on my time between those whose voices are heard loudly and clearly, and those who are sometimes overlooked by nature of their quietness. I have not visited as many as I would have liked, but have met some amazing people who are committed to their church and their community and who express the love of God simply and generously. I thank you for the welcome that my family and I have received, you have made the first six months easy and enjoyable for us.

The question you might ask of me is the same question I am constantly asking of myself: 'What have you achieved?' The answer to that is always twofold.

The first answer is always that ministry is measured not by what I achieve but by what God achieves through me. I fool myself to think that I can grow the church, or give faith to people, for only God can do that. My task is to remain obedient and to abide in Christ and I hope as time goes on I achieve that more and more in my daily living.

The second answer is that I have purposely held back from 'achieving' anything in these first months of ministry, in order that I might get a better understanding of what God is already doing here at St George's and in the community. I am pleased to see so many of you serving the church in various and committed ways and I thank you for all you do.

In the coming months I hope to start to build upon the work already being done and to introduce some new styles and more opportunities for worship. We hosted the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service, and there seems to be a desire among the ministers in the town to develop regular opportunities to come together to worship. I hope to develop some opportunities for deepening faith through discussion and fellowship. The Advent course was well supported, and I am looking forward to our Lent course using the film 'Casablanca' to explore the Easter story. And I hope to build on the links with the Methodist church as we grow together and support each other more in ministry – with hopefully more sharing of events and working together to develop the already successful Messy Church.

I have been pleased to be involved in some of the schools in the area. All Saints invited me to come and talk to three of their classes about what a minister does in the church and what the gospels are all about, and I have taken a number of assemblies there which I hope will continue to develop and grow our links with that school. I also led a couple of assemblies at Morpeth First School, and a communion service at Silvas Court, and I hope to strengthen these relationships and others in the community over the next 12 months.

I know some of you are struggling to keep on serving as you have faithfully done so over these past years. Either through health and physical limitations or just weariness. God wants none of us to be overwhelmed by what we do, but that in serving him we may have life to the full and be filled with joy. When the friends of Jesus were struggling with the task before them Jesus offers them these words of encouragement: 'I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.' Our task is not to grow fruits (only God does that) but to remain in Christ. I pray that we all may grow ever nearer to Christ in the year to come, so that we may be fruitful and come to see what God can achieve through us.

Julian

HALL LETTINGS REPORT

Bookings this year have fluctuated, with a lot of new users for one or 2 dates, and the mid-Northumberland chorus moving in from the Chantry as a long term booking. The Scouts sadly had to close their group having run out of youngsters to make it worth their while, and the meditation group have moved to the Library where they now have a room for free.

I would like to thank Susan, Patricia and Lorna for their help in opening up the Church through the year.

Joann Evans

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGERS

2019

As always, the Managers have had a busy year: at least until the Autumn of 2019 we were looking after the needs of two quite demanding buildings and ensuring that those using the church are in a safe environment. We welcomed our new Minister in the Autumn, who has settled into chairing the Managers' Meetings with remarkable speed. The Clerk would like to thank all our managers for their hard work this last year and to Laurence for chairing our meetings until the Autumn. Later in the year we will enter a period of change in terms of personnel, and I would particularly want to thank Neil Robson and Joann Evans for all their contributions as well as John Muckle and George Brown for their monthly fire-alarm testing.

Church Property: A substantial old building requires a lot of attention and Neil Robson, Robin Cooper and many others have done a great job in ensuring that we continue to be able to occupy a building that is secure against the weather (of which we have had a great deal!) and which is (for the most part) warm and welcoming.

The newly re-furbished lift remains a little temperamental, and there was an accident earlier in the year which led to one of the visitors to the church plant sale being injured when the lift stopped a few inches above the floor level. The managers have now authorised warning notices to be put up. Robin Cooper has been tireless in tracing lift faults with Stannah; used with care the lift should continue to give good service. Amongst other property matters, the new kitchen in the old choir vestry has settled in after some teething problems and is well used for events in the sanctuary area. The hall kitchen has a new hot-water heater, which should prove a lot safer. We have had a number of plumbing problems this year, including a major leak early in 2020 caused by a defective cistern stopcock valve, and we have also had several leaks caused by roofing problems.

In preparation for the arrival of the new minister, the managers sanctioned the re-plastering and painting of the front and back staircases. The vestry has also been re-decorated at the same time as the downstairs kitchen refurbishment, and some older furniture was removed to give better space utilisation. After some dissatisfaction with the lighting in the church and the hall had been expressed, and given the problems experienced with the previous lighting system, the managers decided to introduce LED-based lighting, reducing the electricity demand and providing a much better level of illumination, both for readers at the lectern and musicians and preachers on the dais. A little over 40% of the cost of this conversion has come from generous church members making special gifts - we are very grateful for this. Other annoying electrical problems have surfaced from time to time: the CCTV system at the back of the church suddenly ceased operating and the managers are very grateful to Donald Dixon, aided by Martin, who have managed to resuscitate the equipment at minimal cost. The entry buzzers have also had their moment in the sun.

Looking to the future, the plan to open up the vestibule of the church and provide glass doors is now moving into its final phase. After a few delays, we obtained planning permission from the Council and have now satisfied all the conditions. A builder has been identified and work should start in June 2020. On a more minor but nonetheless annoying note, the demolition work on the other side of the Terrace car-park led to an infestation of pigeons in the tower, generating a rather repellent mess outside the front door. Happily they seem to have moved off to other quarters.

Earlier in the year, the decision was taken to sell the old manse at 3 Riverview, which had been empty since the Forsters moved. It became clear that the costs of renovating this manse to an acceptable standard of thermal insulation and decoration would be very considerable, and the absence of any garden other than the back yard would make the house unattractive to ministers with young families.

The old manse has now been sold, with the church and Trust emerging on the positive side of the ledger, after the purchase of a very pleasant extended house in Lancaster Park.

Housekeeping: One consequence of the installation of chairs in the Sanctuary is that there is now a much more flexible space that can be used for all sorts of events. However, the managers would want to emphasise that users who move the chairs are required to put them back at least approximately as they were; we do not employ anyone to do this. Similar strictures apply to the Drysdale Room. Upstairs, the number of chairs in the hall has been reduced following the suggestion of Jared Johnson so that they are no longer stacked and can be used for seating.

Social Activities: The church has an astonishing number of social activities that help cement its position in the community of Morpeth. These activities include concerts, coffee mornings, the annual fair, the Christmas card sale, the now established Christmas Tree festival, Heritage Day, evening events such as the Christmas Social, the murder-mystery evening and the domino drive, and much else beside. The Autumn Fair attracted a very large crowd this year, coinciding as it did with the Morpeth Food Fair. Gillian Irvine does a tremendous job in putting this programme together, but the success of these events depends on a host of people being prepared to lend a hand in a vast variety of ways. To all of these people the church owes a great deal of gratitude.

Stewarding and related matters: some additional large-print hymn books have been obtained: these are becoming scarce with the hymn book becoming steadily older. A consequence of this ageing is that ministers are seeking to use newer hymns in services that are not in our hymn book, and this has presented quite a serious problem in terms of copyright. Ken Irvine undertook to rationalise the church's interaction with the multifarious owners of copyright for modern hymns and after a prodigious effort has managed to devise, with Christine Oakes' help, a system that will allow us to use hymns whose copyright is held by at least some centralised organisations. The managers are very grateful to Ken for undertaking what proved to be a mammoth task.

Hall Lettings: After a number of years looking after hall letting, Joann has announced that pressure of professional work has meant that she will need to demit this responsibility later in the year. I would want to express my own gratitude to Joann who has invested a lot of time and energy in discussions with prospective lessees and with updating the leasing documentation. Letting itself remains quite buoyant: the proposed demolition of Storey Park Community Centre and the closure for refurbishment of the St James' Community Centre may well lead to additional business with some of the displaced groups being re-housed at St George's. The website has also proved to be a useful selling tool.

The Website: The website was extraordinarily busy earlier in the year, but now seems to have settled down again. The managers were delighted to learn that Teresa had taken on the Facebook page for the church; this is another rapidly increasing mode whereby the church can advertise its presence in the town. It is interesting that for both outlets, pictures are highly attractive in terms of usage; if you have interesting pictures please let Teresa and the Clerk have a sight. One recent innovation on the website is the provision of a monthly blog by the minister: this has been commented on very favourably by a number of website users, and is a welcome new feature.

Andrew Hamnett, Clerk to the Managers

Social Convener's Annual Report 2019

Once again St. George's has enjoyed a very varied programme of events during 2019. This has helped us to maintain our community profile within Morpeth. Many of these events are flagged up in the reports of the church groups that organised them but I have endeavoured to give a flavour of our outreach in the community plus details of some of our charity support which, with the help of numerous volunteers, I have been involved with. I have also included, where possible, financial details.

Please see other reports for further details of activities and fund raising events including the Ladies Coffee Club Domino Drive and Supper and the Ladies Flower Club Annual Coffee Morning. Apologies to anyone I may have inadvertently omitted to mention.

As well as the eight Tea Time Talks and nine Lunchtime Concerts, see other reports, the following took place.

In **January** we held our annual Managers' Coffee Morning raising £723-40 for church funds

March saw the Community Players Spring Production and the Final Prize Winners' Concert of the Wansbeck Music Festival which sadly has now been disbanded.

In **April** an evening concert was given by Iona Brown and Sasha Raikhlina from Royal Northern Sinfonia which raised £490 for church funds. The Artist's fees were paid by the Lunchtime Concerts.

May was a particularly busy month when we held the Annual Plant Sale raising £1,612 for church funds, once again an increase on previous years. Many thanks to 25+ of our church members and friends who worked so hard to make this an outstanding event. Not quite the £2k we had hoped for but there is always next year!!!

The Community Players entertained us with a Murder Mystery with Supper Evening raising £767-60 and the Bewick Orchestra gave a Charity Concert where the Church hire fee was paid for by donation.

In **June** the Mid Northumberland Chorus gave their Annual Summer Concert raising funds for the Chorus and their chosen Charity.

A 'Strawberry Event' which took place in **July** raised, after expenses, £373 which financed forthcoming charity events later in the year plus a donation of £175+ to the church.

In **September** we once again opened our doors for Morpeth's Heritage Day.

In **October** we had our annual Coffee Morning with Charity Card and Gift Sale. This was another popular event much appreciated by local and national charities and raising £1,056 for their charities.

£238 for the church by the sale of refreshments and greetings cards and we also had the Church Annual Fair which raised the amazing sum of £2,111-20.

November saw the St George's Community Players Production take place. This was followed by a Remembrance Concert by Musica Johannis with Refreshments which raised £633 equally divided between the Charities Marie Curie and Help for Heroes. Church hire was paid for by the earlier Strawberry Event. The ever popular Church Social 'sailed forth' raising £1,089-10 - another excellent 'home-grown' effort.

In **December** St George's hosted and helped organise the Multiple Sclerosis Research and Relief Fund's third Christmas Tree Festival which built on and proved even more popular than last year's. This was a two day event when 160 children from local nurseries visited the church on the Friday enjoying a programme of stories, games and songs followed by a day for the general public on the Saturday when Father Christmas was on hand. This year it was decided to make this an 'awareness' event not a fundraising opportunity. However, over £1,000 was donated to help continue the work of MSRRF. The hire of the sanctuary was supported by our Strawberry Event earlier in the year.

During 2019 the Church Library raised £303-50 and the sale of greetings cards £420

Please keep supporting and donating paperbacks and jigsaws.

Gillian Irvine 20/01/2020

Junior Church Report 2020

There have been so many monumental changes in Junior Church over the past few months involving both our young people and the leaders. We had to say a very sad farewell to Sue who has been such an incredible leader for over 20 years, as she moves onto significant pastures new. Both leaders and young people alike miss her greatly and the energy and dedication she put into making Junior Church what it is today.

Janet and I are now co-leaders, I am hoping to learn from Janet's wealth of experience and wonderful creativity while aspiring to use some transferrable skills from my day job! We have a strong team, Barbara, Joan and Christine continue to all be invaluable team players and work hard behind the scenes to provide a good spiritual foundation for our young people through a wide variety of fun and engaging activities every week.

We have also seen significant changes as far as our Junior Church membership is concerned. Josh and Martin, as we all know, were Baptised and Confirmed having worked very hard with Dr. Carla Grosch-Miller in the lead up. It was an incredibly important day and all of us in Junior Church were bursting with pride for the boys on their special day.

With the arrival of Julian came the newest addition to our Junior Church family - Noah. Noah fit in immediately and is now a firm friend to the other regular members, we all love his energy, ideas, valuable contributions and imagination! Heidi, Molly, Daniel (despite the occasional football fixture) and Emily all continue to brighten up our Sunday mornings with their presence and we've also had the pleasure of William when he can make it. Currently all our young people have their lessons together as the age range is not too wide (7-9 years) however we regularly assess the situation to ensure every child is benefitting as much as possible from their Junior Church time. There is always a variety of activities prepared to cater for the different needs and skills that the children have.

At the start of each session we share our news, good and bad, from the previous week and then take it to God in prayer. We also continue to join together on the first Sunday of each month to share communion while the congregation are doing the same in Church.

We recently had a fun-filled Christmas party upstairs in the hall to which we invited the Methodist junior church; strong ties are being created between the two groups of children through Nativities, Messy Church and letter writing (following in Paul's footsteps!).

We are in the process of preparing a presentation for Family Church time to make you all aware of how we spend your very generous donations to the Junior Church collection. In the meantime, rest assured that the children have come up with some very thoughtful and generous ways on how to best use it including the ongoing sponsorship of a child and regular donations to local food banks. We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge and heartfelt thank you to Karin Jackson who has, after many years, handed over the reigns as Junior Church treasurer, thank you Karin for all the hours you have spent in this role!

Janet and I would like to say an enormous thank you to our fellow Junior Church leaders and our Methodist counterparts for their unfailing dedication in ensuring we do the best for the spiritual development of our youngest members.

Thanks also to our Junior Church members for continuing to attend and their willingness to learn, their eagerness to participate and the lovely relationships they have fostered.

Finally, thanks to all of you, the Church congregation for your continued support of our Junior Church children and leaders.

Julie Vermaas

CRECHE REPORT

A crèche is provided in the Drysdale room as and when required and one is always available when there is a baptism.

Anyone wishing to be involved in providing this please discuss with either of us.

Patricia Gatherum and Margaret Brock

Cradle Roll Report 2019-2020

We've had three baptisms in the last year, all after the arrival of our new minister, Julian.

Theo James Ireson in September, a first baby for Amber and Tobias.

Chloe Victoria Matthews in November. Chloe's big sister Eleanor had been baptised at St. George's in 2016.

Louis Joe Warnes was baptised in January to start the new year off in a positive way.

These baptisms often give a huge boost to the congregation numbers for that day. Whether we will see the families again or not it has to be seen as a positive as the parents have chosen to come to St. George's for this special occasion in their child's life.

Cradle Roll services continue four times a year. Possibly our Nativity service is the best attended. The numbers of attendees have been on the low side this last year but we will look at it this year and see if we need to make changes.

We do still have Louise coming to Cradle Roll services and she brings her friend Leah. Louise will be 14 in June. At the last Nativity service Louise's sister came along with her baby boy, only a few months old.

He may be a baptism in the future.

My thanks go to Vivien Bennett, Margery Tate, Susan Sanderson and Ace Oldroyd for all their help with the service and music. Thanks also to our minister, Julian, he became involved with Cradle Roll services as soon as he arrived at St. George's, thank you Julian.

We put our trust in God that numbers will increase or we will find another way to involve the babies, children and their families.

Sue Rutherford

MIDWEEK SERVICE REPORT 2019 -2020

Our services on Wednesday lunchtime continue, except when there is a midweek concert of course. Our attendances vary from three to fourteen, happened once, although an average would probably be around 5 to 8 people. It is mainly our own members but we do have some occasional visitors.

During this years week of Prayer for Christian Unity our Wednesday service attendance was increased by 6 visitors. They came from the Baptist and Anglican Churches in Morpeth. One gentleman has continued to attend on Wednesdays, when he can.

We extended our opening times in July and August 2019 as we did the previous year. It became apparent that we had more visitors in July than August in both years. I took these findings to an elders meeting and it has been decided to have the Church open in June and July this year as a trial. We will open from 10.30am for visitors, tea and coffee will be available, the service will be 12.30 to 1pm as usual. It has happened that some visitors stay for the service. One Wednesday last year a group of three adults visited and stayed for the service. Three adults and Teddy, a little white dog. Teddy was very well behaved, this does prove that St. George's URC is dog-friendly.

Nearer the time I will be looking for volunteers, 2 each week please.

My thanks goes to all those who have lead Wednesday worship.

Margery Tate, Carol Dixon, Margaret Brock, Suzanne Hamnett,

Andrew Hamnett and Rev Julian Sanders. Julian got involved straight away with leading Wednesday worship so thank you Julian.

A huge thank you to Andrew for playing piano for us on Wednesdays and particularly for putting up with my lack of knowledge of music.

There is a change I have to announce, for sometime we have thought about a calling ourselves something different, something more catchy perhaps. We have decided not to reinvent the wheel and copy St.Mark's URC Amble, with Alison's permission, and rename Midweek Services

WOW

WORSHIP ON WEDNESDAYS

All are welcome at WOW

Sue Rutherford

St George's Orchestra Report February 2020

St. George's Orchestra or SGURC is a friendly, flexible, adaptable group who play for Morning Worship once a month also becoming involved with the Social and wider activities. We have a list of about 20 regular players and usually between 10 and 13 are available.

We are fortunate to have a wide variety of instrumentalists available with varying levels of ability and experience. We variously belong to St.George's Church, Morpeth Methodist, St Robert's RC, Trinity Gosforth, Wideopen, Cobweb Orchestra, Society of Recorder Players and more.

At present we have (when available) in the Brass section 1 tuba, 2 trombones, a French horn or trumpet.

Woodwind: 1 Bassoon, 3 clarinets, 1 alto sax, 3 flutes.

Strings: 3 violins, 1 viola and guitar. Some of our players also double on other instruments including recorders and tenor saxophones.

A band of 9 players provided music for The World Day of Prayer 2019, held at the Methodist Church, and written by the women of Slovenia. We like to provide some extra colour to the service by including some Slovenian music and to accompany the singing.

Small groups have also provided music for Bavington's Garden Party in June, Hauxley's Carol service in December and at Wideopen URC.

A highlight of this year was playing for our new minister Julian's Induction service in August. It was lovely also to welcome son Elliot playing his French horn. We had a great turnout of 15 players that afternoon.

Many thanks to Susan Sanderson, who again hosted the summer Playalong sessions in the Horsley room where we welcomed a number of new faces, made new friends and made a contribution to church funds. Beginners were welcomed and some tried playing new instruments as well as some which had not been played for some years.

Thanks also to our pianists Ken and Andrew for their good humoured support for our flexible band.

To all who play many thanks for your support, enthusiasm, friendship, and company.

Finally if you play an instrument and would like to join us please get in touch.

We rehearse for one hour before the service at 9.30am. As well as accompanying the hymns, we play music before and after worship, also during the offering. (I do try to have the music ready a few days in advance if you need time to practice beforehand.)

We are all then ready for a welcome coffee and chat afterwards!

Christine Oakes (Orchestra Coordinator)

St George's Ladies Coffee Club Co-ordinators report 2019/2020

The Ladies Coffee Club has had another happy year. At our AGM in April Suzanne Hamnett retired from being co-ordinator and Sarah Cleverley from being treasurer. Sarah agreed to take over from Suzanne and Linda Glascott agreed to be the club's treasurer.

At the AGM the club agreed to give £1500 to church funds and £300 to "Contact". It was also decided to use some of the remaining club funds to purchase an artificial Christmas Tree and lights for church and a small table to replace one that had gone missing so that there is now 25 tables for use at the various functions which happen at church.

Our numbers have fallen slightly since last year and we now have 33 members. Sadly, one of members, Nora Fletcher died in December. Our meetings have been very well attended and the groups have provided a varied programme.

The following are details of our activities so far this year: -

Tuesday 17th September 2019

Our first meeting was held in the church where the 21 members who attended were able to sit and chat and enjoy refreshments provided and served by group 2.

Saturday 5th October 2019

St George's Autumn Fair. Our cake and preserves stall raised £161.90. Thanks to all coffee club members who helped on the day and provided cakes etc. for the stall.

Tuesday 15th October 2019

Freda Thomson gave an interesting talk on "The Swinging Sixties". What a lot of change there was in that decade! More women working so convenience foods such as Vesta curry and angel delight made an appearance. Self-service stores were opened. Colour television was first introduced in 1967. Just to name a few things that she mentioned.

Tuesday 19th November 2019

The People's Kitchen was the subject of our November talk. Mary Kelly was our speaker assisted by Christine Richardson. The meeting was very well attended with 33 guests and members. Mary gave a very interesting talk about the People's Kitchen in Newcastle which helps the disadvantaged and homeless. Mary and Christine are both volunteers there. Food and friendship are at the heart of the service.

Thanks to the generosity of the members Ladies Coffee Club Mary and Christine were able to return to the People's Kitchen with donations of clothing and toiletries.

Saturday 7th December 2019

Christmas

Coffee morning in conjunction with St George's Flower Committee. The Christmas tree festival was taking place in the church at the same time. A staggering £887 was raised. Thanks to everyone that made this such a successful event.

Tuesday 14th January 2020

Our

New Year's lunch was held at The Waterford Lodge this year. Twenty-three club members enjoyed a two-course carvery meal. A big thank you to Linda Glascott for arranging this.

Tuesday 21st January 2020

Rhona

Dunn came to talk about "Contact" (Morpeth Mental Health Group). We heard how it was started and the work it is doing now to support people with mental health problems. Last year there was great concern that it may have to close due to loss of funding but thanks to the generosity of local people and organisations enough money was raised for Contact to continue. Rhona specifically thanked St George's Church and the Ladies Coffee Club for their support.

As I am writing this report in January we look forward to our February and March meetings, our AGM in April, our summer lunch in May and of course the Domino Drive in February.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported our events and made them so successful. A huge thank you to Suzanne for being our co-ordinator and to Linda for taking over the role of treasurer.

Sarah Cleverley Co-ordinator January 2020

Lunchtime Concerts Report

There were nine Lunchtime Concerts in 2019 with audience numbers continuing to increase with an average attendance of 150 peaking at 173.

Once again we have endeavoured to provide a varied and interesting programme of music.

Highlights this year have included visits by:-

The Virtuoso Jazz Trio – always a firm favourite.

Students of KEVI who perform for us just before their final music exams at school.

Richard Pinkstone – Royal College of Music and Scottish Opera.

The Bottle Bank Band with Stuart Hardy,

A string and woodwind ensemble from The Royal Northern Sinfonia

Bradley Creswick former Leader of The Royal Northern Sinfonia

David Hedley – Royal College of Music with David Murray

Valerie Reid – English National Opera and Elizabeth Browell

Abbey Strings with Jessica Graham and Karen Hague after which complimentary drinks, mulled wine, shortbread and mince pies were served

There were 42 sponsors and many of our audience took advantage of the special offer price of 4 tickets for £10. This ensures that there are finances in place at the beginning of each series.

Total admissions income and sponsorship from concerts		£3,724
Expenses	Payment to Artists	£3000
	Piano tuning x 2	£100
	Hire of church	£400
	Refreshments and expenses	£166-25
	Total	£3,666-25

Tea and coffee sales were £382 all of which went to church funds.

The Lunchtime concerts also contributed £150 for urgent piano repairs and £192 to pay for the new lightweight ramp for the dais.

Evening Charity Concerts were underwritten to the tune of £350, details of which can be found in the Social Convener's report.

We continue to be indebted to all the volunteers from our church who ensure that these events run smoothly. In particular the loyal ladies on admission and serving refreshments. We couldn't function without them. Our continued thanks to Brian Priestley for his excellent critiques for the Morpeth Herald which help to promote the concerts.

Thank you also to the strong men who assist each month to put the piano on and off the dais and to everyone who supports these concerts.

Gillian and Ken Irvine

St George's URC

Knitter, Natter, Craft and Chatter coffee group Report for 2019.

We have had a very busy year. Our membership numbers remain the same at 15-20. Our activities continue to be focussed on helping others. Our members are generous with materials as well as time. It would be interesting to know how much wool we have used! We have continued with a number of projects from past years

Octopus for the RVI baby unit. Poppies for the British Legion. Blankets for Needy families, Refugees, Asylum seekers and babies. Hats, scarves and gloves for the shoe box appeal. Christmas Tree decorations for the Christmas Tree Festival. Cardigans, jumpers and baby clothes.

Other projects were: - Knitting hats for 'Innocent' smoothie bottles. The company gave 25p to Age UK for every hat, we made 444 hats!

Making a special blanket for Deborah, one of our group when she moved house.

Welcoming a visitor from Morpeth Australia. The president of the Country Women's Association, who heard of our group from one of their members reading the Peoples Friend and our article. We gave them a gift of a knitted poppy wreath to put on their Cenotaph from Morpeth England, and received photos in November.

Our group had a stand at the Morpeth Gathering in the Town Hall, what a chance to natter and chatter; people were really interested in our projects and took away lots of patterns.

We finished the year with a big challenge, to teach 30 scouts to knit an angel in 3 weeks. We needed extra helpers for this challenge and managed to complete 38 Angels knitted by the scouts which were blessed with all the others at St G's and flew around Morpeth. Our Ladies were awarded the Scout challenge badge along with the scouts and invited to their Burns Supper as a thankyou - I think the ladies enjoyed the task as much as the scouts .

We had two more requests for help, one from a local girl helping the boat people who arrived on the Greek Islands. We knitted a large number of adult hats and scarves and bought gloves to help the refugees keep warm this winter.

The second was for a baby layette for a young teenage girl whose baby was due at Christmas (she had kept her pregnancy secret). She had the most beautiful layette thanks to our group, and wept when she was given it. We heard later that she gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Thankyou to all the group for their enthusiasm and support.

Joan Cooper - Coordinator and coffee maker.

SGURC**St George's URC Ceilidh Band 2019**

The ceilidh band has played for the regular Country Dance Club meetings in the church hall for dancers of all ages and abilities. Anyone is welcome to come along and the dances are led by our caller, Jared, who uses tact and humour to get everyone to get up and have a go.

Players meet for an hour before the dancers arrive so that there is an opportunity to practise new music and revisit tunes that have perhaps proved difficult in the past, or to try out different combinations of tunes for particular dances.

We welcomed several new players to the band in 2019 and now have 25 on our list who play a range of instruments – some play several instruments. The bands vary depending on the players available on the day – our biggest turnout was 18 and the smallest was 8.

As well as the Country Dance Club we played for a Scottish themed evening at Widdrington URC, an evening at Wideopen St John's URC, a small group played for a Harvest Supper at Ponteland, the annual Christian Aid Ceilidh here at St George's and at a party for National Trust volunteers at Backworth Hall. Donations for these outside bookings totalled £659 and were gift aided to Christian Aid. A small fee is paid by the dancers who come to CDC and in 2019 the sum of £275 was collected, which is £75 more than in the previous year and reflects the increased attendances.

The programme for each ceilidh is sent out to the band a few days in advance so that players can sort their music beforehand, and this seems to work well for most players.

Country Dance Club , (CDC), meetings are held in January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November and whenever possible we try to hold them on the second Saturday of the month. New dancers and players are always welcome.

Gill Armstrong Ceilidh Band Coordinator.

TEA TIME TALKS

2019 was the 11th year of these talks which are still popular with the average attendance generally well up on the previous year. Recruiting audiences for January and September talks is rather more problematic than for the rest of the year, so can we encourage you to bring along some friends and confirm numbers with Jared, particularly for these 2 months, and preferably in advance to give the caterers a reasonable idea of what refreshments might be necessary!

Our thanks to **EVERYONE** involved in this venture, in whatever capacity - without your continued support we would be unable to continue. Entry is by donation of around £2.50 - £3 (for which you also get the best-value cream tea in Morpeth!) and this year, reflecting increased attendances, we were able to Gift Aid £900 to church funds (compared to £575 last year), as well as £25 to Henry Dancer Days and Northumbria Blood Bikes respectively (Blood Bikes also received additional voluntary donations of over £80 on the day).

Over the 11 years of running these talks, we have now given a total of £6895 (cash) to church funds, £635 (equipment) to church, and £425 to various charitable organisations

For further details of this year's schedule of talks, or to volunteer to give us a talk, please contact Jared on 01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com.

Margaret Johnson, Jared Johnson & Christine Richardson,

20/02/20

Wednesday Morning Badminton Club

We continue to meet every Wednesday morning at 9.30 until about 11. We play most weeks as long as we have 4 players! We had our usual rest in August and also, we are unable to play when the stage is up for the players.

Our numbers have remained the same this year to a core group of eight players. We usually go for a coffee after the game to the Chantry Tea Rooms so non-players know where to find us at 11.

We have a yearly subscription of £5 and pay £2 a session. The money from this is donated to church funds and this year the group donated £484 to the church.

New members are always welcome and even if you have never played badminton before or it is a number of years since you last played come and join us at 9.30am on a Wednesday morning in the church hall and afterwards for coffee.

Sarah Cleverley (January 2020)

EVENING BADMINTON

We play on Thursday evening at 7.30 pm. We often struggled to meet throughout 2019 because of a significant drop in regular attendance from the previous year. This problem of last-minute cancellations is unsatisfactory and ultimately might become unsustainable. It is an enjoyable evening for those of us who DO attend, and it would be a great pity if we were forced to disband, so if you, or anyone you know, can already play and would like to join us, please let me know (01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com).

There is no Annual Fee and we only charge £1 for each session, which usually lasts until around 9 pm. Fewer numbers of players and sessions was reflected in a much reduced annual donation of £140 to church funds – over £100 down on the previous year.

Margaret Johnson 20/02/20

MORNING BADMINTON

During 2019 we more-or-less maintained membership numbers, so we generally had enough folk available to avoid many cancellations. Absences were usually the result of off-peak holidays, protracted periods of ill-health or injuries, or grandchildren-sitting – this gives you a fair idea of the age-profile of the Club! Our annual donation to church funds was maintained at £600 (the same as the previous year).

We would welcome another 2 or 3 “regulars” coming along so that we could all have the chance of “sitting-out” the odd game and enjoying a cup of coffee and a chat! SO – if you have played in the past and fancy taking it up again in a very friendly and sociable group, please contact either Margaret or Jared Johnson on 01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com

Jared Johnson 20/02/20

AFTERNOON BOWLS CLUB

The Club meets in the Hall from 2 – 4 pm every Wednesday from Jan – April and Sept – Dec. We started 2019 with about 20 fairly regular members and maintained roughly the same level of membership throughout the first half of the year, but from September onwards attendances began to decline because of other commitments and long-term health issues, so by the end of 2019 we had around 14 regular players, meaning that no-one needs to sit out any games .

Once a year the Evening Bowls Club join us for a competition between joint teams of 3 for the George Elliott Trophy. 2019's winners were Jared Johnson, with Ted Phizacklea and Chris Hills from the Evening Club..

No previous experience is necessary, so if you fancy an afternoon of sport which is no strain on the body and includes a refreshment break when we sit and chat, come along and give it a try! You are welcome to come and join us - Please get in touch with me on 01670 514610 or email me at jared-marg@hotmail.com

We have an Annual Fee of £10 and a weekly £1 donation - we donated £550 to church funds in 2019.

Margaret Johnson 20/02/20

Since writing this, it is sad to report the recent death of one of our regular members, Ossie Dennis. Ossie was a gentle-man in the true sense of the word and we shall miss his company, his friendship and his enduring good-humoured contribution to church life in general.

TABLE TENNIS CLUB

This has now been running for 2 years and we presently have about 8 “regulars” attending. We all have great fun playing (and almost as much pleasure chatting and drinking coffee in our mid-session break!) We meet on most Saturday mornings throughout the year from 10am – noon (subject to Hall availability) and we charge just £1 per session (children half-price). Reduced attendances meant that we could only contribute £180 to church funds this year, down on last year's donation of £300.

The Club was originally set up for church members (and their families), but since we have 2 tables, we could easily accommodate a few more players without folk having to sit-out for very long between games, so if you would like to join us please ring Jared on 01670 514610 or email jared-marg@hotmail.com

Jared Johnson 20/02/20

ST GEORGE'S EVENING BOWLS CLUB 2018**General Account**

2019 INCOME		2019 EXPENSES	
Balance from Previous Year	556.85	Fees to other Organisations	20.00
Annual Subscriptions	300.00	Trophy Engraving	34.80
Weekly Subscriptions	303.00	Dinner / Presentation Evening	704.00
Dinner / Presentation Evening	556.00	Donation to St. George's URC	500.00
Donations Received	5.00	Miscellaneous	16.60
Other Items	0.00	Total Expenses	1275.40
Total	1720.85	Balance Carried Forward	445.45

Equipment Account

Balance from Previous Year	1000.33	Balance Carried Forward	1000.33
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At the end of 2019 the Club had 16 members though several are now unable to play regularly so we are desperate to welcome new members. We find it difficult to make up numbers for matches and so would be delighted if more people would come and join us.

The results of our Club Competitions were – Triples won by Andy Cleverley, Bob Hill & Alan Hyde; Singles won by Alan Hyde; Two-Ball Pairs won by Pat Hills & Richard Tweddell; Four-Ball Pairs won by Frank Walker & Moira Whittle. The George Elliott Competition, in which we join with our friends from the Afternoon Bowls, was won by Chris Hills, Ted Phizacklea & Jared Johnson.

During the year we played our regular friendly matches against, mainly, other URC churches. These matches foster good fellowship between our churches but always very competitive.

They were against Robert Stuart Memorial Church (away – lost 52/24); Bomarsund (at home – won 41/39); Whalton (home – won 59/17); Warkworth URC (away – lost 50/24); Newbiggin URC/Meth (away – won 46/38); Alnwick St James URC (home – won 45/30); unfortunately we were unable even to raise 12 people to play away against Bomarsund; Warkworth URC (at home – won 51/24); Forest Hall (away – lost 27/55); Alnwick St James URC (away – lost 35/62); Robert Stuart Memorial (at home – won 38/32).

Although the Club continues to have a reasonable bank balance (see above), it is gradually declining due to the low numbers attending, as a result we were only able to pass £500 to St George's this year. The balance in the Equipment Fund continues to be £1000.

MORPETH AND MITFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER**Asylum Seekers and Refugees Support**

The churches in Morpeth and Mitford have continued collecting for the **West End Refugee Service (WERS)** and for the **Justice and Peace Refugee Project (J&P Refugee Project)**, both based in Newcastle.

This has included food, clothes and toiletries, all of which are stored in Joy Wight's garage and transported by a group of volunteers as and when there is a sufficient supply.

As far as WERS is concerned, after Lindsey Cross left in December 2018, the man appointed to replace her decided very quickly that the job was not for him. So the post was readvertised and Sean Gladwin was appointed to the post. He took up the position on 29 April 2019. So this year has been a time of transition and settling in for Sean and new staff.

The Justice and Peace Project has continued to be very busy over the year. They will be facing a transition in the coming year as John Dowling has announced his intention to stand down from his role as Manager at Easter.

Both services have been reliant on the support from many volunteers to provide services and to provide the food and clothing which they have needed. Sometimes they have been overwhelmed with the supplies and have needed to ask for a temporary halt as they have had storage difficulties, or difficulties in sorting the goods sent! Both services were delighted by the extra support provided at Christmas to enable their clients to have some small luxuries!

Lilian Nelson reports about the work with refugees and asylum seekers in Northumberland. There is a new drop in at Saint Cuthbert's in Blyth which she says is supported by wonderful volunteers and people from all over the world have been welcomed there.

The group in Ashington has expanded as has the number of people who have leave to remain. She gives an example:-

"We have a young family where the mum is a doctor and we have found a charity which has funded her to convert her qualification, improve her English and enable her to practice medicine whilst an asylum seeker in this country."

This is not an isolated example as there are others who have leave to remain and have moved on and are contributing to our society. At the same time she points out that there are also people who are really struggling against the system and where the hostile environment is evident and they need to keep challenging the system.

Lilian says she feels so privileged to be able to support people and see them grow. Thank you everyone at Saint George's for your prayers and support.

Many thanks to Joy, Lilian, all the volunteer drivers and all who regularly contribute to the work going on to support some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Please continue to remember all these activities in your prayers and in your giving.

Margaret Brock

Morpeth Justice and Peace

The Morpeth Justice and Peace Group has continued to meet over the past year, sometimes in St George's and sometimes in the home of one of the members. The group is supported by people from most of the Morpeth churches and demonstrates a very positive example of churches working together practically.

Having learnt about some of the financial problems being faced by Traidcraft we held two Traidcraft Big Brew coffee mornings where Traidcraft foods and products were sold. We also had a stall at the Party in the Park which publicised the work of the group.

We arranged a Dementia Awareness session, run by Guy Kirk, to help inform people about dementia so that we are more aware how to support others and to recognise the problems they face.

Some of us also went to look round and learn about Harnham Buddhist Monastery and enjoyed a time of peace and meditation there. For the second time the Peace and Justice Group put on breakfast in St George's for everyone who attended the Hiroshima service in the Peace Garden. Unfortunately the peace was shattered by the fire alarms being activated by a light bulb burning out! Each month there is a Peace Vigil held in the Market Square at 5.30pm on the 11th of each month.

If you have a particular issue you think we should look at or are interested in joining us at our meetings or any of our events do please let me know.

Margaret Brock

Dementia Awareness and Memory Café

Following on from the two dementia awareness courses held last year, a further dementia awareness course was held in St George's this year, hosted by the Justice and Peace Group. Everyone who attended found it informative and helpful.

Members and friends of St George's have continued to support the Memory Café held at Morpeth Methodist Church on the first and third Thursdays of every month. Although the focus is on having somewhere where people with dementia and their carers can come and talk and meet regularly, there have also been various activities. These have included a Christmas meal out, children from a local school coming in to sing and a ladies choir singing as well as information sessions which have included a talk on welfare benefits and entitlements.

New members are made very welcome and we would be delighted to see anyone who is interested in going along, whether as part of the group or as a helper. If you want to know more about the Memory Cafe please see either Gordon Slack or myself.

Margaret Brock

CHRISTIAN AID

Many thanks to all of you who donated to Christian Aid in 2019, or helped to raise money by giving your time and effort. The usual events were carried out by the Christian Aid Committee which has members from all of Morpeth's churches.

The first event was the Spring Evening at the Methodist Church. This followed the usual format of a talk about a country supported by Christian Aid money, preceded by a meal based on the sorts of foods eaten in that country and giving members of the audience a choice of what they would like. Last Spring the country in question was Sierra Leone and this event raised £345 (including the raffle). The most important money-raising event is always Christian Aid Week. The day before the event officially started there were two stalls held in the Market Place – a plant stall and a book stall. They only made £127 in 2019, but the house-to-house collection the following week made £5667. Many thanks to all who took part in the collection in which St George's collected £1932 – almost exactly 1/3rd of the total.

The other outdoor event was the Street Collection in September. All the churches have their own spot in town to stand and collect – ours is across the road from Marks and Spencer's, on the edge of the large Stanley Terrace car park. The collection lasts 6 hours thanks to our "one-hour" volunteers and the total collected around the town was £543.

The last of the Committee's events of the year was the Christian Aid Ceilidh held here at St George's, with our Ceilidh Band and Jared talking through the dances. With a raffle and the sale of drinks, this raised £310.

Our different Morpeth churches also have their own ways of raising money for Christian Aid. We made a profit of £70 at our stall at the Charity Christmas Card Sale; the weekly Fairtrade stall at St George's raised £150, and Christmas donations by folk displaying one Christmas card to all their church friends on the Community Christmas Card board in the vestibule made £30.50.

Altogether, Morpeth churches raised £9783 for Christian Aid throughout the year. Many thanks to all who contributed to this, especially those who took part in money-raising events.

Margaret Johnson and Margaret Brock
20/02/20
(Christian Aid Committee members for St George's)

4th Morpeth St George's Brownies
2019 Annual Report

January 2020 Linda stepped down as Brown Owl and became Assistant Leader. Susan Fairgrieve took over the Brown Owl (Unit Leader) role, having been presented with her Leadership Qualification in October 2019. Her mobile number for contact regarding Brownie matters is 07702253343 and her email address is s.fairgrieve21@gmail.com. This information will be posted on our notice board. Of course Sharon Williams continues as our Assistant Leader and Megan Bell our Young Leader. We have a fantastic team of Leaders, all working well together. Charlotte (our Unit Helper) left us to commence her Teaching Assistant training and we wish her well in that. She will be a big miss, but to help us Judith Leja (ex Rainbow Leader) comes in to swell our ranks when needed and she is brilliant, bringing all her Rainbow Leader experience with her to the Unit.

At the start of 2019 our numbers were 16, however by the end of the year this had increased to 28. The girls are a lively bunch and quite frequently challenge us as Leaders. The new programme, as explained in our last report, is now fully operational, with plenty of badges to work towards. The programme is split into 6 themes and during 2019 we covered Express Myself and started Take Action – Make Change. This latter theme covered environmental matters such as war on plastic, which is a big issue. One of our Brownies who went up to Guides this year was the first to be awarded the new Brownie GOLD award, so congratulations to her. Interest Badges are now done at home. This can present a challenge getting the girls motivated as they already have such a lot on outside Brownies, with other clubs and school work, but we try to encourage them by starting work on badges in the Unit.

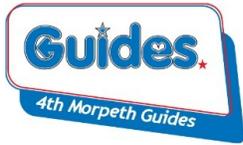
We also continue to celebrate other dates within our diary such as, Mothers Day, Easter, Fathers Day, Christmas, and the Division is always challenging us with new badges such as the Japan Badge we were able to award to our Brownies this year. This involved challenges such as making sushi, and trying different foods, some of which did not go down well, learning some Japanese phrases, cherry blossom painting and making Japanese lanterns. The girls also had to find out certain facts about the country of Japan.

We entered a team again for the Lions Swim, raising £55 for our Unit and the Division had their annual Easter Disco. The County organised a Brownie day at Alnwick Castle in May followed by a Division trip to Beamish to celebrate Empire Day. Pack Holiday was in October when we returned to the bunkhouse at Wallington again. The environment there is fantastic for the Brownies and we got out and about walking, building dens, sailing mini rafts on the river and having a tea light campfire (battery tea lights not naked flames) singing songs and eating marshmallows. Hot chocolate was waiting for us back at the bunkhouse. We joined the Division in the Remembrance Parade in November and ended the year with our Division Carol Service in St Georges Church and, of course, our visit to the Panto at Gateshead stadium.

Though numbers were small we joined the Church for their Harvest celebrations and the Toy Service, when we are able to parade into the Church carrying our flags. These times are important to us as an organisation and we will continue to support our Church whenever we can.

***Brownie Leaders,
Linda Glossop, Susan Fairgrieve, Sharon Williams, Judith Leja and Megan Bell (Young Leader).***

December 2019



2019

We started 2019 with the take over of the Odeon cinema to see Mary Poppins. It was opened up especially for all members of Girlguiding. It even came with it's own unique badge!

We celebrated Thinking Day in February thinking about Girl Guides in Japan. We came together for a Division event and had our own cherry blossom festival. After decorating our bags we made fans, lanterns, hats, practiced our Japanese writing, made origami swan and finished the day of making our promise with a tea party.

The girls took part in an incident hike. They walked in a circular route from Amble to Warkworth completing challenges on their way before returning to Amble. There was even a stop at Morwick Dairy.

We visited Beamish Museum as part of their flag weekend. We join their parade as we walked through the streets of the town. We all came together on the field where it was explained about the Empire and the history of the day.

The Division Guides and Rangers all slept out under the stars for a night. They built their own bivvy shelters for the night. We toasted marshmallows before going to sleep in the woods.

Each year Girlguiding will take action together to tackle an issue raised by girls as part of Future girls. 2019 was part of the Plastic Promise campaign to work together to tackle plastic pollution. Units across the globe worked on special activities during the same week and shared messages.

We took part in Parliament Week. We had books to explore so we could learn about what goes on in Parliament. We ran our own mock election as we have several candidates who were standing for election.

During the year we have also had Sri Lankan and Nepalese themed nights, cook out, bonfire activities and a litter pick around the town. Parades in church and Town Parade on Remembrance Sunday. Served refreshments at the Morpeth Gathering, Lions events and at St George's Church after the service and for social events. The girls enjoy being part of the community.

We finished the year off with a Christingle service in St George's followed by a Christmas market. The girls planned their own stalls. It was a great success. From the evening, they donated the money to Children's Society.

Thank you to all our helpers who give the girls some amazing experiences, and to the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support.

Liz, Amy, Glynis, Fiona and Megan

Mobile - 077 1448 1089

Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

4th Morpeth Guides, St George's Church Hall, Tuesday evening, 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm



2019 Report

2019 for the girls in Rangers has been a very busy year. With continuing to complete interest badges and skills builders from the new programme to completing Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

The girls have completed their explore skills builder badge which involved planning a route with a GPS system, yoga in the park and making water filters. This badge involved the girls going outdoors and exploring their local surroundings. Another badge the girls accomplished was their animation badge where the girls had to create a character and complete a storyboard. This gave the girls a chance to get creative and to show their creative side.

The Rangers took part in parliament week. This involved the girls taking part in debates on issues of their choice, making a ballot box and completing the workbook involved with parliament week. This gave the girls the opportunity to express their views and opinions and to learn to respect each other's views. They completed their voting interest badge from this.

The girls have continued to excel by completing awards outside of the Ranger meetings which included the bronze, silver and gold Duke of Edinburgh awards. Some of the girls completed their bronze expedition, some their silver expedition and a few gold expedition which all involve planning a route and deciding what they are going to cook before the expedition and cooking their meals on Trangias.

Most of the Rangers are also carrying out their Young Leadership qualification as well as Ranger meetings which involves the girls being linked with Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units by volunteering at these units.

Thank you to all our helpers who assist the girls in their Girlguiding journey, and to the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support.

Liz, Charlotte, Anne and Megan

Mobile - 077 1448 1089

Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

Morpeth Rangers

St George's Church Hall, Tuesday evening, 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm



The year started with a Pot of Gold Party as some of the Rainbows were leaving to move up to Brownies. We continued the term with a pancake party and the girls served each other pancakes. We ended the term with a Division disco.

We went on our international travels. We started with Thinking Day and thought about Girl Guides in Japan. We then continue with our Guiding programme linking it to countries around the world. The Rainbows had to get on a plane each week and travel, getting their passport stamped along the way. We ended going back home with a teddy bear's picnic in England.

We went on our first sleepover to the Girlguiding house at Whittonstall. Joined the flag parade at Beamish Museum, walking through the town with our banner.

We took part in the Girlguiding Plastic Promise to tackle plastic pollution. We collected our rubbish for a week to see how much there was and then used it to make underwater sculptures.

The girls throughout the year have completed interest badges at home and badges in the unit. We have awarded a number of badges along the way.

We went to the panto to see Cinderella and then our final week was the Christingle service in St George's Church.

Thank you to all our helpers for an amazing year, and to the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support.

Liz, Amy, Glynis, Emma and Erin

Mobile - 077 1448 1089

Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

4th Morpeth Rainbows, St George's Church Hall, Tuesday evening, 5.15 pm - 6.15 pm

St George's Community Players

It has been a busy year for the Players and a special one too. The Community Players were originally formed in 1929, so 2019 was our 90th birthday! To celebrate, we held an afternoon event, 'The Show Must Go On', in July, for past members and patrons. A wonderful afternoon full of nostalgia, fun and the meeting up of old friends, and to finish the celebrations we enjoyed a Christmas/ Birthday evening at the Primo Piano in December

We presented our usual 3 nights spring and autumn productions starting with 'Amateur Killer', a play staged in the round. This had an excellent cast and it was encouraging to see 2 of our newest members taking part.

Bridget Rowbottom made her directorial debut with 'Party Piece,' not in the round this time but back on the stage with a wonderful set, designed and constructed, with help, by our stage manager. The hall was full or almost full on all three nights.

Eileen Clark produced another of her very popular Murder Mystery Evenings at Stakeford church, for a large joint WI event, and repeated it as a fund-raising event for the church the following week.

The price of tickets has been increased this year and this now includes refreshments and programmes. This proved to be a very popular move, so we shall continue with this in the future.

We are pleased that three new members have joined the Players this year and two of them will be taking part in the next play, 'Ladies Day', March 19, 20, 21. We hope you will come along and support us.

Our thanks go to the church and Patricia Gatherum, our liaison elder, for their support during the past year.

Heather Robinson - Secretary