

Cambridge Judge Business School

REACH Ely Case Study Series

Reimagining Churches as Community Assets
for the Common Good

ST ANDREW CAXTON

Text, design, and photography

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**REACH Ely (Reimagining Churches as
Community Assets for the Common Good)**
is a multi-partner research project that
aims to help communities make fuller use
of their churches.

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The project is implemented by

**Centre for Social Innovation at
Cambridge Judge Business School
and the Diocese of Ely**

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and Historic England*

www.reachely.org

The challenges facing church communities and their buildings have been extensively studied in the light of declining church attendance in the United Kingdom over several decades. REACH Ely aims to address the less-well-understood opportunities for churches to engage and reconnect with the 97.7 per cent of the local communities in the Diocese of Ely who do not attend their parish churches.

With the absence of universal determinants of success and failure of churches in the community engagement context, the REACH Ely project will provide an understanding of the relationship between communities and wider use of church buildings as well as the contribution that churches make to the common good. The project will determine community values, needs and opportunities that can be used in the most effective way to ensure a win-win outcome for communities and sustainable future of church buildings.

The **case study series** is based on in-depth interviews and observations about church building use with informants from a subset of deaneries and parishes in the Diocese of Ely, supplemented with secondary information about the communities they represent. The purpose of the case study is to unearth various church experiences in renovating and envisioning their buildings as missional and social spaces, engaging with local and wider communities, addressing current challenges, and learning from their practice.

The **Glossary** is a separate document that accompanies the case study series. It is available as a download from the project's website www.reachely.org

On the cover: St Andrew's church tower with a yew tree seen from churchyard.

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ST ANDREW CAXTON

Church Category: Rural

Deanery: Bourn

Address: Gransden Road, Caxton,
Cambridgeshire CB23 3PL

Website:

www.papworthteamchurches.org



Summary

Buildings and Artefacts: Grade II* listed building; East window memorial to a local surgeon; 14th century tower with a stair turret on the south face; Electronic church organ; Gentle recorded background music; Medieval brasses in the chancel; Memorial ledger stones; 13th century font and double piscina; Victorian rood screen; Pews replaced with chairs; Kitchenette and WC facilities; Upgraded heating; Innovative recording system of church visitors

Congregation to Population Ratio: 13 / 572

Fundraising: Village fete stalls; Grants and bequest; Small donations

Income Generation: Regular giving

Communications: Papworth Team Ministry website www.papworthteamchurches.org; Leaflets delivered around village; Church news page in Caxton parish newsletter; Graveyard map; Visitors' book; External Church noticeboard; Information table and noticeboards in the church

Community Engagement: Walking group; Bell ringing society; Enquirers and heretics group; Joint events with community groups; Collaborative events with 14 ministry team churches; Church coffee mornings; Public concerts; Children's ministry; 'Caxton Help' – a joint church and community response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

ROOTS



Profile

Caxton is a small rural village and civil parish in the South Cambridgeshire district with a population of 572 people (2011). The village sits nine miles west of the county town of Cambridge and seven miles east of St Neots. Caxton is most famous for the Caxton Gibbet, a 20th century replica of which is located on a small knoll on the A1198.

What was the Roman Ermine Street, now the A1198 road, bisects Caxton parish. The modern village has grown up around the road, although the parish church is a short distance to the south-west and stands quite apart from the modern village. In 2004, a bypass was completed around Caxton to accommodate traffic for the growing town of Cambourne to the north-east. Cambourne is set to expand considerably in the coming years with approval for 2,350 new homes granted by South Cambridgeshire District Council in 2017. Caxton village is located between the A14 and the A1 main roads, providing motorway access to the north and to the south of the country. The villages closest to Caxton are Papworth Everard and Longstowe to the north and south respectively, Cambourne to the north-east, Bourn to the east, Great Gransden to the south-west and Eltisley to the north-west.

Village amenities include a well-used village hall, which hosts events such as quiz nights, curry evenings and is where the village gathers on Remembrance Sunday for refreshments following the act of remembrance at the War Memorial. Other village amenities include: a playground and sports field; an annual village fete and occasional car boot sales; and a public house which is now also a Thai restaurant. Caxton is served by a Church of England primary school and doctor's surgery in nearby Bourn. A mother and toddler group is held in the village hall and the car park hosts a weekly visit by a local fish and chip van.

Building

Historically, the parish church dedicated to St Andrew belonged to the Priory of Lewes until 1351 when it passed to the Dean and Canons of Windsor. The church is Grade II* listed building. The church was saved by a national appeal and major restorations were carried out in 1863-69 when the south aisle and porch were rebuilt.

The church is located somewhat away from the centre of the village, to the south-west, and can accommodate 200 people at most. St Andrew Caxton has a tall 14th century tower with cross-buttresses and a stair turret on the south face. The walls are constructed from field stones and reused material with clunch and free stone dressings. The west doorway and bell-openings are Perpendicular in style, and a small pyramid roof is covered in uneven tiling.

Further restoration work was undertaken in 1929-30 when the pews were replaced with chairs, allowing a more flexible space for services and events, such as barn dances and concerts. The outer walls of the tower were repaired and made waterproof in 2000. The east wall of the church had to be rebuilt around 2008. A kitchenette and WC facilities have been installed, together with a vestry, and the heating has been upgraded. The church has been redecorated and a modern electronic church organ installed. Recent improvements have used light oak to introduce a more modern feel.

There are significantly old graves in the churchyard yet without statues or

memorials of particular note. St Andrew Caxton has, over the past few years, been open to visitors during the daytime. An innovative recording system, with visitors dropping plastic tokens into a box, revealed that there were 350 visitors in the first year of opening. Gentle recorded music is often played, which has been favourably commented on in the visitors' book by many visitors to the church.

The church is open throughout the year (except when required to be closed during periods of lockdown). An adjacent field belongs to St Andrew's church.

Artefacts

Although the chancel and west wall of the nave are 13th century, the church contains remains of 14-15th century work, including doorways in the north and south walls of the nave. A double original piscina in the chancel is 13th century, and a Sedalia of solid masonry projecting from the south wall may also be from this period. Brass indents for two full-length figures, also in the chancel, are late medieval, whilst the various ledger stones commemorating the Barnard family date from 1679 to 1794.

There are six bells, a 16-17th century communion table, and the font, perhaps 13th century, has an octagonal limestone bowl. The font has a modern lid, with a handle formed by a pair of fish to reflect the fact that St Andrew was a fisherman. The rood screen is thought to be early Victorian. The pipes from a previous organ are an attractive asset that the church would like to retain and display.



Top: View of the nave with chairs. Middle: View towards the East window and rood screen; Back pews, vestry, and facilities in the tower. Bottom: Children's corner and the font by the entrance; Kitchen area under the tower.

RUNNING

Team

St Andrew's church sits within the Papworth Team Ministry, formed in 2000, which includes 15 parishes across 16 villages. The ministry team supporting St Andrew's comprises the vicar, rector, an associate priest and two churchwardens. The Papworth team employs an administrator and there are a number of lay readers and lay ministers within the 15 churches. The PCC members of St Andrew's are also involved in many other activity groups in the village.

Quite a lot of what goes on in the church draws on the wider Papworth Team, for example, sharing skills in running certain types of events (e.g., for the housebound), organising the services rota, publishing news, ensuring effective safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and running team services. The setting up of a central operational hub involved considerable legally-established change.

“We're trying to give people a welcome when they come in and make sure that such welcome is never linked to church funding.”

Clergy comment

Religious Services

A Holy Communion service is offered once a month at 8.30 a.m. Other services during the month include a 10.30 a.m. Morning Prayer and a 10.30 a.m. Family Service. There is also Morning Prayer at 8.15 a.m. on Thursday mornings. In addition, a Bible Study group meets twice a month.

The more traditional services regularly attract around 16 people, with larger numbers for family services and special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter and Mothering Sunday. Caxton church had run out of chairs at a recent Remembrance Sunday, and christenings can involve around 65+ people.

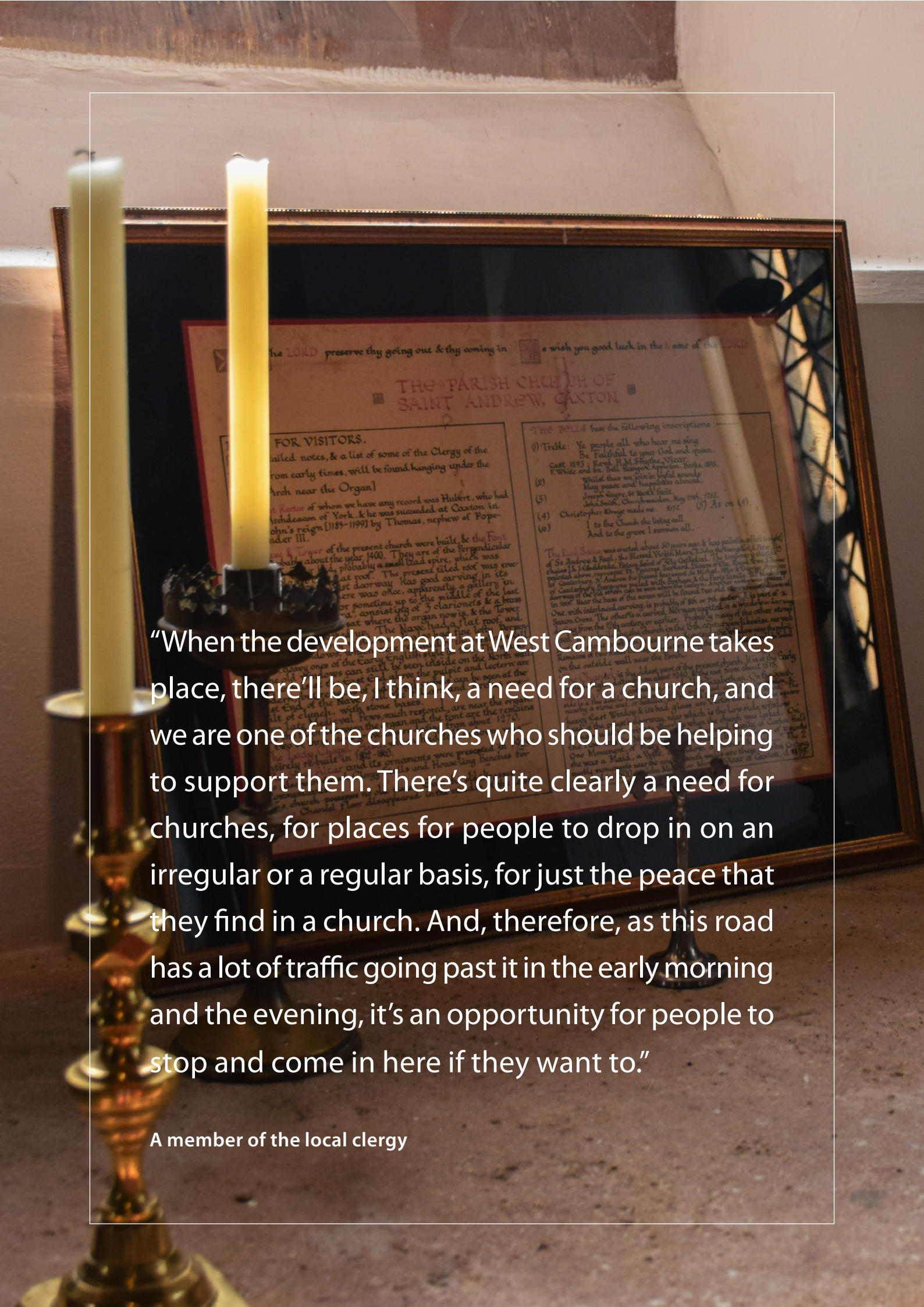
Covid-19 lockdown. During the pandemic crisis in 2020, the church building of St Andrew's was locked, in line with the Church of England's requirements for all churches. The church body continued to meet through joint **regular online services** with the other Team churches at 10 a.m. every Sunday and daily Morning Prayer at 8.15 a.m., plus a weekly Bible Study group. The services were delivered using Zoom, which allowed those participating to greet one another before and after the service and added an extra sense of it being a joint act of worship. The online service on Easter Sunday had around 80 connections with perhaps 120 people attending the service, including some past members joining from as far afield as Devon and Hong Kong. In addition, for those church members who were not able to access services online, a Sunday service was provided via a **telephone conference call**. The regular **weekly Bulletin**, which is circulated electronically to parishioners across the 15 parishes, continued to be issued and provided important information as to how to join the online services, as did links on the **Papworth Team Churches website**. Hard copies of the Bulletin were supplied to those in the congregation of St Andrew's church who were not online.

In addition to continuing to join together for services, the PCC and members of the congregation supported one another during the pandemic lockdown through practical help and by **regular phone contact** with one another, in particular with those who were in lockdown on their own, and through prayer.

'**Caxton Help**' was a joint initiative led by members of the PCC during the pandemic lockdown. The initiative was organised between the church and members of the Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, and volunteers from the local community, which provided shopping, delivered prescriptions and undertook other tasks for key workers and for those in self-isolation within the village. 'Caxton Help' also formed part of a wider network of volunteers that the County and District Council used for helping to deliver aid to the most vulnerable within Caxton and other communities.

Parish Share

In 2019, parish share expenditure was £10,922.



“When the development at West Cambourne takes place, there’ll be, I think, a need for a church, and we are one of the churches who should be helping to support them. There’s quite clearly a need for churches, for places for people to drop in on an irregular or a regular basis, for just the peace that they find in a church. And, therefore, as this road has a lot of traffic going past it in the early morning and the evening, it’s an opportunity for people to stop and come in here if they want to.”

A member of the local clergy

Fundraising

At present, Caxton church has no need of a formal Friends of the church group as it is seeking to encourage people to support the church through regular giving and in other ways, including donations.

Grants have been obtained for major projects from the Amey Community Fund (£40,000) and the church is supported through a **bequest** from a former churchwarden and his wife.

Village fete stalls. The church runs one or two of the stalls at the annual village fete. Fundraising efforts are directed towards external charities chosen by the church.

Small donations. Funds raised at the coffee mornings are routinely donated to other charities or to the Knapwell Church Restoration Fund.

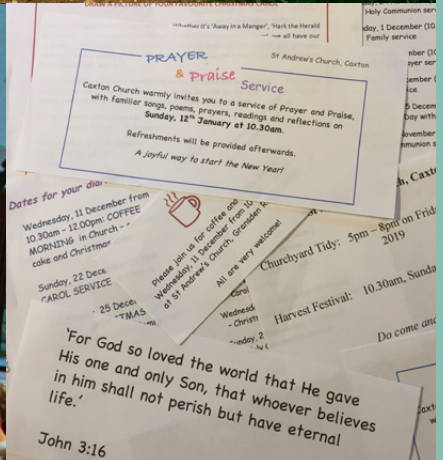
Income Generation

Regular contributions from the congregation help the church to pay for itself. The church is not currently rented out to other organisations although that would be considered where appropriate.

St Andrew's PCC schedules its coffee mornings to ensure that they do not clash with the village hall's coffee mornings, which are raising money for the restoration of that building.

Communications

Church events, such as services and coffee mornings, are advertised in the village **newsletter**, via **leaflets** posted through letterboxes and on local **village webpages**, as well as through the **Papworth Team Churches website** www.papworthteamchurches.org and **email bulletin**. St Andrew Caxton has recently improved its signage and is planning to produce a **welcome guide** for new residents and a graveyard map. The current small church **noticeboard** is not very visible from the road and has no pedestrian passers by. There is a separate village noticeboard on which the church advertises key events. The **Visitors' Book** and a donations box are kept in the church near the entrance.



Clockwise from top-left: Caxton church Coffee Morning; 'Breath of Fresh Air' Walking Group (walking on a footpath from Caxton to Bourn); Flyers and pew slips from Caxton church; A display of poems and paintings about dementia in Caxton church ('Lost for Words: Decline into Dementia' by David Potter); 'Bible and Wine' meeting; A wedding at church (Photos by Caxton church).

REACH

Community

Bell ringing society. This active society (Huntingdon district) rings the bells in the church from time to time. The bells were completely renovated approximately five years ago and attract bell ringers from some distance away.

Walking group. A church-led walking group, known as 'A Breath of Fresh Air', meets monthly, usually for a 1-1.5 hour's walk ending up with coffee or beer and cake at a local café or pub. It typically attracts between 12-16 people from nearby churches and villages.

Caxton church runs a regular **Bible Study group** and holds an 8.15 a.m. Morning Prayer every week. Members of St Andrew's church both help with and participate in the events run by Rendezvous for elderly residents from local villages.

Growing the church community. One or two small housing developments in the village have brought new people into the Caxton church community and there has been a trickle of people from Cambourne, the west side of which is expected to grow as 400 acres of new housing is built there. Joint events are held with community groups, such as the village fete. There are also collaborative team events within the 15 parish churches of the Papworth Team Ministry – St Andrew's church has hosted the Team Lent course for the past two years – and team social events.

The Papworth Team Ministry team has begun to reach out to other denominations wishing to worship within the team churches.

“We haven’t had big changes, but we’ve had one or two small building schemes. These have brought new people in, who have been tremendously beneficial to the community: We are not stuck with a framework of thinking which belongs to a set of people who’ve lived in the village all our lives... Major contributors have been new people coming into the village.”

Longstanding resident



Events

Coffee mornings are held every other month; they are well advertised and attract people from outside the church community.

Concerts. The church has hosted a number of concerts, craft fairs and two or three barn dances in recent years. The Sing Papworth choir usually gives a concert every year in the church.

Public exhibition. There has been an art and poetry display on the subject of dementia, hosted initially by Caxton church before moving around the other churches within the Team. It was created by one of the Papworth churchwardens.

Village events. St Andrew's church had previously run its own fete but now contributes to the village event.

Engagement

Children's ministry. The minister responsible for Caxton church, who covers two or three other churches, is responsible for children's ministry and regularly visits local schools and colleges, attending and running assemblies. The Papworth Team has committed funds to the school ministry and a conscious decision has been taken to free up the Minister's time in order to carry out this work. Over the years, St Andrew's PCC has also contributed to the ministry of WCCYM (West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries).

St Andrew's church goes out of its way to **welcome new worshippers**. The new kitchenette and WC facilities mean that coffee can be served after services, making this a more social occasion.

Other denominations have been made welcome across the team of churches. A joint Roman Catholic and Anglican carol service is held every year at Croxton church and a mass is held monthly for members of the wider Indian Roman Catholic community in Papworth Parish Church.

The **family services** at Caxton church are publicised in a number of ways and attendance numbers at these services have been growing. The absence of a church hall or any adjacent building that could be used for children's work currently limits the nature and size of the current work. The church is considering creating a space within the building for children's work to take place.

Church organ. The team has locally publicised the fact that the new church organ is available to anyone who wishes to play it. At least two Caxton residents have made use of this offer.



Top: View of the churchyard from the church tower roof. Middle: Belfry and church tower roof. Bottom: Yew tree in the churchyard and the tower.

REFLECTIONS

Challenges

A small and senior congregation

The demographic profile of the congregation has meant that events and coffee mornings are run with very few volunteers. Caxton church needs to expand its team of supporters.

Lack of separate church hall

There is no church hall and the village hall is some distance away. PCC members want to explore ways of making the space within the church more flexible, both for church events and for greater community use. Suggestions include the addition of a mezzanine layer in the tower or a closed-off glass structure in the south west corner of the church.

Youth engagement

The church recognises this is an issue for the church team which is actively seeking space dedicated for children's activities within the building.

Community attachment to church fixtures

The members of St Andrew's church are very much open to new initiatives and actively welcome the use of the church building for church and community events (with no payment to the church).

Communication

Improvements are planned such as to the current noticeboard which is not very visible to people driving past the church.



TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN MEMORY OF

AVOYSTVS JOHN WRIGHT SV GOBON WHO DIED JULY 9TH 1669

THIS WINDOW IS DEDICATED BY 450 PATIENTS & FRIENDS

Lessons Learned

To foster collaboration links with other churches

Collaborations between the fifteen churches within the ministry have been beneficial, both in terms of organising events and applying transferable skills to the challenges of maintaining the buildings, for example. It is seen as offering encouragement and support for the Christian community in keeping churches open that may be struggling.

To integrate church and community

Opportunities for further church and community integration are welcomed, such as the school ministry and the coffee mornings.

To adapt the church building for more flexible and a wider use

The church is actively looking at making improvements to the internal layout of the building. Any large projects will be funded by grant applications, for example, to the Amey Community Fund. Improvements have been made to the interior of the church to make it more welcoming and less intimidating to new worshippers. Facilities such as a kitchenette and a WC allow for social gatherings after services, which helps with community cohesion.

To contribute to tackling loneliness

The regular coffee mornings are felt to be successful in helping to tackle loneliness within the community, particularly for the elderly. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the church-led 'Caxton Help' group worked hard to ensure that everyone in Caxton had help when needed. This included providing a telephone number for anyone who felt lonely or in need of company to call for a chat and also proactively contacting those who were known to be on their own, to check how they were.



“Our thinking is that if you make the church building warm, nicely decorated and comfortable, it provides a welcoming environment – and this helps to encourage people to come into the building. The church is here for everyone and the building plays an important part in their welcome.”

A churchwarden

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