

# **St Brandon's Church**

## **Brancepeth**



**Newsletter: January 2021**

Also online at: [www.stbrandon.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.stbrandon.org.uk/newsletter)







## Parochial Church Council

Priest in Charge	Rev'd Anna Brooker (3780578) or <a href="mailto:rector@stbrandon.org.uk">rector@stbrandon.org.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:anna.brooker@durham.ac.uk">anna.brooker@durham.ac.uk</a>
Associate Minister	Rev'd. Alison Hobbs (3789670) <a href="mailto:alison@brancepethcastle.org.uk">alison@brancepethcastle.org.uk</a>
Curate	Rev'd Sabine Tenge-Heslop (01388 730855) <a href="mailto:rev.sabine@durham.anglican.org">rev.sabine@durham.anglican.org</a>
Lay Reader	Geoff Moore – co-opted member of P.C.C. (3735674)
Church Wardens:	Hester Higton (5974675) James Morgan (4476520)
Secretary	Carol Beeby (3847431), (07592 975002)
Treasurer	Mike Higton (5974675)
Deanery Synod	Caroline Middleditch (378 1400)
Other members:-	
Amy Gooding (07753606115) Janette Foxe (07587 225 200). Tom Hobbs (07857437860) Sue Morgan (3781172) Jean Hodgson (3780289) Robert Scott-Biggs (3735907). Steve Hodgson (3780289)	
Prayer Team	Amy Gooding (07753606115), Alison Hobbs (378 9670), Deborah Hodge (01388 745455), Sue Hope, Alison Moore (373 5674), Myrleen Stewart (378 0862).
Sunday School	Martin Peacock (07503242074)
Messy Church	Rev'd Sabine Tenge-Heslop (01388 730855)
Organist	Richard Hird
Sacristans	Carol Beeby (3847431), Valeria Dietz, Lucy Hodge (07891867181).
Safeguarding Officer	Geoff Moore (3735674)
Flower Guild	Lynne Hastie (3781871)
Churchyard	Edward Staines (3780858)
Youth Club	Geoff Moore (3735674), Martin Peacock (07503242074)
Worship Team	Rev'd Anna Brooker, Janette Foxe, Richard Gooding, Hester Higton, Rev'd Alison Hobbs, Geoff Moore, Sue Morgan.
SMD Team:	Evelyn Aitken, Anna Brooker (ex-officio), Carys Funnell, Richard Gooding, Alison Hobbs (ex officio), Tom Hobbs, Martin Peacock, Sally Scott-Biggs.
Fabric:	James Morgan (chair), Alison Hobbs, Tom Hobbs, Steve Hodgson, Robert Scott-Biggs, Edward Staines.
Website	<a href="http://www.stbrandon.org.uk">www.stbrandon.org.uk</a>

**February** Newsletter entries – no later than **January 18th**

Please send to Sue Morgan – [sueatpeppermires@gmail.com](mailto:sueatpeppermires@gmail.com)

Dear friends,

Happy New Year! It's the traditional greeting, of course, though this year it might be more appropriate with a question mark rather than an exclamation mark after it. Happy New Year?

The familiar tradition that goes alongside the greeting is the making of New Year Resolutions. But again, doing that doesn't quite seem to ring true as we embark on 2021. Not to run out of sanitiser? Not to meet up with family or friends? Mmm ...

I'm reminded of the conversation in J.R.Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*: "I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

That's wise advice, of course, but it's not necessarily easy to know just how to follow it. It might help, however, to think about 2021 first in terms of our fears for it. Obviously the pandemic will be front and centre, particularly in the next few dark months. General fears about its spread, about hospital capacity and the number of deaths, combine with more personal fears for our own health and that of those close to us. Then there's Brexit which, as I write in mid-December, still looks like the 'oven ready' deal might end in 'no deal' with all the terrible implications for supply chains and the economy in general which that implies. Which brings me to climate change, and fears that we just won't do enough soon enough.

Fears are not only depressing but also potentially debilitating, and while there may not be much we can do about such big issues, it doesn't mean we can do nothing. Perhaps resolutions do have a place after all.

And alongside our fears, what about our hopes for 2021? Of course, we all hope for the successful roll-out of the vaccine so that the pandemic is brought under control, and we can get on with our lives. Then we will have particular hopes for ourselves, our family and friends, our communities, our nation, our world.

Putting fears and hopes together takes us (rather obviously – you saw this coming, didn't you?) to the words from the first verse of 'O little town of Bethlehem':

*Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

Being reminded that God knows and meets us in the middle of our hopes and fears – and not just now, but in 'all the years' – and that His everlasting light will keep shining, might help us to face and work to overcome our fears, and to believe and trust that our hopes will be fulfilled.

So not quite Happy New Year, but at least best wishes for a year in which our hopes and fears are likely to face greater challenges than usual.

Geoff Moore

## St Brandon's January 2021– Services and readings

***At present, Sunday morning services are 'blended':***

*you can join in via Zoom or come to church.*

*In all cases, everyone is welcome!*

*In addition to the services below, each day Monday – Friday,*

***Morning Prayer*** is shared in church and online at **8.15am**  
and there is a ***Midday Eucharist*** from Brancepeth Castle at **12noon**.

***Thursday Evening Prayer*** continues fortnightly online services.

Online service invitations are sent via NAVIGATOR, St Brandon's email link.

Please phone or email for further details

### **Sun Dec 27<sup>th</sup> John, Apostle and Evangelist Parish Eucharist 10.15**

First:	Edward Staines	1 John 1
Gospel:	Jayne Cook	John 1: 19b-end
	Robert Scott-Biggs	Intercessions
Psalm 117		

**PLEASE NOTE THIS SERVICE WILL BE ONLINE ONLY, FROM BRANCEPETH CASTLE CHAPEL**  
**The Zoom link will be sent via Navigator as usual.**

### **Sun 3rd Epiphany Parish Eucharist 10.15**

First:	Gillian Smellie	Isaiah 60: 1-6
Gospel:	Richard Gooding	Matthew 2: 1-12
	Sue Hope	Intercessions
Psalm 72		

### **Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> Online Evening Prayer 7.30pm**

### **Sun 10<sup>th</sup> Baptism of Christ Parish Eucharist 10.15**

First:	Evelyn Aitken	Acts 19: 1-7
Gospel:	Peter Cook	Mark 1: 4-11
	Doris Dobson	Intercessions
Psalm 29		

### **Sun 17<sup>th</sup> Epiphany 2 Parish Eucharist 10.15**

First:	Robert Scott-Biggs	1 Samuel 3: 1-10
Gospel:	Tom Hobbs	John 1: 43-51
	Matt Gaze & Grace Hart	Intercessions
Psalm 139:1-5, 12-18		

### **Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> Online Evening Prayer 7.30pm**

**Sun 24<sup>th</sup> Epiphany 3****Parish Eucharist 10.15**

First:	Ulrike Hobbs	Genesis 14: 17-20
Gospel:	Hester Higton	John 2: 1-11
	James Morgan	Intercessions
Psalm 128		

**Online Messy Church 4.00pm****Sun 31<sup>st</sup> Presentation of Christ****Parish Eucharist for Candlemas 10.15**

First:	James Morgan	Malachi 3: 1-5
Gospel:	Mike Higton	Luke 2: 22-40
	Caroline Middleditch	Intercessions
Psalm 24: 1-10		

**FEBRUARY****Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Online Evening Prayer 7.30pm****Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2 before Lent****Parish Eucharist 10.15***Church Action on Poverty focus*

First:	Wilfred Foxe	Amos 5: 21-24
Gospel:	Anne Allen	Acts 22: 22-29
	Geoff Moore	Intercessions
Psalm 10		

***Please wear a face covering when attending services in the church building.***  
**THANK YOU**

**Sidespersons**

Jan 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Peter & Jayne Cook & Joan Nesbitt
Jan 10 <sup>th</sup>	Sally & Robert Scott-Biggs & Caroline Middleditch
Jan 17 <sup>th</sup>	Fiona & David Eltringham & Sue Morgan
Jan 24 <sup>th</sup>	Nick Brooker, Jane Stout & Bonny Bainbridge
Jan 31 <sup>st</sup>	Peter & Jayne Cook & Joan Nesbitt
Feb 7 <sup>th</sup>	Sally & Robert Scott-Biggs & Caroline Middleditch

**Flowers**

Epiphany
Denise Jackson
Sarah Nicholson
Iris Waggott
Christine Dodd

***Do you know anyone who, for any reason, would appreciate a prayer or a friendly chat?***

**Please tell Alison Moore of the Prayer Team 0191 373 5674/07890 733757.**

**PRAYER REQUESTS** Please text to this dedicated number: 07598 600571 and your prayer requests will be included in our regular Friday morning service. Normally we would have been inviting you to leave a prayer on the altar, so this is the safe alternative!

# Prayer and Thanksgiving Diary January 2021

## What really matters?

*You are invited to use this diary and share in the prayers offered daily*

- 1 **New Year's Day** Offer to God your honest hopes for this new year
- 2 Give thanks for the love and care that the Covid crisis sparked in people in 2020
- 3 **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas** Give thanks for what gave you joy in the Christmas period
- 4 Pray for those who are ill with Covid19, including those with long Covid
- 5 For Quarry Hill, the cottages, Morley Farm, Littlewhite farm, Goodwell Field
- 6 **Epiphany** The wise men followed the star, though they did not know what they would find. Pray for courage to notice and follow.
- 7 The Rectory, Rectory Cottages, Bridleway, Constable Meadows, Hoppy Acres, Thornberry Garth
- 8 Stockley Grove, Bridge Road, Tanglewood
- 9 For those who live in Village North, Station House, Railway Cottages
- 10 **Baptism of Christ** Pray for the cleansing and new start that baptism signifies
- 11 Give thanks for the Covid vaccines becoming available
- 12 Pray for those who are ill and anxious because their treatment has been delayed by Covid
- 13 The Oakenshaw Road area, Village South, Castle and Lodge
- 14 Pray for those who have lost their employment because of Covid
- 15 Whitworth Lane, Black House
- 16 Scription, Peppermires, Holywell, East Parks area
- 17 **Epiphany 2** May we, like the wise men, look for what really matters
- 18 **Week of prayer for Christian Unity** Pray for love and respect (not agreement!) to grow between Christians
- 19 Durham Rd and the Forge
- 20 Give thanks for the learning in 2020 about what really matters in life
- 21 Wooley Grange, High Wooley, Weather Hill, South Brandon farm, Springwell farm, Brawns Den
- 22 Pray for health workers, for stamina and safety
- 23 Goodwell Lea
- 24 **Epiphany 3** May we, like the wise men, recognise what is important in our lives
- 25 **Conversion of Paul** 'Conversion' means turning around. Give thanks for turning around moments in your life
- 26 **Timothy and Titus** were Paul's companions. Give thanks for your 'companions'
- 27 All who live in Foxes Row, Russell Close, North Field View
- 28 **Thomas Aquinas 1274**
- 29 Pray for politicians and government, the desire and will to work for the common good
- 30 Pray for teachers and students in schools and colleges, for energy to work well in difficult circumstances
- 31 **Epiphany 4** May we, like the wise men, be surprised by great joy as we encounter Christ

*If you would like something included in the Prayer Diary, please contact Alison Moore,  
[durmoores@btinternet.com](mailto:durmoores@btinternet.com)*

## Brancepeth Youth Club

January - March 2021

*We'll continue to meet weekly by Zoom, 6.00-7.30pm on Sunday evenings, starting on 10<sup>th</sup> January.*

*If you haven't yet joined one of the Zoom meetings and would like to, then please phone or email Geoff for details.*

*All young people in the Village (and beyond, and their friends) are warmly welcome. The age range is from 11 to 17 years inclusive.*

*The first meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January will be our traditional New Year Party! The theme this year is the letter 'F', and we plan to have games matched to the theme. Food (provide your own, I'm afraid) and costumes related to theme would also be appreciated!*

### *Leaders*

Geoff Moore

373 5674    [durmoores@btinternet.com](mailto:durmoores@btinternet.com)

Martin Peacock

07503 242074

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## Sunday School

'Don't forget!

**Sunday School meets every week in the Neville Chapel when we meet in church  
(with suitable Covid Safe measures in Place)**

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**Messy Church online 4pm Sunday 24th January**

The session will be held via Zoom and advertised in the Navigator and on the church Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StBrandons/>

Details will be sent by email to regular attenders



If you would welcome a short time of Christian worship with friends and neighbours, we would love to see you.

You are invited to join us for a small and friendly 'home Eucharist service' in the Castle Chapel and/or on zoom as Covid regulations permit.

Tuesdays 5 & 19 Jan 2021 at 11:00  
Tuesdays 9 & 23 Feb 2020 at 11:00



For more information, and the zoom link,  
please email [alison@brancepethcastle.org.uk](mailto:alison@brancepethcastle.org.uk)

*Rev. Alison, St Brandon's Church*



Salvation Army Christmas gift appeal 6<sup>th</sup> December.

A special thank you to everyone who donated to this appeal; St Brandon's response was splendid with donations arriving throughout the day. The gifts were collected by Lieutenant Ali Brooks on her first visit to our church and she was very pleasantly surprised: "are ALL of these for us?" Indeed, it was a challenge to fit everything into her car. Anna employed her packing skills and we managed to leave just enough room for Ali to squeeze in. Before heading off Ali declared "you're stars, all your congregation are stars!". Well done everyone and thank you

Janette Foxe

## **Carol Beeby (Sacriston at St Brandon's) - (CB) interview with Grace Hart - (GH)**

GH: Hello Carol! I understand you have recently retired from nursing. What got you into nursing?

CB: Hello! I was always interested in science at school, especially biology as I had an excellent teacher. When asked why I wanted to pursue nursing during my interview for nurse training, I can remember answering that I wanted to help people.

GH: How did you find your training?

CB: Really enjoyable, if a little daunting at times! It suddenly all felt quite real. I'd only really considered it on a big picture scale before and hadn't thought about the detailed practicalities of what it might involve (not being able to have time off when everyone else was off!). Despite a few shock moments, I found a way through and eventually trained as a general nurse and midwife, before going into community midwifery.

GH: Wow, it does sound like a challenging yet fulfilling vocation. Was that your experience?

CB: I certainly found fulfilment in it, yes. Both community midwifery and practice nursing enabled me to treat the whole person and not just the condition. Working as a community midwife gave me the opportunity to get to know the families of my patients and understand more of their lives.

GH: What a privilege. Speaking of whole life, can you tell me a little about your journey of faith?

CB: Growing up, I attended a C of E school and Sunday School, but wouldn't say that I had a personal faith until coming to St. Brandon's about 13 years ago. A friend invited me to a 'Back to church Sunday' service, and the rest is history! I quickly became more involved in various roles including being PCC secretary.

GH: How does your faith impact your everyday life?

CB: I think it has given me the opportunity to reflect upon the world and its injustices. For me attending church provides a forum highlighting Christian values and provides the opportunity to 'give' to those less fortunate than us. St. Brandon's supports the Foodbank, the women's refuge, the Children's Society and DASH (Durham Action on Single Housing).

GH: Interesting. Of course some of those injustices are felt more now than ever. What are some of the joys and challenges you've experienced during lockdown?

CB: Thankfully there have been many joys! I've had the opportunity to do more gardening and walks with our dogs, as well as spending more time with my husband at home (although it took a bit of getting used to at the start of lockdown). Also the square in which we live has done more community activities, from communal plant and food deliveries to three-legged races on VE Day when social distancing was required! One lady who lived on her own was so determined to take part in the race that she strapped on a third 'leg'!

GH: Haha, that's fantastic! She certainly showed perseverance in the face of a challenge.

What have been some of the challenges you've faced in this period?

CB: I guess like many people it's involved a lot of cancelled plans. In my case, I was looking forward to making the most of the extra time retirement afforded me by visiting people I hadn't seen in a while. It has also been a real shame not to be able to be in the church building.

GH: Indeed. One final question: as you enter this new chapter of retirement and as restrictions hopefully ease, what are you most looking forward to?

CB: It will be wonderful to be back in our church building again and to be doing more of the activities that have been put on hold, like visiting family and friends and having people to stay. I have also started to try to learn to play the piano, which I hope to continue.

GH: Brilliant! I'm a piano player myself and strongly believe that it's never too late to learn! Thank you for all that you've shared, Carol. Happy playing!

### **Christingle Service on Zoom – an enlightening experience!**

The Messy Church Team and Barbara welcomed a lovely crowd of young and old for a very atmospheric Christingle service on 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent. All were really zoomed in when we learned where the tradition of making Christingles originally came from (Guess what? From Germany – ever heard of the Christkindl?). Martin played a wonderful bishop with a big heart for children, and Nick helped us to make our own Christingle. The best moment was the lighting of the candles - Anna led us in prayer during a spine-tingling moment. Thanks to all taking part!

Sabine Tenge-Heslop

(see the screen shot on the back cover!)

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### **Great North Air Ambulance Service**

Charities like this are finding fund-raising extremely difficult. They have not been able to do house-to-house collections but we can collect within the village and arrange a single collection. I have already done 2 with the help of neighbours and Brancepeth Ladies and have now arranged one for Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January. For those who are interested they collect the following items...

Clothes, handbags, belts, shoes, curtains, towels, bedlinen

Separate bag...books and old mobile phones (NO CDs at present)

Please bring your bags to 2 Foxes' Row any time from Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> Jan. till the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup>. If you ring 01913780707 beforehand I will be able to garage items to keep them dry.

Thankyou... Allee Longstaff

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## **Friends of Brancepeth Cricket Field**

The FBCF is an association of enthusiasts wishing to see the Cricket field continue as a village amenity supported by villagers themselves, for recreation, relaxation and a focus for village events, celebrations and fun; all those things which bring people together. To that end it proposes to arrange and support activities on the field in partnership with the Parish Council which includes the field in its plans for the village, that the field should “play an active part in providing facilities and opportunities to promote the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of the community..... and fully embraces this spirit of localism and co-operation.” [Parish Plan Issue 2 December 2017.]

To this end, the FBCF have convened and set out the following Objectives:

To ensure that:

- (a) the Cricket Field continues to be a resource for all villagers to enjoy as an outdoor exercise or play area
- (b) the area is secured for the present and the long term and
- (c) new ideas will be developed about how the Field can be maintained and more widely used.

Membership is open to all interested in actively furthering these objectives and to those who simply wish to show their support. Please contact the secretary:

Sheena Murray:

28, Goodwell Lea,

0191 378 1097

[sheenamurray@icloud.com](mailto:sheenamurray@icloud.com)

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### **Stage improvements in the Village Hall – carried out during Covid restrictions**

First John Morgan's art work was mounted on the back wall, then a star cloth was ordered and hung at the back.

Next some of the unused kit was removed from high level.

The curtain track, known as a tab rail was ordered and assembled, thanks go to Ian Stoker for helping with this; then the track was hung, including a new timber support beam, thanks go to Ian, James Dalton and Dave Armstrong for assistance.

The new curtains were measured up and material was obtained from South Shields.

Curtains were then made and hung on the rail.

Side panels known as legs and high level panels known as skirts were then made and hung.

These mask the sides and the high levels of the stage from the audience.

All curtains, legs and skirts have lead weights sewn into the hems to help them hang.

The legs can be rotated through 90 degrees to suit the stage use.

Thanks go to Christine Jones for all the sewing.

Thanks also to Martyn Jones for masterminding the improvements.

## Update from Brancepeth Community Association (BCA)



You may recall that at this time of year, the BCA asks its members to renew their annual subscriptions for the year ahead. The subscriptions are a significant part of the BCA's income and help with the upkeep and maintenance of our beloved Village Hall as well as helping to facilitate hall users with social, recreational and educational activities at subsidised rates.

The ongoing pandemic with social distancing rules has impacted upon groups and individuals accessing the village hall for a significant part of last year and we will therefore extend 2020 membership subscriptions to the end of March 2021 – covering a period of 15 months. Thereafter, in the spring, we hope that you will renew your annual membership from April 2021, at the same membership subscription fees that have been held in place for 12 years.

Although the village hall closed in late March 2020 (and reopened periodically during the summer and autumn, complying with government guidance) the BCA has found ways to add value to your membership fees during these challenging times. At the start of lockdown, we set-up a Springwatch page on the BCA website and welcomed lots of wonderful photographs of flora and fauna in and around the village, attracting overseas interest with extended family and friends of villagers. We hosted several online themed quizzes with help from some expert quiz masters. The 'take-out meals' - using the village hall as a collection hub - were very popular. Although we could not host the planned VE Day celebration event in the hall, we were still able to celebrate outdoors and some fantastic video footage and photos were captured and posted on the BCA website. The Scarecrow Competition was great fun and was part of a broader set of activities put on for young people during the summer holidays under the guise of 'BrancepethAlive', funded by the BCA, our local County Durham AAP and in partnership with St Brandon's and Brancepeth Parish Council. The compilation Xmas Show DVD and Advent Windows were a great success. Thank you to all involved.

Whilst the hall was closed we took the opportunity to progress works on the upstairs 'Stage' revamp (enabled with a grant from Durham County Council) with a new modernised overhead storage area, a new star cloth backdrop and stage curtains. The upstairs has also been fully repainted. Also repairs to the chimney stacks and some electrical works have been completed as well as the installation of a phone booster for increased phone signal in and around the building. The existing stairlift was 20 years old and prone to breakdown so in April we replaced it.

To make the hall as safe as possible, we have also undertaken a detailed Covid-19 risk assessment, implemented new safety measures and purchased a large stock of cleaning products, hand sanitisers and paper towels. There are detailed Covid-19 guidance posters situated throughout the building.

Lastly, to let you know, the BCA committee will change at the next AGM (to be held in April 2021) with a few of our long serving committee members retiring from the committee. If anyone would like to be involved in the committee, please contact me – your input would be very welcome. Wishing everyone a safe and happy new year ahead.

**Peter Aitken, BCA Chairman**

## Brancepeth Show – The review

What a year! But if we thought 2020 would put a stop to the annual Brancepeth village show, well, we need not have been too concerned. The BCA are a resourceful bunch and came up with a creative and fun solution. And so, on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December many of us tuned into this year's *virtual* Christmas show to watch "Christmas Shows from the past", a bumper crop of comedy sketches, music, poetry, plays and dances from 1992 – 2019 collated on DVD.

It was lovely to see how the stage area has been transformed over the years with John Morgan's creative and professional decorations. If you haven't yet grabbed a copy of the DVD please do and watch it. Until then here are just a few snippets to whet your appetite:

In 1997 the Spice Girls found a gap in their calendar and performed for a very appreciative Brancepeth audience. At least I think it was the Spice Girls...certainly looked and sounded like the real deal to me. And ABBA...they turned up in 1999. I suppose Mama Mia the musical was still a few years away, so they had the time. Did you know that over the years Brancepeth audiences have clapped and sang along to grand performances by the Beachboys, Laurel and Hardy and the cast of Grease too? Yes, ok, of course those entertaining acts were really talented members of our community.

Back in 1998 Frank Coffield treated everyone present to a rousing rendition of Rule Britannia...dressed by Queen Victoria with hair styled by Bet Lynch (look her up!). Oh, also in 1998 Miss World aka the wonderful Margaret Dobson turned up to show off her fabulous figure in her swimsuit. What a very special lady and a great sport.

It was lovely to see some of the old comedy sketches: the Talent Show sketch of 2003 featuring Kath Curry, Martin Peacock in a swimming sketch in 2016 (yes, really), Rick and Rachel's "The Future" from 2017, and of course, that comedy classic "The Buffet" by Josie Armstrong, when she accurately described how a Brancepeth buffet works. Some of you will know that Josie is still working off her community service after alleging the bishop's wife has an on-line gambling addiction and the Queen owed her Avon money!

Brancepeth village has such a brilliant breadth of talent to draw from. In 2019 we appreciated the stunning costumes and beautiful, graceful Tibetan dancing by Lihua Wang and Deborah Chapman. Maybe the village attracts creative talent, do you think? Anyway, we are so lucky.

Evelyn Aitken told us what pleasures she has in store for her daughter-in-law when she moves in with her; and her Peter was in fine voice, generating audience participation in his telling of The Miners of Medomsley. Ulli Hobbs sang beautifully accompanied by Mark Monument on piano, Martyn Jones brought his whippet along



to entertain, the village choir were in fine voice expertly conducted by Jean Merrington and the Steve Taylor band expertly held sway with Rachel Lunney on vocals.

A huge well done to the children of the village for their brilliantly performed play in 2019, coached by Martin Peacock. It's worth mentioning that the play was written by the children themselves. Yes, I know, quite an achievement...the next generation of Brancepeth talent is in safe hands.

The DVD ended with a 2012 rendition of "We wish you a Merry Christmas" from the children of the village (most of them children no longer) with accompanying visual effects.

Post DVD some of us "zoomed" (how many of us had even heard of zoom this time last year?) into the chat rooms to raise a glass and say hello to fellow Brancepeth residents, past and present.

So, the Christmas Show 2020 went ahead with great success. Special thanks to the people who made it happen this year: Mark and Rosemary Monument, Josie Armstrong, Peter Burdess and Jo and James Dalton.



With thanks to Val Gibbons for her review

Mark and Rosemary Monument compiled the programme. They couldn't include some of the acts because of poor sound quality but all of the recorded shows can be accessed from the Brancepeth Archives and History Group web site.

## **Parish Council update**

The Parish Council continue to meet via Zoom to progress village maintenance and improvements. At the last meeting items that were discussed included;

The Field. The Parish Council are pleased to hear that a group of residents have formed a 'Friends' committee. They have set out their objectives elsewhere in this newsletter and we look forward to hearing what they will propose for the use of the field when Covid restrictions are lifted. The Parish Council hold a lease for the tenure of the field, this being the strategy to maintain an input and stake in any proposals for it in the future. This lease runs to 2023 and we are currently checking our status as tenants to underpin our position. The Parish Council run a contract to get the grass cut on the field, also some selected verge areas in the village not covered by DCC. We are seeking to renew the contract for Spring to ensure we have continuity when the current contract expires.

The Parish Council are working on updating their website to improve its visual appeal, improve its accessibility for everyone and give some interaction to the information from ourselves with residents. We are hoping to launch the new site early in the New Year.

A new noticeboard is to be installed soon on the verge near the entrance to the field. With the boards already at the Village Hall and in the bus stops we want to improve access to information and discourage fastening notices in an unsightly way to trees and telegraph poles. Again, we're hoping to have this installed early in the New Year.

Our next Parish Council meeting is at 7:30pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January. This will be a virtual meeting using Zoom. Residents are welcome to attend and if so, please get the dial in details from the clerk via our website.

Dave Armstrong

(PC chair)

## **Dates for the Diary:-**

Jan            24th   Sun            Messy Church, 4.00pm, Zoom  
January Book Club details to be decided after the meeting in December

## **Photos**

**Front cover** ©Nick Brooker – poster image of St Brandon's in the snow on a seasonally starry night.

### ***Inside front cover - Brancepeth Community Activities***

©Josie Armstrong – Putting up and decorating the Village Christmas Tree at the crossroads.  
Edward Staines, Dave Armstrong, Ritchie Brown & Sebastian & Tom Hobbs with Eli.  
Chris Hutton digging the enormous hole to hold the Christmas tree!  
Dave Armstrong painting the fencing in front of the Brancepeth sign  
©Peter Burdess washing the Brancepeth sign  
© Jim Merrington mending the wall and bulb planting at the entrance to the village  
©Jo Dalton– Martin Peacock delivering and filling the new tubs before planting them up

**Back cover** - ©Sabine Tenge-Heslop – screen shot with lit Christingles (see article)

### ***Inside back cover – Improvements in the Village Hall***

©Jo Dalton– Christine Jones sewing curtains and Martyn Jones working on the stage improvements (see article)  
© Peter Burdess – Liz Burdess making models to swell Village Hall funds  
©Jo Dalton – James Dalton working on the electrics!

Many thanks to everyone working towards improving the environment where we live.

**[www.stbrandon.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.stbrandon.org.uk/newsletter)**

***February newsletter entries no later than 18<sup>th</sup> January***

***Please send to Sue Morgan at [sueatpeppermires@gmail.com](mailto:sueatpeppermires@gmail.com)***



## **Brancepeth Community Association - Management Committee**

Peter Aitken	<i>Chairman</i>	Ian Stoker	
Martyn Jones	<i>Vice chairman</i>	Jean Merrington	<i>Choir &amp; Church</i>
Jo Dalton	<i>Secretary (&amp; Website)</i>	Geraldine Jennings	<i>Bookings &amp; Garden Club</i>
Margot Harrison	<i>Treasurer</i>	Joan Taylor	<i>Subscription, Wednesday</i>
Josie Armstrong	<i>Social Secretary</i>		<i>Coffee &amp; Cinema Club</i>
Anna Brooker	<i>Church Representative</i>		

<http://brancepethcommunityassociation.btck.co.uk/> Tel: 0191 3783952

### **Parish Activities**

Chairman B.C.A.	Peter Aitken, The Copse, Foxes Row (3789908)
Secretary	Jo Dalton, 1 Rectory Cottages (3780771)
Treasurer	Margot Harrison, Downsgarth (3784813)
Membership	Joan Taylor, 5 The Village (3783630)
Hall Bookings	Geraldine Jennings, 6 Goodwell Lea (3781583)
Archives & History	Vivienne Lowe, 17 The Village (3780974)
Badminton	Peter Hodge, (01388 745455)
Brancepeth Allotment & Leisure Gardeners' Club	Sue Morgan, Carole Reed & Liz Burdess baacommittee3@gmail.com
Book Club	Val Gibbons (3784200)
Choir	Jean Merrington (3780952)
Drama	Martin Peacock (07503242074)
Flower Guild	Jessie Brown (3782748)
Garden Club	Barry Dickinson (3782398)
Snooker Bookings	Geraldine Jennings (3781583)
Wednesday Coffee	Joan Taylor (3783630)
Yoga	Lynne Hastie (3781871)
Youth Club	Geoff Moore (3735674)

### **Parish Council**

Chairperson	Dave Armstrong – chair (07843 343846)
	James Dalton – vice chair (3780771)
	Christine Jones (3789297)
	Jessie Brown (3782748)
	Sheila Chapman (3784408)
	Ian Stoker (3784986)
Parish Clerk	Geoff Smith 07986197346
<b>County Councillors:</b>	<a href="mailto:olwyn.gunn@durham.gov.uk">olwyn.gunn@durham.gov.uk</a>
	<a href="mailto:fraser.tinsley@durham.gov.uk">fraser.tinsley@durham.gov.uk</a>

[www.brancepeth-parish-council.org](http://www.brancepeth-parish-council.org)







Nick and Anna



Sabine



Elizabeth Thomas



Martin



Bridget



James Morgan



Deborah

