

West Howe Post

FREE

18th March 2023

Written by Ashley Liddington

ST PHILIP'S CHURCH

CELEBRATES 70 YEARS IN WEST HOWE



From its consecration on 13th March 1953, St Philips, West Howe has been at the heart of the community on the estate. It's been a beacon on a hill shining the light and love of Jesus into the community as we know it, and since the 1990's, when the cross was lit on top of the building, its had a physical light in the darkness here too.

Originally, known to many at the start of its life as the "Dinner centre on the hill", as it was not the most aesthetically pleasing churches, it would provide a meeting place for many within the parish, as well as a place for worship, prayer and community.



St Phillips in the early days would have up to 250 children attend Sunday school, which had to be held over 3 sessions and was a place full of laughter, fun, the scriptures and praise to God.

Children and young people have always been a key part in the churches story, and over the years it has hosted many outreaches to this age group. These have including youth clubs, holiday clubs, children's clubs, parent and toddler groups, children's contact centres and Sunday schools. It has been supported by two youth outreach leader and a children's ministry leader, along with many willing volunteers. This work continues today with Kingdom Kids being an outreach to the estate. Generations of people have been touched by the gospel message from the heart of the community.

Community really is in the DNA of the church and over its 70 years the church has been host to many groups including, life groups, sewing clubs

(who used to produce beautiful banners and vestment for the church), craft groups, money advice centres, men's ministries, women's ministries, civic and ecumenical services with many denominations and even a church plant to name just a few. It has been a place for people to rest, renew, experience and discover Jesus at the heart of their journey in West Howe.

The original building which stood on the site, now the location of Edward May Court, was a traditional 1950's pre-fabricated building, it had a main area and a side room for children. There are stories that one of the first jobs that would be completed each Sunday morning by Bob, was to go around the church and replace any broken windows as it would be a weekly occurrence. The buildings have taken a bit of a battering in the community over the years with the new church only having its windows replaced this year after having them shot gun pelleted.

In the 1986 the new church was given the go ahead and was built relatively quickly, upon its current site. The week the work was completed, there is a wonderful account that the service was started in the old church and then the congregation continued to sing as they marched out of the old church building and into the new praise God and celebrating the new home of St Philips.

Unfortunately many years later, the congregation was heartbroken when large cracks began to appear in the building. After several attempts to support the roof over the years, upon closer inspection it was found that the church had not been built to the right specification and indeed the roof was pulling the building apart!



A huge fund raising effort was launched to raise the roof! The church community, under the leadership of its current Vicar Rev Brooks managed to raise all £260,000, from many sources and in 2017/2018 the church roof was completely replaced to the glory of God. A testament to how important and vital the church is here at the heart of the community.

The centre is now a hive of activity throughout the week and weekends, with many groups using the facilities, everything from weight loss, to health groups, education, parties, family events as well as life groups, Communion services, morning and night prayer and church events.

The history of the church would not be complete without mentioning the huge amount of people who have served the call of God to West Howe over the 70 years of its history.





It has also been supported by a great number of amazing people and lay ministers, and now continues to have a fantastic team of Lay Pastoral Assistants, Lay Worship Leaders and church wardens along with its PCC's. All these amazing people help St Philip's, to be an oasis in the estate, and continue to make it a place where everyone is welcome, no matter who they are and where they come from, so that they can encounter the life changing Jesus in their lives.

The church has, for over 70 years had a stable number of active communicants that love God, Love people have served the people and parish of West Howe with passion and praise to God, ensuring that the presence of Jesus has and always will be here in the community, living up to its original purpose as a mission church to the estate.

Over the church's history, St Phillips has seen five Vicars, Rev George Molyneux, Rev Tom Taylor, Rev Richard Harrison, Rev Dick Saunders (also the Rector of the benefice with St Andrew's) and its current vicar Rev Christine Brooks.

The church also has a history of service and training, it has been the training church of four curates including Rev Tim Gome, Rev Diane Robert, Rev Garry Neil and Rev Tony Gee along with a couple of ordinands along the way.





EASTER

2nd
APRIL

PALM SUNDAY

10.15 Holy Communion

6th
APRIL

MAUNDY THURSDAY

19.30 Holy Communion

7th
APRIL

GOOD FRIDAY

14.00 @ the cross

9th
APRIL

EASTER SUNDAY

10.15 Holy Communion

St. Philip's West Howe, Moore Avenue, BH11 8AT.

