

St Michael's Church, North Rode

<http://northrodechurch.org.uk>

Introduction

By contrast to Gawsworth, North Rode is a smaller parish. After many years in a benefice of 4 small parishes, we became part of a benefice with Gawsworth in the 2014 reorganisation, and have had the privilege of being led by the Rector.

We only justify one service each Sunday, but aim to cover all types. Many of the congregation live in other parishes, with some being previous residents, but are attracted to our traditional services.

We look forward to a new Rector who can build on our traditions and with God's guidance keep the parish alive.

History



St Michael's Church, North Rode, between Macclesfield and Congleton, is a grade II listed building donated by the Daintry family, and consecrated in 1846. It was designed by Charles and James Trubshaw and stone built in mainly Romanesque and Gothic revival style with a tower housing a clock on the west side. Notable features are the hammer-beam roof, encaustic floor tiles incorporating the Daintry crest, four brass corona chandeliers over the aisle, and a small statue of St Michael in a niche above the south door.

Later enhancements include wood carving on the altar, rood screen and font cover done by local people around 1900. In 1904 the new oak choir stalls were added, the work of the Macclesfield School of Carvers. The vicar's vestry was added at a later date. The kneelers were all stitched in the 1970s by ladies in the village and were organised by the late Mrs Tudor Evans of the Grange. A disabled access slope from the road was added in 2008, and a disabled toilet and kitchenette in 2017. This enables the church to be used for a variety of community activities

St Michael's is set in an elevated position surrounded by a graveyard which is about half full. It serves a village of some 240 residents, with some of the congregation coming from Congleton and Macclesfield. It seats about 140, with further seating in the gallery at the west end accessed by a spiral stone staircase.



Originally it came under the mother church of Prestbury, in which Chancel Repair liabilities within the village still vest. It is now part of Macclesfield Deanery, in a combined benefice with St James', Gawsworth, led by the Rector.

The Daintry family also built the Grade II listed Daintry Hall across the road from the church, and the adjacent School House, both now administered by trustees and committee members under PCC auspices. This used to be a primary school, and is now let to a private nursery. It can be used at other times for small events and meetings, but there is not enough space for larger village events.

Unusually the village has no war memorial. Farmers had reserved occupations in the wars, and those from the village who served mercifully all returned safely.

Further information about the church and village can be found in the *History of North Rode* by Anne Lever.



People at North Rode and Parish Team



There is a flourishing stable village community comprising retired people, part-time farmers, and a largely professional working community, but there are fewer children than might be expected. Residents in the more recent barn developments tend to be more mobile. An email circulation list keeps everyone informed about forthcoming events and

other more immediate communications affecting the village.

A Parish Council vets planning applications and handles other village matters.

There is a popular village Women's Institute, but there isn't enough support for other North Rode groups and fellowship, with many being available in Gawsworth.

The church is kept open during daylight hours, with the tenant of School House being the keyholder.

The Parish of North Rode

North Rode has an attractive rural setting, bordered by the River Dane and the Macclesfield Canal, and surrounding the Manor House in the Park, which used to comprise common



grazing. There are several public footpaths, and the Manor drive is designated as a public bridleway. The London to Manchester railway line runs through the village, but North Rode station was closed in 1962.

Traditionally North Rode was a dairy farming village, but there are no longer any milking herds and sheep are more prevalent, with some horses and more recently some arable crops.

There is resistance to new housing development, but several barns have been converted to dwellings. Some older houses, such as The Grange, are Grade II listed. Diversification includes Bed and Breakfast and self-catering accommodation, and a site with 6 self-catering chalets.

The Chain and Gate is the only remaining pub, just outside the boundary, and there is no longer a shop or Post Office.

Worship

We aim to provide a variety of services every Sunday morning at 11.15 to appeal to all preferences. Typical attendance on normal Sundays is 15-20, which rises for special services, and about 100 came to the 2018 Carol Service with the Macclesfield Light Orchestra.

The services on a monthly basis currently comprise:

1 st Sunday	Common Worship Communion
2 nd Sunday	BCP Communion led by the Rector
3 rd Sunday	BCP Matins
4 th Sunday	Family Service led by the Rector
5 th Sunday	Communion led by the Rector, alternating with Gawsworth

Services without the Rector are taken by visiting retired clergy and lay readers. We are open to suggestions on a format which would attract more people.

The morning Harvest service is well supported and usually includes a harvest hymn written by a late North Rode resident. The annual Toy Service produces several sacks of presents which are distributed by the NSPCC. We used to have Evensong on Ascension Day and Harvest

Sunday, but these were dropped because of lack of support, and there is scope for increasing the number of special services.

The active robed choir comprise five people, accompanied by a traditional pipe organ, and there are further excellent singers in the village. Canticles are sung, but psalms are usually said, and there is less chanting than at Gawsorth.

Outreach

Our web site and magazine are the main source of information, including services and other events, together with reports on items of interest.

We encourage baptisms, weddings and funerals. Some baptisms come through contact with the Nursery.

When the local primary school in Daintry Hall, opposite the church, was closed, North Rode children, along with those from six other villages, were assigned to Marton School. Although it is outwith the parish, and involvement by the Rector and others is encouraged, and each village elects a Governor. Liaison with the Daintry Hall Nursery is also encouraged, and they hold their delightful annual nativity in the church.

Finance

We pay our full parish share at 20% each month, and annual turnover is about £24K. Capital is about £35K. We are dependent on fund-raising to supplement planned giving, which usually exceeds £5K per annum. The flagship bi-annual village event is our Sheep-Racing and barbecue from which the church gets a 60% share, usually amounting to at least £6K. Other events have included very successful auctions of promises, safari suppers, a Gardens festival and carol-singing.

A Planned Giving envelope scheme is in operation and we claim back nearly £3,000 in Gift Aid from this and through pew envelopes. Our annual Gift Day in June raises about £2,000. Card donations can be made via the web site.



We are dependent on grants for major projects such as the recently completed disabled toilet and kitchenette.

Major projected repairs to re-lead the tower roof and repair glazing will cost over £30K and will need grants.

We have a 100 Club with 50% split of income between the church and prizes, but it needs more support to reach 100 subscriptions. We need more initiatives such as legacies. A Friends

Club has been considered, but for a small church the returns are unlikely to make it worth the work involved.

Future Plans

- At present all PCC tasks are handled by a handful of overworked people, which isn't sustainable without younger members prepared to take over. Our future survival as a parish with our own identity depends on attracting younger members to our congregation and PCC and we need to consider how to achieve this.
- Previously we were equal partners in a benefice with Bosley, Winkle and Wildboarclough, which worked well. In the 2014 reorganisation we became a smaller part of a benefice with Gawsworth and a well-established rector who had been in post for 15 years. Gawsworth were used to being self-contained, which meant that each parish kept their own identities. We hope that a new incumbent could achieve more integration with a fresh approach to both parishes.
- There is scope for a more organised approach to Outreach.
- We need to progress major project work which involves grant applications.
- Discussions with Gawsworth might result in a more appealing magazine.