

## Churchyard Alpacas Pandemic Attraction at St Wilfrid's Church, Calverley

As Spring has just come alive once more, so the hard work starts in our Churchyard with grass cutting one of the main priorities and this year our small group of volunteers have been joined by two new participants Pablo and Geoffrey our four-legged Alpaca friends.

Pablo and Geoffrey were gifted to the church by a local resident, and they join our team which also includes three goats. The church introduced the goats to help keep the vegetation down and they, like the Alpacas, have been the star attractions especially during lockdown with many families visiting to admire God's beautiful creatures.



As well as being celebrities in the churchyard they also carry out essential work making sure that the vegetation in the large old Victorian section is kept to a manageable level.

One pupil of Calverley Church of England Primary School, which is adjacent to the churchyard, has raised funds to purchase a purpose-built hut for Pablo and Geoffrey to shelter in during the winter months, the children love them and it's wonderful that they will have lasting memories of their childhood that includes being able to engage with these animals.

A local resident who lives overlooking the pen where the animals are kept overnight has taken on the role of their 'keeper' and makes sure they are fed and watered at least twice a day and has even installed his own wildlife camera to monitor their behaviour. This is remarkable as the resident concerned does not attend church but has become actively

engaged with this form of outreach into the local community.



The introduction of the animals has been such a success that the PCC have agreed to purchase a small flock of sheep to supplement the work already being carried out. Our alpacas and goats demonstrate how all of nature points to God and can be a point of spiritual connection for many people, as well as very practical.

John Corbin March 2021