

**DIOCESE OF ST. ALBANS  
PARISH OF ST. ANDREW, BIGGLESWADE**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)  
HELD IN ST ANDREW'S CHURCH ON  
SUNDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025**

Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong chaired the meeting.

44 parishioners were recorded as having attended the meeting, including 6 via Zoom.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Angela and George Dilley, Robin and Rosemary Jopson, Barbara Ebeling, Rob Butcher, Nettie van de Weerd, Colin and Beryl Dixon, Adrian Maynard, Wendy Smith, David Pilgrim, Claire Leeks, Gareth and Helen Tranter, Sam Elong, Noah Dilley, Adam and Pippa Wells.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 APCM**

The minutes were proposed as being a true record of the meeting:

**Proposed by Hilary Johnson; Seconded by Jan Gardner. Approved/1 abstention.**

**3. Matters arising from these minutes**

None.

**4. Annual Reports**

a) Report of the Electoral Roll Officer

Ruth Marshall-Jones reported that this year saw the preparation of a new Electoral Roll, being the first year in the six-year cycle. There are currently 100 members as at the closing date of 26<sup>th</sup> April, there having been 124 as at the closing date last year. The return to the Diocese will therefore show a total of 100, of whom 98 are resident in the parish. Ruth added that the drop in numbers was likely due to several factors; Covid had impacted, with some people not returning to church; some church members had moved away or sadly died. The Electoral Roll closes for a period and will then re-open for those who didn't complete a form but still wish to. Rev'd Liz thanked all those who had returned forms and to Ruth for her work.

b) Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the parish generally

Lucy noted in the Annual Report of the PCC that the MAP had not been amended to reflect the new one adopted by PCC in November 2024. Rev'd Liz thanked Lucy for highlighting this; the new MAP will be referenced going forward. Rev'd Liz thanked Ruth for bringing together the report and confirmed that it would be submitted to the Charities Commission in due course

c) The financial statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

The Statutory Financial Statements 2024 and a Summary Sheet of these figures had been previously circulated. Andrew Rutt spoke to these by way of a PowerPoint presentation to highlight:

**PCC Financial Funds**

- Are made up of endowment, restricted, designated and general funds a total of £495,000
- There is a restricted fund for 10 Compton Mead in sum of £444,000
- The other restricted funds show in the sum of £14,000 as cash at the bank and include the Holiday Club, Religious Education and Bellringer Funds.
- Designated funds of £7,000 include the Major Fabric, the Emergency Mission and the Donations and Legacies Funds, which are all shown as cash at the bank
- **The General Fund**
- 2024 shows a deficit of £10,000 and the PCC is budgeting for a further deficit of £4,000 on the General Fund for 2025, (the reduction due to increased giving, reduced

energy and maintenance costs) which would leave reserves of £9,000 at December 2025

### **General Fund-Regular Giving**

- Shows as £76K but is budgeted to be £78K following a "Giving Generously" initiative in October 2024, this is still £1k less than the giving in 2018. It was reported that 51% of the regular giving comes through the Parish Giving Scheme with a further 33% in bankers orders.

### **General Fund – Expenditure**

- The Parish Share in 2024 was £77K and will be £76K in 2025.
- In 2024 a total of £15K was given to various charities through fundraising and the share allocated from regular giving.
- Other expenditure includes the parish administrator, energy costs and insurance.
- The cost of both gas and electricity for 2024 and 2025 were explained to the meeting, showing the cost in 2023 at £16K, 2024 at £10K but a budgeted decrease to £9K in 2025.

### **Thank yous**

- Andrew thanked any number of people for their help and assistance to his role, for everyone for their regular giving and those who help in fundraising.
- Lucy Dilley thanked those people who donated to the tea and coffee fund which is growing steadily.

### **Questions:**

- There were three questions/comments raised by the attendees, which Andrew answered
  - o Steve Waldron asked if the number of weddings and funerals seriously affected the figures and was there scope to get more money into the church. Andrew responded that last year there were 4 weddings and this year there are only two. There has been a drop in the use of the church for funerals over the years as funeral directors are encouraging people to consider the crematorium as it is cheaper and more convenient; a lot of the fees for the funerals go to the Diocese. Rev'd Liz noted that this was not a reflection on the church, merely change. There are ways in which we could think more creatively on how we reach a wider audience and maybe we need to think about that as a PCC and increase our outreach in the community.
  - o Mary Dominey asked if there was still a collection of the newspapers. Yes, they are still collected. Chris added that the papers are sold to a company and there is a yearly collection but there has been a two-year delay which we are chasing.
  - o Anna asked if it was just newspapers or could it include flyers. Chris said it could be anything that is paper.

Andrew referred to Gift Aid and noted that you can claim on small donations. For example, the wall safe and teas and coffee has achieved an extra £600 over the last two years. Rev'd Liz gave a vote of thanks to those who organised the 'tap and go' facility. There had been a few teething problems, but it seems to be working ok now; we just need to promote it more.

Chris gave a vote of thanks to Andrew for his work as Treasurer and Accountant.

#### **d) The report of the Churchwardens on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church**

Chris referred to the report in the Annual Reports booklet. He thanked all those who helped in working parties and to those who are part of the Eco working group for their hard work to make us more eco aware. He noted that many jobs are done by self-help which saves us a lot of money. He gave a vote of thanks to anyone who takes part in any of these activities. Chris referred to last year's minutes which mentioned the introduction of solar panels as a consideration by the PCC. Chris noted a few years ago, following a visit from a consultant at the DAC, a discussion was had about solar power and where we need to put solar panels on our roof. He suggested we wait until the boiler storage was in place. We are now ready for this to be looked at again. Chris referred to the flagpole; the

top of the pole is damaging the flag, therefore we are unable to fly it. We have been in touch with the architect who is looking at how to replace/renew. We continue to look at unifying the flooring. With regard to the north roof, that is on the agenda and is currently with the DAC as they need to tell us how they want us to do it. We are aware that the project needs to be undertaken as swiftly as possible since the government are now trying to limit the amount of VAT reclaimed to March 2026, therefore if the roof cost £100K before VAT, the VAT would be £20K. If the work is completed before March 2026, we will be able to claim back £20K; if the work is not completed until after March 2026, we will be unable to claim back the VAT. Rev'd Liz added that we are waiting for the architect to be advised by the DAC.

e) Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Rev'd Liz referred to the report in the booklet. There was nothing to add. She gave a vote of thanks to those who serve on the deanery and diocesan synods in their roles. She added that it was good to have lots of colleagues who could host in vacancies.

f) Report on the Vicar and Churchwardens' Charities

Rev'd Liz referred to the report in the booklet, a useful pastoral aid.

## 5. Elections

Rev'd Liz gave a vote of thanks to those stepping down from various roles:

Ruth as PCC secretary. Rev'd Liz thanked Ruth for all that she has done and given to the PCC in terms of time and dedication in the past eight years.

Judith Thatcher, who has served on the PCC for one year.

Vivienne Gayfer, who has served on the PCC for six years. The meeting applauded.

Turning to the elections: -

4 persons as representatives on the Parochial Church Council for 3 years

One nomination had been received:

Lucy Dilley: **Proposed: John Dilley; Seconded: Carolyn Marron**

1 person as representative on the Parochial Church Council for 2 years

One nomination had been received:

Rob Butcher: **Proposed: Brenda Thorpe; Seconded: Rosemary Jopson**

1 person as representative on the Deanery Synod for one year

No nominations had been received.

Rev'd Liz congratulated Lucy and Rob on their election to PCC and noted that this leaves us with three vacancies on PCC which can be filled at any time as with Deanery Synod reps, currently Hilary Johnson and Rosemary Bentley. Therefore, if anyone would like to think about the roles, they are welcome to come forward as they can be elected during the year.

Rev'd Liz noted a few dates for PCC:

5<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm at Cople church for the swearing in of Churchwardens.

7<sup>th</sup> June the PCC will meet at Jordans Mill at 10 am to welcome aboard and get to know each other.

1<sup>st</sup> July at 7:30 pm in the Ivel Room – standing committee meet.

15<sup>th</sup> July at 7:30 pm in the Chapter House – PCC meet.

## 6. Safeguarding

Helen Tranter, our new PSO had sent her apologies but had asked Rev'd Liz to raise a couple of points on her behalf.

As a policy and as our PSO, Helen has implemented a single point of contact for safeguarding concerns, which will be herself. There is now a mobile number and email address.

We have built a policy safeguarding training log which complies with the rules and training policies of the Diocese. The training log needs to be kept up to date.

Thanks to those who have responded and done the training which gives us a good picture. Helen has worked very hard with various people to draw that training log together. Rev'd Liz gave a vote of thanks to Helen for all the work she has put in. We are looking forward to supporting her going forward.

Mark Simmons asked whether any safeguarding training that is undertaken outside the church environment is regarded as valid training or does it have to be specifically under the banner of St Andrew's. Chris responded that unfortunately this is not the case; the training is related to the church environment.

#### **7. Appointment of an Independent Financial Examiner for the 2024 Accounts**

Andrew Rutt noted that the accounts had been checked by Colin Sparshott, a retired certified accountant; he had indicated that he would be happy to continue in this role. It was therefore proposed that he be asked. **PROPOSED: Andrew Rutt; SECONDED: Vaughan Johnson. All approved.** Thanks were given to Andrew for liaising with Colin Sparshott.

#### **8. Report from the Vicar**

Rev'd Liz referred to her sermon (attached as Annex A) and gave a few additional thank yous. Highlights:-

- building our new MAP, moving beyond the pandemic we were hopeful for more continuity. There are some specific areas which we are going to try and look at. Looking forward to the year ahead, we have challenges and things to bring to the table.
- Rev'd Liz had been on a course "Launchpad" and next Monday there will be a launch evening where she would like to bring some of that teaching back to the parish.
- We have been awarded a couple of grants from the Diocese to help us with getting resources and a new addition for the young people being a tennis table.
- A lot of highlights have been around working with the schools.

#### **9. Any other business**

Chris thanked Rev'd Liz for being part of all that is St Andrew's; we look forward to the future. The meeting applauded.

Rev'd Liz said that we were delighted to see Chris back and improving in health and wished him well, assuring him of continued support; we are happy to have you back.

Chris thanked everyone for their support, prayers and cards; the support he has received has been outstanding and wonderful.

The meeting closed with the blessing.

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(Chair)

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(Date)

## ANNEX A

Fourth Sunday of Easter 2025/Vocations Sunday/APCM  
**10am Parish Communion followed by the APCM**  
Acts 9.36-43; Revelation 7.9-17; John 10.22-30

*Let us pray:*

Heavenly Father, thank you that you love us and that you have called us into your kingdom.  
Give us the wisdom to know how you are calling each of us today,  
and give each of us the courage to respond.  
+In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

*I wonder when someone last called you?*

Perhaps you received a phone call, or did someone see you in town and call out your name?

Calling is such an important theme in Christian life. It is the way we understand God's invitation to follow him and serve him. Calling is something that we share with every Christian in the world and through history – a call to follow Jesus, a call to baptize people of God living together as the Body of Christ, and a call to take our place as part of God's family, the Church.

Today is known in the Church as Vocations Sunday. Vocation means 'calling' and Vocations Sunday is a day when we think about the different ways in which God calls us to love him and to follow him, and we can serve him and others. Today is also the day when we will hold our Annual Parochial Church Meeting after this service. This dual focus for our worship today offers us an opportunity to give thanks for all that has been, and to look forward to all that will be. I would like to offer some reflections on what it means to be called by a loving God and to serve him by reflecting on the calling of God and to give thanks to God for the many, many opportunities we have had as a Church to respond to God's call over this past year, both as individuals and as a community of faith.

Sometimes we may think of calling, or vocation, as being limited to special jobs such as a priest, a doctor, a nurse, a teacher. But the truth is that every single one of us has a calling or a vocation to follow Jesus. Calling is something that we all share. Calling though is also personal and specific.

Some years ago, John Powell in a book called 'Seasons of the Heart' (1988) wrote about there being an old Christian tradition that says God sends each person into this world with a special message to deliver, with a special song to sing for others, with a special act of love to bestow. No one else can speak your message, or sing your song, or offer your act of love.

These are only entrusted to you.

Each of us is loved and called by God. Expressing your special message, singing your special song, offering your act of love will not only bring you profound fulfilment it will also be enriching for others.

This is God's calling to each one, our vocation is to unearth and to give of our innermost treasure.

God gives to each of us particular gifts, skills and characteristics that he calls us, by name, to share with others. Sometimes that will be a calling to be a good friend or neighbour, it might be a calling to be a brilliant cook or an administrator, or to drive a bus, or to volunteers for a charity, it might be a calling to serve in ministry in the church offering your time and talents to build up the worship and mission of the Church – it might be a combination of these things, and so much more. As we

reading in 1 Corinthians 2.9: *“No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”.*

*So, time to reflect: where has God been calling us to love and to serve as a Church, and how have we been responding?*

In our Parish, we are blessed with many ministries and opportunities to serve. We are called by God to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Throughout the past year we have been called by God in many and varied ways, and these are just some of the ways we have responded with faith, hope and love:

We have responded to many pastoral calls for conversation, and support, to specific calls for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, journeying alongside Chizara, David and Munachi who responded to God’s call and came forward to be prepared for First Holy Communion and Christopher, Jane, Niah and Valerie called by name to be Confirmed by Richard, Bishop of Bedford, on the 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2025, the Sixth Sunday of Easter.

We have been called to pray and to worship together. We have been called to visit and care for the sick and the suffering, to walk alongside the anxious and comfort the bereaved. At times this past year this has included many of you, and your loved one. It is good to hear and see many of you recovering and coming through your health challenges and wellbeing struggles. I give thanks to God today for calling me to serve this parish as your Vicar, and I thank God for his mercy and love for us all.

Today, I also remember those who have been called by God to everlasting life, eternal rest. It is with love and thanksgiving for the gift of life, and in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life that we remember all those whose Funerals have taken place this past year, and amongst those known especially to us; Norman Gurney, Sylvia Rutt, James George ‘Jim’ Seamer, John Pryor, Donald Pryor, Pauline Pryer, Jennifer Baglin, Philip Hickin, Morris Pulham, Paul Bennett – Rest in Peace. As we honor their memory, may we celebrate the impact they had on our lives and it is my continuing prayer that we find comfort in our faith that our dearly departed loved ones are now in a place of peace and eternal joy.

Throughout the year, as a Church we have been blessed by the ministry of many angels, too many to name everyone by name, but by you all, all who have responded to God’s call, and those who have taken up specific roles in the life of our Church, giving time and talents to minister and to serve God. I am reminded of Malcome Guite’s poem here: The Last Beatitude:

*And blessed are the ones we overlook;  
The faithful servers on the coffee rota,  
The ones who hold no candle, bell or book  
But keep the books and tally up the quota,  
The gentle souls who come to “do the flowers”,  
The quiet ones who organise the fête,  
Church sitters who give up their weekday hours,  
Doorkeepers who may open heaven’s gate.  
God knows the depths that often go unspoken  
Amongst the shy, the quiet, and the kind,  
Or the slow healing of a heart long broken  
Placing each flower so, for a year’s mind.  
Invisible on earth, without a voice,  
In heaven their angels glory and rejoice.*

I will say a little more in the Vicar’s Report at the APCM:

{Today I am giving thanks to God for his calling on the lives of us all in his Church, amongst those: Chris Parker and Nettie van der Weerd, our Churchwardens, for Andrew Rutt, PCC Treasurer and Ruth Marshall-Jones, our PCC Secretary, who steps down from this role today following 8years faithful service in that role, all our PCC and Deanery Synod members and all who serve on

committees and working groups here; for the Eco-Group and all who work to care for the Buildings and Ground that we are richly blessed with, for Rosemary Bentley, our LLM and fellow colleague in ministry here; for Mandy Anning our former Parish Administrator; I give thanks to God for Jenny, our Sacristan and for Richard coordinating the Serving Team here, for all our servers and all who contribute to the planning and leading of worship; for Rob Butcher our Organist and Director of Music, choir members and worship band musicians, Sue Thorn and Bill Fudge in particular for their help and support during Rob's time off sick earlier this year; for Helen Tranter our new Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO); for Emma Pallett, all our Sunday School leaders and helpers; for all our Youth Leaders and Helpers; for those who made the trip to our Mission Partner in Mafambisa; and for Emma, Sally and Chris, and absolutely everyone who pulled together to make 'Deep Sea Divers' Summer Holiday Club 2024 a wonderful week for all; for Maggie McCloughlin and Mother's Union, for Charlotte Smith and all those who ring our Bells calling us to worship, to remember and to celebrate; for those who give generously, fundraise, promote and support charities working across the world; those who care, visit, clean, serve, read, lead in prayer and worship, offer PA support, arrange rotas and assist with parish administration, for us all seeking to be Christ-Centered – Welcoming – Inclusive – Outward Looking].

We have been called to serve the local community and the wider world, as well as the Biggleswade Deanery, Churches Together in Biggleswade and Diocese and we have responded in many different ways: just to raise up some of these callings and responses this past year: we were pleased to host a Deanery Lent evening worship with Richard, Bishop of Bedford as the Preacher, as well as Diocesan Quiet Day for Clergy in March and a Deanery Synod meeting on Vocations in October. We were invited to join with the Diocesan celebrations marking the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women, and the Mother's Union gave a wonderful tea-party celebration too. In March we were delighted to host the Mayor's Civic Service: Youth & Community 2024 focus with Miss Zoe Linnington, Head of Edward Peake school as the speaker. We were invited to lead the Churches Together Good Friday Service in the Market Square, Remembrance Day & Armistice Day services, and to speak and pray at the Christmas Light's Switch-on once again this year.

We welcomed Bishop Alan, Bishop of St. Albans here on Sunday June 30<sup>th</sup> to preside, preach and bless our New Heating System. We've been responding to God's call on the Church to grow younger and more diverse, working alongside children and young people of the parish in Sunday School, Holiday Club, Youth Groups and on the mission trip to Mafambisa. We have responded to our local schools calling on the church throughout the year to host services and lead Collective Worship in schools, and to served on Governing Bodies throughout the year when the education system changed from the three to the two-tier system, and to celebrate the newly formed St. Andrew's Church of England **Primary School** and Edward Peake Church of England **Secondary School**. We've responded to the needs of the sick, in particular by building up regular Home Communion visits in Care Homes in the Parish. We've responded to the community call for hosting music concerts and events throughout the year, alongside hiring out the Chapter House to uniformed organisations, charities, and local groups. We've responded to emergency calls for funds, alongside hosting fundraising events throughout the year including the Country Fayre and a Christmas Bazaar, and with your support raised giving in the parish through our Generous Giving focus in the autumn. *And we could go on.* The point of looking back today is to give thanks to God, remembering that God's call is a gift, and responding to it brings life, purpose, and joy.

On Vocations Sunday, we give thanks to God for his call on our lives may we also give thanks for the work of the PCC, who have worked with Canon Tim Lomax on our new Mission Action Plan, launched on St. Andrew's Day in 2024, calling us to be 'Christ-Centered, Welcoming, Inclusive and Outward-Looking'. In this coming year, may we open ourselves more fully to God's call, trusting that God will equip us and guide us. Let us pray for each other, that we may grow as a community where all are encouraged to discover their true calling. As Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

As we look back, may we give thanks for all that has been,  
As we look forward, may we give thanks for all that will be.  
+In the name of Christ, Amen.

*The Revd. Liz Oglesby-Elong  
Vicar of the Parish of St. Andrew, Biggleswade.*