

**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 20th SEPTEMBER 2020**

Rev'd Guy Scott chaired the meeting.

39 parishioners were recorded as having attended the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Margaret Spinner, Colin and Beryl Dixon, Tony and Christine Elcombe, Vaughan and Hilary Johnson, George Dilley, Paul and Shirley Williams, Judith Wakeling, Elaine Martin, Paul and Linda Canty, Yvonne Gray, Nettie van der Weerd, John and Jessica Dilley, Rosamund Drakes, Gill Whinnet

2. Approval of the minutes of the 2019 APCM

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2019 were approved by those present.

3. Matters arising from the previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Reports

a) Electoral Roll

Rev'd Guy informed the meeting that Ruth Marshall-Jones had taken over the position of Electoral Roll Officer following the resignation of George Dilley. Ruth then reported that the year commenced with 133 parishioners on the Electoral Roll, being the second year in the six-year cycle. Two people had added their names to the Electoral Roll by the closing date and two members of the church family, Paul and Linda Canty, had removed their names having made the decision to worship in their home village of Blunham. One person had been removed as a result of their death, this being Prudence Moore. Therefore the Electoral Roll had a membership of 132 names. The return to the diocese would therefore show a total of 132 persons of whom 124 are resident in the parish.

Rev'd Guy thanked Ruth.

b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and the Parish

Rev'd Guy asked if the meeting was happy to accept the report and if there were any questions/comments. There being none, the report was accepted.

c) Financial Report

Rev'd Guy asked if the meeting had any questions for Richard/Claire. Andrew Rutt felt the meeting needed to understand that the income from stewardship net of the mission giving was less than the parish share which pays for the incumbent. Effectively the PCC was paying for the lighting, rates, insurance etc from the rent received for Compton Mead. Lucy Dilley said that should Compton Mead become vacant, presumably there would be an impact on the church's running. Rev'd Guy and Richard confirmed this would be the case. Andrew continued that doubtless loose plate collection and weekly giving had been impacted. Richard said that looking at numbers this year so far, there was an impact on loose plate giving but the reduction was not quite as much as thought. He added that we did need to be aware of premises income which was fairly substantial but had been zero in the last six months. Also, funeral fees had substantially reduced so there would be a hit this year. He pointed out that there were some reductions in costs as well, but we need to be tightening our belts this year. It was hoped there would be more weddings next year, i.e. those postponed from this year. Richard said it was quite a complex situation and the use of premises was the biggest impact of all.

Rev'd Guy then explained the situation with regard to fees for funerals – that for each one conducted, the PCC receives £30. He said that General Synod had passed a motion in 2019 that the whole fee be paid to the DBF (Diocesan Board of Finance) with no fee being retained by the PCC. However, the DBF had intervened and agreed that with effect from 1 April this year a discretionary amount of £30 be retained by the PCC, which has helped in some way, although we do not get as much as we used to. There were no further comments.

Rev'd Guy thanked Claire for her work in maintaining the day to day running of the accounts, and Richard for all that he had done in putting the financial statement together.

d) The report of the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

There were no comments and the report was accepted by the meeting.

e) The report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

There were no comments and the report was accepted by the meeting.

f) The report on the Vicar and Churchwarden's Charities

There were no comments and the report was accepted by the meeting.

5. Elections

a) Election of 3 persons as representative on the Deanery Synod for 3 years

Rev'd Guy explained that the new triennium began this year and therefore we needed to elect three members. Nominations were received from Rosemary Bentley and Andrew Whatling; Rev'd Guy thanked them for standing. He noted that there was still one vacancy and asked if anyone would be interested. He recommended the role as he said it gave the individual a bigger picture of the Church at work in the Diocese; the Deanery Synod also meets to elect members to General Synod. He suggested that if anyone was interested, they speak to himself or Rosemary. David Pilgrim commented that as a previous representative he would also commend the role as it gives a particularly good perspective as to our own church. He added that in comparison to other churches, St Andrew's has fewer financial problems. Rev'd Guy thanked David for his comments.

b) Election of 2 persons as representatives on the PCC for 3 years

Two nominations were received: David Pilgrim and Andrew Rutt. Rev'd Guy declared that both were duly elected to the PCC and congratulated them on their appointment.

c) Election of 2 persons as representatives on the PCC for 2 years

Two nominations were received: Oliver Dilley and Ruth Marshall-Jones. Rev'd Guy declared that both were duly elected and congratulated them on their appointment.

6. Safeguarding

Rev'd Guy reported that Vaughan Johnson and Rob Butcher, who led the Safeguarding team, had given a report at the recent PCC meeting and there were no safeguarding issues in 2019. Rev'd Guy reminded the meeting that Linda Canty had resigned from her role as DBS Recruiter, and he was delighted to announce that Carolyn Tebbutt had agreed to take on the role. Thanks were given to Linda for all that she had done during her time in the role, and to Carolyn for taking on the role.

7. Appointment of an Independent Financial Examiner for the 2019 Accounts

Rev'd Guy advised that Toni Hunter had decided she no longer wished to continue as Independent Financial Examiner, and we needed to find someone to take her place. He asked the meeting if it was happy that the PCC/Churchwardens take this on. Richard Blackford added that Toni had been doing this voluntary role for 10 years. He wanted to formally say thank you to her for all the time she had given and to say how much it was

valued. Angela mentioned that it had been suggested at a PCC meeting that we send her a gift. It was suggested a bottle of red wine would be much appreciated.

ACTION: Ruth to send a note of thanks to Toni and organise a gift of wine.

8. Remarks from the Vicar, Rev'd Guy Scott

Rev'd Guy gave his remarks for the year, during which a short video was played showing a thank you from Virginia in Mafambisa to all the team members from our church involved in Hands at Work. These are attached in Annex A. Applause was given following his remarks. He ended by saying that St Andrew's was a tremendous parish and had lots of potential.

Rev'd Guy went on to say that because of COVID-19 and all that we were having to do, Bishop Alan had given permission for all incumbents to swear in their new Churchwardens. Rev'd Guy then admitted Rosemary and Rob to the office of Churchwarden on behalf of Bishop Alan. Rosemary gave thanks to George and Richard. She said everyone knew how demanding a role it was being a churchwarden and she said how grateful both she and Rob were to them both for their years of office. Rob endorsed Rosemary's comments.

9. Any other business

There being no business, Rev'd Guy thanked everyone, and the meeting closed with The Grace.

(Chairman)

(Date)

ANNEX A - Vicar's Reflection

As you might imagine, I have been reflecting on the last ten years with you all. Together we have achieved much with God's help.

I arrived just as the major extension to the Chapter House was nearing completion. And what a difference the extension has made; a flexible space which allows for the separation of the St. John's Room from the Chapter House, and the extended kitchen has meant we can offer hospitality to church and community groups alike.

The Garden Remembrance was completed, and so we have a designated area for the interment of cremated remains which offers comfort and assurance for those who grieve the loss of loved ones. There is a sense of calm in that part of our churchyard which many people appreciate. I would like to record our thanks to Prudence Moore R.I.P. who maintained the Garden and the record of burials. Pru spent many hours looking after this area for us all, but she was frustrated at times with the condition of the lawn!

We then moved our attention to the access of our church, and so the work on the North door and disabled access began. What a difference this work has made, making our worship space more visible and accessible to all. The North West corner of our church is now lighter, and a sense of space has been created.

After 100 years of ringing it was clear that our ring of eight bells was in need of refurbishment. So the 'Big Bells' appeal was launched, we raised the funds for their refurbishment and augmentation to a ring of ten. The Ronald J. Sharp Ringing Centre was also created, which has enabled recruits to bell ringing to learn the art in safe and presentable surroundings. We also took the opportunity to refurbish the clock, to secure the clock to a metal frame and to electrify the weight mechanism.

From the tower we moved back to ground level and replaced the South door internal porch with a striking oak and glass porch, which offers more light, and visually has impact reflecting the architectural significance of the South porch.

Recently we have seen, and heard, the completion of the Organ work following the appeal. We now have a refurbished and enhanced pipe organ with a mobile console. And just this week, we now have a new path alongside the Chapter House from the carpark. This was Sylvia Rutt's idea and we are grateful to Sylvia and Philip for their generous funding of the path.

Together we have achieved much with God's help. We couldn't have done it without you, the Worshipping Community here in this place. The time and effort, the fundraising and planning has been tremendous. Thank you. Our thanks also to the external bodies who gave us grants for the various works, and our thanks to the 'Friends of St. Andrew's for their continuing significant support.

Some do question "why all this work on a building? When surely it should be about people!" I refer them to our vision statement [worshipping God with joy, growing in faith, serving with love, welcoming all](#). It is our vision that has supported and stimulated all that we have done so that we, and all God's people, can worship God with joy, grow in faith, serve with love, and welcome all.

As the people of God in this place, as a worshipping community, we have continued on our pilgrimage with God these last ten years.

Together we do so much!

Do you remember the continuous reading of the Bible over several days when we marked the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. A sacred time when the word of God brought us closer together.

The Holiday Clubs, when we welcome children and young people and introduce them to Bible stories, they have fun and laughter, they encounter this sacred space.

Our Country Fayres, when we welcome the wider community of Biggleswade and raise funds for many deserving charities.

All those charities we support during the year, the Children's Society, those we support in Lent and at Christmas, at Harvest and in an Emergency.

When we gather to worship God in praise and silence, with word and sacrament.

'Worship in the Community' when we have tried to reach new people in our ever-expanding Town. This initiative hasn't achieved what we had hoped and prayed for, so now is the time to re-evaluate what we have been doing and seek a different way forward in reaching our aim. Before COVID 19 we were reaching new people through our 'drop in coffee shop' at the Orchard Centre thanks to the M.U.

Our welcome to, and presence in, schools, and our continuing involvement on Governing Boards In partnership with Hands at Work we now have an important link with Mafambisa. Whilst some still have reservations about this link (which is healthy for all concerned) members of our teams have returned from South Africa touched by other people's faith, culture and humanity, which in turn has helped them grow in faith and to consider God's bigger picture.

I am now going to pause for a moment so that you may watch a thank you from Virginia from Mafambisa.

Our Church is a witness to the community around it, and we are the living stones witnessing to the community as well. On Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, for Carols in the Golden Pheasant and for the Christmas Tableaux. On Palm Sunday and Good Friday, we are Christ's living stones witnessing to his love.

Our Worshipping Community has grown and changed, and what is more, I believe we are inclusive and diverse reflecting the community in which we are set.

Together we do so much!

In the ten years I have been with you here, Biggleswade has grown by a third, and as I said when I announced my new appointment, you need someone with more energy... mine is running out!

The Gospels are all about being on the move and change, and Jesus says don't keep looking back, look forward. It is time for you as a Worshipping Community to look forward with expectation and welcome God's future for you here.

It has been a privilege and a joy (most of the time!) to be part of Biggleswade's story and I wish you all well as you look to God's future.

God bless you all, and thank you, Guy