

**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 23RD APRIL 2023**

Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong chaired the meeting.

50 parishioners were recorded as having attended the meeting, 7 of these via Zoom.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Judith Wakeling, Rob Lackey, John Dilley, Lucy Dilley, Oliver Dilley, Angela Dilley, George Dilley, Nicola Woodward, Vivienne Gayfer, Judith Thatcher, Rosemary Bentley.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 2022 APCM

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

Proposed by Ros Drakes; seconded by Peter Giles. All approved.

3. Matters arising from these minutes

- Hilary Johnson referred to item 2 concerning the inclusion of those attending via Zoom and asked if the rules had changed. Rev'd Liz said there had been no change.
- Robin Jopson asked what the situation was with regard to the co-ordinator of the Children's Society. Rev'd Liz said that Rob Butcher had agreed to take on the role and would be contacting people in the next few weeks.

4. Annual Reports

a) Report of the Electoral Roll Officer

Ruth Marshall-Jones reported that the year commenced with 122 parishioners on the Electoral Roll, being the fifth year in the six-year cycle. There have been five additions and three deletions and therefore there are currently 124 members as at the closing date of 8th April. The return to the Diocese will therefore show a total of 124 persons, of whom 117 are resident in the parish. Rev'd Liz thanked Ruth for all her work and for keeping an eye on everything.

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

Ruth Marshall-Jones referred to the PCC Annual Report which forms part of the Financial Statements and confirmed that the Report was adopted at the PCC meeting held on 28th March. She noted that it would be submitted to the Charities Commission in due course. Ruth thanked all those who contributed to the report. Rev'd Liz thanked Ruth for co-ordinating the report and for her services to the PCC. Philip Rutt congratulated Ruth on the detailed report.

c) The financial statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31st December 2022

The Statutory Financial Statements 2022 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

- Made up of endowment, restricted, designated and general funds a total of £513,000
- There is a restricted fund for 10 Compton Mead in sum of £444,000
- Designated funds include the Major Fabric Fund, the Emergency Mission Fund and the Donations and Legacies Fund, which are all shown as cash at the bank
- There has been no movement across the year on the restricted funds
- The Major Fabric Fund decreased by £9,000, being expenditure on the Heating Project
- **General Fund**
- 2022 shows a deficit of £1K but the PCC is budgeting for a deficit of £18,000 on the

General Fund for 2023, mainly due to energy cost increases, which would leave reserves of £14,000 at December 2023

General Fund-Regular Giving

- In 2022 £76K, an increase of £7k from 2021, following a "Giving Generously" initiative in January 2022.
- Budget for 2023 is £73K, this allows for reductions in giving due to the cost of living crisis.

General Fund – Other Income

- Chapter House bookings had a significant drop from £14K (2019) to £3K (2020) but this has recovered and continues to do so into 2023.
- Compton Mead currently rented out at £15K per annum. When the property is no longer privately rented and used for Church purposes that income will need to be replaced
- Other income of £12K in 2022 includes Sunday Lunches and other social activities
- **Expenditure**
- The Parish Share will increase from £77K in 2022 to £78K in 2023
- In 2022 a total of £15K was given to various charities through fundraising and the share allocated from regular giving.
- Other expenditure includes the parish administrator and increases in energy costs
- The increases in both gas and electricity for 2023 were explained to the meeting, showing the cost will increase from £9,000 in 2022 to £18,000 in 2023.

Questions:

There were no questions raised by the meeting.

Andrew thanked everyone for their giving in this difficult time. He gave special thanks to Rosemary Bentley and Jan Gardner for counting the cash, Adrian Maynard for stewardship, Chris Parker for managing the Chapter House rentals, John Dilley for managing the rental property and to all those who contributed in any way.

Vaughan gave a vote of thanks to Andrew for his capacity to present the accounts in a way that could be understood, for providing clarity and expending money when it is necessary. He added that Andrew has interpreted the wishes of the PCC rapidly which gives the PCC a huge amount of confidence. He commended the Parish Giving Scheme as it gets the money in quickly and we receive gift aid monthly; it is automatically raised in line with inflation. He noted that if we installed electric panels on our roof we would see lower electricity bills and we would also be doing something for the environment.

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

Rob noted that this report had been circulated in the Reports of the Church Activities and Organisations. There were no questions.

e) Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

In Rosemary Bentley's absence, it was suggested Ruth ask Rosemary to provide a brief written report following the meeting. This is as follows:

Deanery Synod met three times, March, July, and October 2022 during the last year of the triennium; it was pleasing to meet in person on each occasion. The first meeting at Cople Church commenced with a Eucharist when the vicar, Revd Lynne Sandle presided; we also received a brief report from General Synod, delivered by an archdeaconry delegate, Sheila Bissell. The Lenten Evening worship services were well attended.

At the July meeting, held in Old Warden Village Hall, the speaker was Keith Williams who gave a very informative presentation about the mission of 'Good News for Everyone,' briefly working under the auspices of the Gideons and providing Bible throughout the UK, including in very large print format. We hosted the October meeting in the Chapter House; it was good to present a cheque for £2,000, the result of our three-year Deanery Project donations, to Ruth Janes, the treasurer of the 'Malawi Orphan Fund.' It was pleasing to receive a detailed update about the growth of the work in Malawi from Ruth who had recently returned from the project. The 2023 Deanery Project will receive donations for CHUMS, specifically directed to support for children and young people who have experienced bereavement and other traumas.

f) Report on the Vicar and Churchwardens' Charities

Rob reported that the Vicar and Churchwardens' Charities remain a small part of his duties. He had not done a written report this year as there has been no significant activity. The resolution from last year's APCM was accepted by M and G, the investment group. The funds remain invested in the same financial institutions and raise approximately £20 annually. There have been no calls on the charity this year.

5. Elections

- a) 4 persons as representative on the Parochial Church Council for 3 years

Three nominations had been received:

Andrew Rutt: **Proposed: Paul Daniels; Seconded: Ruth Marshall-Jones**

David Pilgrim: **Proposed: Paul Daniels; Seconded: Ruth Marshall-Jones**

Nicola Woodward: **Proposed: Chris Parker; Seconded: Ruth Marshall-Jones**

All three were duly elected to serve for 3 years

- b) 1 person as representative on the Parochial Church Council for 1 year

One nomination had been received:

Nettie van de Weerd: **Proposed: Ruth Marshall-Jones; Seconded: Chris Parker**

Rev'd Liz congratulated Nettie and added her thanks to those who had stepped down from the PCC; Maggie McLoughlin after 2 years of service who had decided to concentrate her efforts on the MU, and to Claire Leeks and Vaughan Johnson following 6 years of service each.

- c) 3 persons as representatives on the Deanery Synod for 3 years

Two nominations had been received:

Rosemary Bentley: **Proposed: Ruth Marshall-Jones; Seconded: Paul Daniels**

Hilary Johnson: **Proposed: Paul Daniels; Seconded: Andrew Rutt**

Rev'd Liz acknowledged the service given by Andrew Whatling over the past six years as Deanery Synod rep and said that it had been a delight to have him represent us. She went on to say that we were especially privileged to share his incredible honour of receiving the Order of St Alban in June 2022 at a service at St Alban's Abbey, and also his important entry in a national book "All Stand" which tells of his journey of faith, with a forward by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Rev'd Liz then presented Andrew with a certificate to mark our thanks and in recognition of his services as our representative for the parish in the Deanery, Diocese and the Church of England. There was applause from the meeting.

6. Safeguarding

Vaughan Johnson re-iterated that safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us and that it cannot work unless we are all alert and keep vigilant. He mentioned that there had been one issue during the year but the system had worked very well; the team went through the due procedures and the matter was resolved. The Safeguarding team currently consists of Rob Butcher, Chris Parker, Carolyn Marron, Oliver Dilley and Jessica Mephram who are a fantastic team. He gave a huge thanks to Carolyn for the DBS checking and Chris for the Chapter House hiring and risk assessments. Vaughan added that he is standing down as Safeguarding Officer although not leaving the team; he was delighted to say that Nicola Woodward had agreed to take over his role. Rev'd Liz thanked Vaughan for all that he had achieved during his time as Parish Safeguarding Officer, noting that he had been Child Protection Officer/Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer since 2015 and lead of the Safeguarding Team since 2018. She said that he had contributed much and led with great commitment and carefulness; his years as our PSO had made a crucial difference to our working safely with all, and for all. Vaughan was then presented with a garden voucher as a token of our appreciation and love. The meeting applauded.

7. Appointment of an Independent Financial Examiner for the 2023 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: Paul Daniels. All in favour.** Rev'd Liz thanked Colin.

8. Report from the Vicar

Rev'd Liz referred to her Homily given at the 10 o'clock service (attached as Annex A). She referred to Covid times when she started to appreciate looking at things that had a calendar year in them and she went on to mention many of the highlights of last year: -

- Snowdrop outing to Anglesey Abbey in February
- Mayor's Civic Service in March
- The Easter Monday Pilgrimage and the start of the Ec0-Church Survey and her first Holy Week and Easter in April
- The Christian Aid Big Breakfast and service at St Peter's in May
- The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June
- Andrew Whatling's admission into the Order of Alban and the Mafambisa trip in July
- The 'Come and Share' Picnic and Holiday Club, and 'Come and Meet' drinks at the King's Reach pub in August
- The Country Fayre and the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September
- Schools Harvest Festival at St Albans Abbey in October
- Remembrance Sunday in the market square, the Memorial concert for Yvonne Gray and St Andrew's Day Confirmations at Biggleswade with Bishop Richard in November
- Outside Church wreath making and school Christmas services, and Woodmans Carols for Remembrance in December, as well as every service and concert, work on the heating replacement project, school governor responsibility and assemblies and collective worship in school and church, pastoral care and outreach especially through baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Rev'd Liz referred to the Recovery MAP adopted by the PCC in June 2022 and noted that one of the jobs for the newly formed PCC would be to put this back on the table and build on it. She added that she felt the road ahead was more positive, a lot more has been re-established and there is so much to build on, so much to do but we must not overstretch ourselves. She thanked everyone for continuing to welcome her and her family and journeying with them. She added that it was a pleasure to be at St Andrew's and that she was looking forward to the year ahead.

9. Any other business

An email had been received from Lucy Dilley asking three questions, two of which related to worship and one to music. Rev'd Liz proposed that the worship items could be looked at by the ministry team and the music item would be referred to Rob Butcher as Music Director. The responses will then be fed back to Lucy. Anna Rutt felt that the questions and answers should be conveyed to the meeting. Rev'd Liz read out the questions and said that the responses would be conveyed to the congregation in due course.

- 1) Can it be considered that we receive the holy sacrament at the high altar going forward at the 10 o'clock Holy Communion service on Sunday.
- 2) Can copies of the music for the new songs that are being introduced at the 10 o'clock Holy Communion service on Sunday be provided to enable those who can read music and are part of the congregation to follow the tune and help support the congregation.
- 3) Can it be considered that at services there is the option to share the peace physically amongst each other if people wish so.

Rev'd Liz referred to the Coronation and booklet produced by the Church of England with prayers for our new King. She also referred to the programme of events and services and activities in the town and said she hoped that as a parish we would be getting involved.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

(Chair)

(Date)

ANNEX A

Third Sunday of Easter/APCM

Acts 2.14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 17-23; Luke 24.13-35

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognised him" (Luke 24:31)

*Almighty Father, in your great mercy
you gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continuously in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.*

In the Benedictine Abbey of Santo Domingo, near Burgos, northern Spain there is a sculpture of Christ on the road to Emmaus. Christ is dressed as if he were a pilgrim walking to Santiago Compostela, armed with a pilgrim staff and a scallop shell. He is both Saviour and companion, a fellow traveller on the road.

I wonder how many of you have been this year's "Pilgrimage" series, Friday nights on BBC 2... I have. Seven well-known personalities take on a journey of a lifetime, this year's series is "The Road through Portugal", 364km following the Fatima Way, arriving in the city for a special candlelit vigil. The pilgrims all have different faiths and beliefs – and the question remains as to whether stepping in ancient footsteps on a spiritual journey will broaden their minds, change their hearts? As the opening credits capture two in conversation: 'Most pilgrimages', says one pilgrim to another, 'involves making some kind of journey or other', to which another replies, 'yes, so you get time out to stop and to think'. 'Absolutely, yes!' is the reply.

In episode 2 I was most moved by the conversations in the evening over dinner as the pilgrims caught up on their experiences. It was the reflections of a practicing Muslim, Nabil, that struck me the most: he was asked how it was going for himself, to which he responded about what he has noticed about the faith of others: speaking of one of the other pilgrims, a Paralympian who lost the majority of her sight aged 6, Nabil reflected that her pilgrimage journey was like the journey of faith, as to live a life of faith, is to trust in what you cannot see; Nabil then reflected on how listening to another pilgrim, a boy band singer had left the music industry as he didn't like the spiritual inclinations he found there, and how he had now discovered how to live a life of faith, was encouragement: to believe God has prepared something better for us, choices can be made, there is a better path to follow; another pilgrim wore a cross from his Mother – Nabil honoured that, noting that faith teaches us to respect others; and, the most senior pilgrim of the group was praised for her spirit, her happy

and excited nature, living every moment as a blessing. 'These are the small things I see', he concludes, 'that make me appreciate my faith'.

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognised him".

Those of your familiar with theatre and the works of Shakespeare will appreciate that one of his favourite ways of bringing a drama to a climax is the recognition scene, where scales fall from the eyes, and suddenly the truth about the person is revealed: the unknown stranger sheds the disguise, the enemy turns to friend. These small things seen, noticed, revealed at the Pilgrims dinner table as Nabil was reflecting on Pilgrimage, as is discovered in Shakespeare's recognition scenes, remind me of the many Easter stories in the gospels that are like that; the amazing grace revealed through separation, loss and death, into what emerges from the empty tomb in the joyful reunion of followers and friends of the wounded, and risen Jesus. Mary Magdalen, supposing him to be the gardener, hearing him speak her name and recognising him as her 'Rabbouni', her Teacher. The eleven disciples behind locked doors and the One who greeted them, who could only be Jesus, "Peace be with you". Thomas who would not believe, and astonishing confession of faith: 'My Lord and my God'. Peter and the disciples after the miraculous catch of fish, who declare 'It is the Lord!'.

On this Third Sunday of Easter, as we look forward to our APCM after this Service today, we have the most wonderful of the Easter recognition scenes as told by St. Luke, the Road to Emmaus. The two downcast, heart-broken, grief-shattered disciples trudging back home are joined by an unknown stranger, they converse on the road, an invitation is offered, and accepted, at supper the guest turns host, the familiar action of bread blessed and broken is the moment of recognition, the former down-cast disciples, now eyes wide open, excitedly return to the city to tell the others.

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognised him".

The recognition story of broken bread, burning hearts, and opened eyes is full of echoes. Jesus in Luke's Gospel is always on the move, a travel narrative, beginning with a story about another journey from Jerusalem, like the Emmaus Road: two people, Mary and Joseph, going home once again, at Passover. Luke's Gospel is also a story full of eating and drinking. Much of Jesus' teaching and many of his key encounters take place at the meal table. There he eats with tax-collectors and sinners, at the last supper he teaches his disciples about the nature of loving service and what the sacrificial giving of his own body and blood will mean. At the Emmaus meal, two people come to a recognition that leads to life.

Today, in these days of Easter, we celebrate with joyful hearts the memory of God's wonderful works. Today we hold our APCM, as we come together as the

household of God, to celebrate with joyful hearts the past year together, we celebrate God's wonderful works amongst us, through us and around us. And with our eyes opened, recognising Christ in our midst, our Saviour and companion, we can look forward together with hope, joy and gratitude. Through our sharing at the meal and the meeting table here today at St. Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, may we know deep within our hearts that the risen Christ walks with us, as he longs to share his life with us, crossing the thresholds of our hearts, our lives, to make his home there. Alleluia. Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

*Wounded, and risen Christ,
as we walk our earthly path,
give us deeper confidence that you walk beside us,
you accompany us and encourage us.
May we each know the love of God around us
and the power of the Holy Spirit within us,
and may the blessing of the Holy Trinity
be the gift that we freely share with all those we meet on the Way.
In Jesus' name, we pray,
Amen.*

*The Revd. Liz Oglesby-Elong
Vicar of the Parish of St. Andrew's, Biggleswade.
Third Sunday of Easter/APCM 23rd April, 2023.*