

**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 28TH APRIL 2024**

Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong chaired the meeting.

54 parishioners were recorded as having attended the meeting, including 11 via Zoom.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Blackford, Jenny Blackford, Alice Blackford, Rosemary Bentley, Sue Cleghorn, David Pilgrim, Emma Pallett, Nicola Woodward.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 2023 APCM

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

Proposed by Ros Drakes; Seconded by Robin Jopson. All approved.

3. Matters arising from these minutes

None.

4. Annual Reports

Rev'd Liz thanked Sue Oldroyd and the magazine team for putting together the Annual Reports booklet

a) Report of the Electoral Roll Officer

Ruth Marshall-Jones reported that the year commenced with 124 parishioners on the Electoral Roll, this being the sixth year in the six-year cycle. There have been four additions and four deletions and therefore the return to the Diocese will show a total of 124, of whom 115 are resident in the parish. Ruth added that next year, 2025, will see the preparation of a new Electoral Roll which means that members on the previous roll need to apply to be included – inclusion is not automatic; new people can also apply. Rev'd Liz thanked Ruth for holding that office.

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 19th March. She confirmed that it would be submitted to the Charities Commission in due course. Ruth thanked all those who had contributed to the report. Rev'd Liz gave thanks to all those who contributed and to Ruth for drawing together all that has gone on and having it set out in such a clear way.

c) The financial statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31st December 2023

The Statutory Financial Statements 2023 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 £517,000
- There is a restricted fund for 10 Compton Mead in sum of £444,000
- The other restricted funds show in the sum of £22,000 as cash at the bank and include the balance of the Heating Fund, Religious Education and Bellringer Funds.
- 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
- **General Fund**
- 2023 shows a deficit of £9,000 and the PCC is budgeting for a further deficit of £9,000 on the General Fund for 2024, mainly due to high energy costs, which would leave reserves of £14,000 at December 2024

General Fund-Regular Giving

- Shows as a static £77K, following a "Giving Generously" initiative in January 2022.
- The Budget for 2024 is £76K and it was noted that a Stewardship campaign will take place in the autumn of 2024.

General Fund – Other Income

- Chapter House bookings contribute £13K of income.
- 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 £11K in 2023 includes Sunday Lunches and other social activities. It was noted that a budget for additional fundraising has been included for 2024 in the sum of £2K.
- **Expenditure**
- The Parish Share in 2023 was £78K and will be £77K in 2024.
- In 2023 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 2023 and 2024 were explained to the meeting, showing the cost in 2022 at £9K, 2023 at £16K but a budgeted decrease to £12K in 2024.

Questions:

There were no questions raised by the attendees.

Rev'd Liz thanked Andrew for his detailed presentation. The meeting applauded.

Vaughan gave a vote of thanks to Andrew for his capacity to present the accounts in a way that could be understood, thus giving the PCC a huge amount of confidence in the finances available to them. He emphasised the importance of the Parish Giving Scheme and that fact that it makes it so much easier for the treasurer. He referred to the new heating system and asked the PCC to consider fitting solar panels on the roof. He also asked that the PCC further consider how deep our welcome is to people coming into the church.

Rev'd Liz said that we know we want to increase the use of card payments which will help us, and in this respect, Andrew has invited Kate Ford, the Diocesan Giving Adviser, to come and meet with a group of people with a view to there being a stewardship campaign in the autumn. She added that a PCC Away Day has been organised for Saturday 22nd June with two facilitators, Tim Lomax, Director of Mission and Ministry and Kate Lomax, Church Growth Officer for the Diocese, where it is hoped we can address some of those issues raised around what our mission is and how we can share with those who are new. Rev'd Liz admitted that there will be challenges as we are a growing and busy, diverse church and not everyone will find their spiritual home here.

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

Chris referred to the report on page 3 in the Annual Reports booklet. He added that we are very fortunate with the amount of people who help which in turn has a big impact on the finances.

Rev'd Liz added that we are looking forward to welcoming Bishop Alan to St Andrew's on 30th June to bless and give thanks for the new heating system at the 10 o'clock Holy Communion service. Invitations have been sent out and we look forward to celebrating what has been achieved during the past year.

e) Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Hilary referred to the report in the Annual Reports booklet. She added that there had been several meetings and one in particular at which there was a talk entitled 'A presentation of the Light and Life Project'. It is a short course on science and religion and there will be further investigation of that. Rev'd Liz thanked Hilary.

f) Report on the Vicar and Churchwardens' Charities

Rob referred to the three trusts set up in the 1800s. Historically we have given money to the young people, Holiday Club, and towards school trips etc. The figures currently sitting in the trusts are provided in the accounts.

5. Elections

2 persons as representatives on the Parochial Church Council for 1 year

Two nominations had been received:

Lucy Dilley: **Proposed: Chris Parker; Seconded: Angela Sharp**

Judith Thatcher: **Proposed: Vivienne Gayfer; Seconded: Ruth Marshall-Jones**

2 persons as representatives on the Parochial Church Council for 2 years

Two nominations had been received:

Peter Giles: **Proposed: Chris Parker; Seconded: Andrew Rutt**

Adrian Maynard: **Proposed: Nick Gurney; Seconded: Pat Sherwood-Saunders**

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

Four nominations had been received:

Harriet Shannon: **Proposed: Jenny Blackford; Seconded: Carolyn Marron**

Rob Lackey: **Proposed: Rosemary Bentley; Seconded: Beryl Dixon**

Claire Leeks: **Proposed: Harriet Shannon; Seconded: Chris Parker**

Theodora Lewis: **Proposed: Paul Daniels; Seconded: Chris Parker**

Rev'd Liz gave thanks to everyone who had stepped forward. She also thanked Mark Simmons and Paul Daniels for their faithful service on the PCC for the past six years. She noted that Nettie had not stood for re-election to the PCC as she is now serving as our new Churchwarden and Rev'd Liz looked forward to welcoming her in her new role. It was noted that Nicola Woodward had stepped down from the PCC and also from her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer for personal reasons. Rev'd Liz said that it was important we continue to support Nicola and it was noted that Nicola had agreed to continue in her role as PSO until her successor had been appointed. Rev'd Liz added that whilst we do have a safeguarding policy in place and we have a DBS coordinator, the role of the PSO is important as they work alongside these other roles; whilst we have a lot of expertise and experienced people who have done their training, the role of the PSO is one of great importance. In this regard she asked that if anyone felt that they have any experience and a sense they could take on this role, to please come forward.

Ros Drakes asked if we still had Assistant Churchwardens. Rev'd Liz said that since she had been at St Andrew's, that role had not been operative and had not been taken any further. Vaughan commented that he had not been asked to do anything but was still Assistant Churchwarden as far as he was aware. Rev'd Liz suggested further discussion and if we needed to appoint Assistant Churchwardens, then there should be a role description and terms of office put in place.

6. Safeguarding

Rev'd Liz referred to the report in the Annual Reports booklet. In addition to what was in the report, she noted that all the training is up to date and she thanked Carolyn and the team for the past year. She also gave thanks to Nicola Woodward who was stepping down from her role as PSO

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: Rob Butcher. All in favour.** Chris asked Andrew to convey our thanks to him on behalf of the parish.

8. Report from the Vicar

Rev'd Liz referred to her sermon (attached as Annex A) and reflecting on the past year:

Sunday Homily: Abiding Faithfully, Remaining Fruitful. "Abide in me, as I abide in you" (John 15.4).

The Departed: Looking back over 2023, Michael Wilson (April), Tim Woodward (March), Peter Hill (May), Vernon Spinner (June), Norman Gurney (December) and although for next year's Annual meeting the early part of this year 2024, Sylvia Rutt (January 2024), John Pryor (February 2024), Donald Pryor (March 2024), Pauline Pryor (March 2024) (RIP) alongside many others whose services we have taken, ashes buried, and those in our own wider families and friendships who have died in the past year.

Those joining: Lots of new people at worship and events, which is a good sign of a healthy church, growing and welcoming in new people. **Colin Dixon:** Retired as Reader (Ascension Day 2023). **Mandy Anning,** our new Parish Administrator (started June 2023).

Month by month highlights, important Events:

(Jan) Friends of St. Andrew's AGM in Church, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service at St. Andrews: 'Go and do likewise' based on the Good Samaritan, Christingle Service; (Feb) Ash Wednesday Assembly and Sung Eucharist, Deanery Lent Evening Worship and Lent Assemblies at St. Andrew's Lower Schools, (Mar) Outside Church and making Lenten Prayer Trees, Mayor: Grant Fage's Civic Service celebrating volunteering and those who serve the community, Ed Peake Easter Service and St. Andrew Lower Schools Easter Assemblies, Holy Week and Easter 2023, (May) The Coronation of His Majesty the King (6th May), Ring for the King and theme of May 7th Family Communion, Biggleswade Choral Society Concert in Church 20th May), Eve of Pentecost Confirmation at St. Albans Cathedral: Kimi and Theo Lewis, (June) New SIAMS Framework Training, Friends of StAndrew Renewal Sunday (18th June), Beavers Church Visit (26th June), (July) East Beds Concert Band refreshments fundraiser & Afternoon Tea Fundraiser, and Choral Evensong (16th July), picnic in the park (30th July) until rain stopped play!, Holiday Club Aug 2023: Restoration Station, our Family holiday to USA to spend time with Sam's Mum, two of his brothers and family there; (September) Heating Works – move to Chapter House for Thursday Holy Communion, Saturday cleaners for Sunday's back in Church, Country Fayre (Save the Children & Tibbs Dementia Charities Fundraising) & building links with Tibbs Dementia Foundation, schools, community groups and many more during the day, (Oct) Bishop's Quiet Day for Clergy at St. Owen's, Bromham, (Nov) All Saints and All Souls Sung Evensong (5th), Remembrance Sunday, very wet! (12th), Biggleswade Lights Switch on and invitation to give a Christmas message (24th), Nativity Festival and Christmas Fayre (25th), (Dec) Mothers Union Christmas Lunch (4th), Wreath-Making Fundraiser (9th), Nativity Tableau (23rd) and Christmas Services, back in Church, with heating – Alleluia!

As well as every prayer said, meals and refreshments shared, monies given and gratefully received, every Service and Concert, events and use of the Chapter House, Fundraising, management of works and support and co-operation, working together on the Heating Replacement Project, School Governor responsibilities and Assemblies & Collective Worship in school & Church, pastoral care and outreach through Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, and Care Home and Sick Communions.

Looking ahead, looking forward:

+Richard with us next Sunday – 3 admission to Holy Communion, 3 adult and 1 young person Confirmation.

Significant roles have been taken up, as well as prayers for remaining vacancies.

Rosemary Bentley return to active ministry, hopefully from end of May this year.

PCC Away Day: Tim and Kate Lomax: 22nd June 9.30am for 10am start to 2pm: St. John's Church, Cockayne Hatley

Celebrating my 20th year of Ordination to the Priesthood – 4th July, 2024. +Alan invitation to attend a special evensong and supper in June.

+Alan with us for Blessing of our New Heating System at the 10am Festival Parish Communion followed by celebratory refreshments in the Chapter House, Sunday 30th June – invites have gone out, and everyone at Church is invited.

Rob thanked Rev'd Liz for all that she does and for who she is and for fulfilling the tasks that have fallen on her shoulders. He echoed the importance for us to move forward and develop our outreach in the parish. He noted that she was the first female vicar and gave thanks for her strength. The meeting applauded.

9. Any other business

None.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

(Chair)

(Date)

ANNEX A

Fifth Sunday of Easter 2024/APCM
10am Parish Communion followed by the APCM
Acts 8.26-end, 1 John 4.7-end, John 15.1-8



"Abide in me, as I abide in you" (John 15.4)
Abiding Faithfully, Remaining Fruitful

Have you ever been travelling, and on arriving at a familiar junction, you discover that the turn you would usually take is shut! Yellow diversion signs re-direct you, and off you go, diverted along another road. You have that feeling that you know the direction you are travelling, but, you are not quite sure of this road, this way is unfamiliar.

Such journeys act as a metaphor for life; we all have significant points in life that we can recognize as 'junction' moments when we look back on them. Such moments have taken us down roads never travelled, when the journey has become difficult or we have found ourselves travelling through the dark valley, wondering will the light ever break through again. Often, we have no choice when those junctions come – we must walk the road set before us.

If you live long enough, you are bound to experience an unexpected junctions in life; twists and turns that you need to take, alone, or with friends and family. In our recent past we all had to embrace, like it or not, a collective unfamiliar road, as the world came to the COVID junction. We were all travelling a road unknown, collectively experiencing it, wondering what God was doing and what we were meant to be doing, and being, as we walked it.

In preparing for our APCM after this Service, many of us have been looking back over the past year of life together as a community of faith here at St. Andrew's, Biggleswade. We've been reflecting on it, writing about it as we've given thanks for the service, generosity and love shared in the name of Christ in this Church and Parish community. In our personal lives, collectively as a Church and across the Parish, we recall that we have come to various 'junctions' during the last year; matters of life and death, joys and sorrows, finance and mission, direction and purpose, outreach and worship, decisions and changes. At times we have needed to travel a road unknown, wondering what God was doing, and what we were meant to be doing, and being, as we have walked our own paths, journeyed together as a Church, and lived, loved and served this Parish, and beyond throughout the past year.

John's Gospel (15:1-8) as the reading set for today, is a well-known passage that speaks comfort and truth to many situations. Jesus, speaking with his

disciples, on the road they were travelling, as they left the Upper Room – Jesus knew there was a junction for them ahead, a junction not just for Jesus but one that would shake the foundations of the world and the life as they knew it, as Jesus was to be crucified, dead, and buried. In the shadow of the cross, Jesus called the disciples to abide in him, to remain in him.

One of the key words that can help us to understand the ministry of Jesus and his Church in the world is that of abiding. God abides with us. Christ bids us to abide in him, that he will abide in us. Christ bids us to make our home in him, as he has made his home in us. Christ tells us that there are many rooms in his Father's house, to which, in God's time Christ will come again and take us to where he is, to be with him for ever (John 14). Whatever is ahead as we look forward to the next year here together, we are reassured that we can lean on Christ; he is the one who goes before us – and who walks with us.

One understanding of abide is to 'wait patiently with'. Today, we thank God for his waiting patiently with us this past year. God, through his Son Jesus came to us in ordinary life, he has sat with us, eaten with us, walked with us, lived amongst us. It is no wonder then, that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples doing ordinary things. Walking, talking, sharing food, breaking bread, eating breakfast on the sea shore.

As we gather today for our APCM, we give thanks for God's abiding with us, in the shadow of the cross, at the diversions and junctions, alongside the good times, the successes and celebrations of the past year. We rejoice that God continues to dwell with us, in us, through us. God was, God is, God ever will be – God will not abandon or leave us. Our calling as the Church is to abide faithfully, and to remain fruitful. We are called not just to abide for ourselves but we are called to abide in, with and for this Parish community, within the wider context of our troubled, broken, hurting world; and we are called to abide as good stewards of all that God has given to us as we strive for the well-being of all of God's creation – and especially to abide with those who have no one to abide with them.

"Abide in me as I abide in you" (John 15.4)

Abiding faithfully, may we remain fruitful, as we are sent out to love and serve the Lord.

+In the name of Christ.
Amen.

The Revd. Liz Oglesby-Elong

*Vicar of the Parish of St. Andrew's,
Biggleswade.*

Fifth Sunday of Easter/APCM 28th April, 2024