

The minutes for the Shirley Annual Parochial Meeting held on Sunday 12th May 2024, commencing at 1.00pm

Vestry Meeting.

The meeting opened with prayers led by Rev Paul

Election of Church Warden(s)

Nomination forms were received for Gill Hanton who was proposed as Church Warden by Margaret Foresheew and seconded by Judith Chivers, and Linda Pitt who was proposed as Church Warden by Kate Crocker and seconded by Denise Smith.

No other nominations were received, therefore all agreed unanimously that they should serve another year.

This was immediately followed by the APCM.

1. Apologies were received from Reverend Wendy Martin, Reverend Wendy Carter, Linda Alford, Jean Wall, Jan Gardner, Pat Powell, Doug and Glenys Golightly.
2. There were no additional items for AOB.
3. The minutes of the APCM for 2023.
The minutes were proposed from the chair as a true record of the meeting. All voted in favour. There were no matters arising.
4. Electoral Roll report. This was provided by Margaret Foresheew as Electoral Roll Officer, and was published prior to the meeting. The report was also read out.
5. Elections
 - (a) Electoral Roll Officers. Margaret Foresheew is willing to continue as Electoral Roll Officer. Proposed from the chair and all voted in favour.
 - (b) Parish Deanery Synod Representatives and PCC representatives:
Deanery Synod Representatives: These reps were voted in last year and this was for a 3 year term. The representatives are Kate Crocker, Gill Gough, and Margaret Foresheew.
PCC representatives: Nomination forms have been received for the following people: - Mark Strentz, Denise Smith, Chris Terry, Linda Alford, Ian Longbottom, Kate Day, Jan Gardner, David Paice, Belinda Piasecki, Jean Wall.
Reader Rep: Sarah Penfold.

As these nominations did not exceed the number of places available, the assembled group were asked if they would like to vote for these individuals or to elect them en bloc. It was agreed for them all to stand again for the PCC for 2024 with no election.

For new PCC members a brief meeting after this meeting will take place to elect roles and subcommittee members.

6. Reports – these were all circulated prior to the meeting to all PCC members and made available to the wider congregation and parish members via the church website and paper copies were available from the Parish Office. The following comments were made: -
 - Safeguarding Report
Reverend Paul wanted to thank Sue Harries and Judith Chivers for all the work they do behind the scenes.

St James Report

Rev Paul wanted to thank Kate Crocker for all the hard work she puts in with writing bids and grant applications and her support for the Pod Project as well as all the other jobs she does at Church and in the Churchyard and, of course, Eco Church.

No other questions or queries were raised.

7. Presentation of the Accounts.

Ian Longbottom, PCC treasurer, presented the accounts. He talked us through the accounts he had prepared, which had been audited by the independent accounts examiner for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The receipts and payments method is used for the Parish accounts. It is important to note that the way these accounts are prepared means that funds received i.e., from grants or fundraising often appear in the year before the amounts are paid out. An example of this is funds raised and grants for the Pod Project, this was income during 2023, but most of the expenditure will be in 2024.

Ian highlighted some important parts of the Parish Accounts.

The main point being that we need to ensure that receipts are greater than payments.

The electricity provider has changed in March 2024 and it is important to note that unlike domestic energy there is no cap for the Parish.

Planned giving is higher than last year.

Church Activities includes Sunday Lunch Club which previously has not been included.

The Global Equity Fund has increased well in 2023.

In 2024 the main financial challenge is to match receipts to payments, which the Buildings and Finance Committee will be watching closely.

Ian wished to thank the following people for their help with the accounts: -

Belinda, David, Debbie, Jean, and Jan.

He also wished to thank Phil Beedon, as independent examiner, and David Paice who have had to deal with Ian's changes and new excel spreadsheets and formulas.

These accounts have already been adopted by the PCC previously, therefore they were noted by the APCM.

Reverend Paul thanked Ian for all his hard work especially with the extra challenges faced this past year.

Thanks were also expressed to Phil Beedon.

8. Appointment of the accounts inspector.

It was proposed that this should be Phil Beedon again, if he is in agreement. Ian will contact him.

9. Vicar's report

A report looking back over the year was circulated prior to the meeting, however Rev Paul added to his report with a comment regarding the future as follows: -

Last year – as I am sure you will all recall!! – as I spoke to the APCM I mentioned 6 challenges that we faced. And I think they remain focusses for the year ahead as well

1. Consolidating the ministry team.
2. The office
3. Children and families

4. Discipleship
5. Kitchen and toilet project
6. Financial challenges

Ministry Team

The team has developed and grown. Richard Haynes has been with us for almost a year now, and I find it hard to imagine what we did without him. He has been welcomed into the family here and I know he feels very much at home. He has thrown himself into everything we have asked him to do – and I am aware that some of those things have been well out of his comfort zone – but he has always done so with enthusiasm and commitment. And a smile (as long as there has been the promise of food!)

Wendy Martin – as we announced in church last week Wendy has decided it is time to “go home” as she said. Home to her children and their families. Back to Sussex. We will miss her gentle leadership and pastoral concern; we will miss her spiritual wisdom; we will miss the way she has challenged us on occasions on our attitudes and responses to others; how she has encouraged us in our move to be more inclusive. SO, we wish you well Wendy with thanks for all you have contributed to life here. Wendy’s last service with us will be the Parish service on 7th July

And Rich B – we welcome Rich to the ministry team to complete his curacy. I am sure we will benefit from his wisdom and character, and I trust he will develop in his ministry here and grow into the person and minister I know God wants him to be. Rich -we look forward to getting to know you better over these next months and to see you flourish and thrive

Our wonderful readers. Sarah, Gill, Dee & Kate. Where would we be without you? I am constantly singing your praises to all across the Diocese. When I met with Bp Michael this week I could see how impressed he was at the variety and generosity of your ministry here. So, thank you all!

And Theresa and Wendy C – for all you do not just to fill gaps in the rota but as an integral part of who we are and what we do.

And of course, we remember Nick Ball. We thank God for his ministry here and his love for us all and we pray for Helen and the family as they still adjust to life without him.

The Parish Office

It has been a difficult year in the office. Chris not living up to our hopes, but Belinda stepping up when the need arose – many, many thanks to her for being so willing and so efficient. And now with Emily in post we can, I hope, look forward to a stable future, with Emily increasingly being able to support and develop the admin and publicity side of our work

Follow on from Messy Church

Messy Church goes from strength to strength. We thought we had large numbers this time last year, but the last two months have been amazing with more than 50 children and their families

But the question remains – how do we build on what we are doing? How can we encourage these families in their faith and commitment.

The W4E service at ST James has proved to be a stepping stone with 4 or 5 families regularly attending. These families have also joined our electoral role as an expression of their commitment.

As from June we will be establishing a simple kids church to run in Church House during sermon and prayers. A bible story and some thoughts, a game and an activity led by a member of the ministry team with assistance.

Discipleship

4 more of our members – John, Hayley, Nicole, and Dan – are being confirmed next Sunday at Birmingham Cathedral following START and Moving On courses which have tailored to meet their situations.

2 Lent conversation groups ran this year with around 25 people attending. We based the studies on Bp Anne's talks about the marks of mission, and produced an accompanying booklet of daily readings to go with the groups. A smaller group met in the weeks leading up to Advent

A monthly study group – aimed primarily at those who work in the daytime – has been looking at living out our faith in the workplace and has been well supported.

The parish prayer book was published in November and this weekend's Pathways to Prayer has given a further opportunity to try different ways of praying (all resource in church all week!). We spent a day looking at the big story of the Bible back in July. Wendy led a quiet day at the start of Lent. And of course, we regularly hear sermons – and each of our preachers has their own individual style of preaching – something that is a real plus for the parish.

Pod Project

This has caught people's imagination and we are now very close to having sufficient money to go ahead. The drainage work will be done in the summer, with the rest of the project completed in the Autumn. Huge thanks go to Kate Crocker for her tireless work in writing bid applications for funding and generally making sure the project is progressing.

And if that was not enough, she is also powering ahead with a project to replace the old gas boilers in ST James (40 years and counting) with a green solution for heating using infra-red chandeliers. Plans are with the Diocese for approval. We are still hoping the new system might be in place for the winter, but a more realistic expectation is next year.

Finance

And financially – we are doing OK – just. The more we do in the Parish the more we spend – that is a simple fact of life. And the more we spend the more we need to receive income. And, as a Parish Church, the bulk of our income comes from individual donations – most of that through the regular giving of committed members. SO can I urge you all – everyone – to reconsider what you give to the church. What we give is a response to what God has given us. As King David said in scripture

Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the splendour,
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Everything is from God – so all we are doing is returning some to him. Please do have a look at your regular giving, and please use the Parish Giving Scheme if you can – it saves us both time and money!!

And, of course, a big thank you especially to Ian – but also to David, Jean, Jan, and the many people who count and bank as well as those who spend!

And so, we look forward to another year of serving God in this place; of witnessing to him and of showing his love to all we meet.

A question was raised from the floor regarding music/choir in St James – Rev Paul replied that we have been very lucky to have had students from the Birmingham Conservatoire. Ewan is moving on to do a Forestry course in Wales and so Rev Paul has spoken to a student, Harry Brown, who will hopefully join us after the holidays, during the summer we will have to rely on CDs.

Rev Richard Haynes stepped forward to speak and said that he is one year into his 3-year curacy and he feels he has had lots of challenges but thanks to everyone for the welcome to him and Ruth and for trusting him. He feels that everyone has realistic expectations of him. He has study days and papers which he must produce to be assessed at the diocese and thanks to everyone for being honest with him. Rev Richard also, on behalf of the Parish, thanked Rev Paul for all his work within the Parish.

10. Deanery Synod Report

Provided prior to the meeting, no comments, or questions.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date of next APCM, to be confirmed – it was agreed that the format of today was acceptable and will look at dates for next year.

Rev Paul closed the meeting with a prayer at 2pm.

PCC Brief Meeting following the APCM voted the following officers to the PCC: -

Ian Longbottom – PCC Treasurer

Belinda Piasecki – PCC Secretary

And the following Deputy Wardens are happy to continue to continue with their role: -

Kate Crocker – St James

Linda Alford – St John's

Denise Smith – Christ the King