

Minutes of the 2024 Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday, 21 April 2024 at 11.00 am in St Peter's Church, Brackley

Introduction

1. Welcome

The Rev'd Rich Duncan (Chair) welcomed everyone and opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Appointment of a Secretary (for both meetings)

RD proposed Denise Johnson as secretary, all agreed.

3. Apologies for absence

Dave Bell, Kath Bell, Louise Jordan, Karen Gees, Steve Gees, Naomi Brown, John MacMahon, Phillipa MacMahon, Anne Parsons, John Parsons, Sylvia Lafford, Dave Withers.

Vestry Meeting

1. Approval of minutes of previous Vestry Meeting held on 23.4.23

RD asked those present if there were any comments, none received, the minutes were therefore accepted as a true record, proposed by Helen Price and seconded by Caroline Dunning.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Standing for election for 1 year

Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Bev Lazenby	Caroline Dunning	Anne Parsons
Les Edge	Mary Bazeley	Louise Jordan

No one else has come forward. BL and LE are therefore appointed by default.

RD expressed his grateful thanks to Bev Lazenby for covering the CW duties singlehandedly for most of the year and doing everything with dedication and constant cheerfulness. RD prayed for the Churchwardens.

RD explained that he has created the position of Assistant Warden to help the Churchwardens in their practical roles (chiefly Sunday mornings and midweek door duties). Caroline Dunning and Kath Bell have offered to help in this capacity for the next year. Assistant Wardens do not have the legal responsibilities of a CW and therefore do not have to be elected. RD extended his thanks to CD and KB.

This meeting closed at 11.07am.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Approval of minutes of previous APCM held on 23.4.23

RD asked those present if there were any comments, none received, the minutes were therefore accepted as a true record, proposed by Val Lynam and seconded by Chris Bazeley.

2. Matters Arising

Inspections have been undertaken of the death watch beetle infestation in the tower and the nave roof space timbers. Quotes for treatment are being sought. The problem of visibility to see the

screen from the side aisles hasn't yet been addressed and RD stated that he would like to resolve this as soon as possible. Ivy treatment on churchyard walls has been ongoing, with more planned for this weekend's Maintenance Day.

3. Presentation of Electoral Roll

Denise Johnson, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that the updated electoral roll has been displayed in the church as legally required.

On 1 April 2023 there were 154 people on the electoral roll. DJ reported that there are 7 new members and one member passed away (Valerie Allen). Therefore, as of 30 March 2024 there are 160 people on the electoral roll.

RD advised that we also lost Mary Thomas and Tom Dunn this past year. RD prayed for their families, as well as the newcomers who have joined St Peter's in the past year.

4. Elections and appointments

The PCC

The following are nominated for 3 years

Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Ben Stopher	Caroline Jones	Oliver Jones
Louise Jordan	Val Lynam	Helen Price

On 1.2.24, Denise Johnson was co-opted onto the PCC as a full voting member until April 2025.

The following are nominated for 1 year

Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Uli Ashley	Tony Holden	Jacinta Holden

As this does not exceed the number of elected PCC members allowed, all those standing are automatically elected without a vote.

From April 2023 to March 2024 the PCC held 9 meetings with average attendance of 13 people per meeting.

RD proposed that people could be co-opted onto the PCC during the course of the year as needed, up to the maximum number elected members allowed. All agreed.

PCC Members standing down since last April

John Carter, Karen Gees, Steve Gees and Nick Hebditch

RD expressed his heartfelt thanks to all who have served on PCC this past year and especially to JC, as he steps down from the Treasurer role. He has held this position for 15 years and always with good humour and great diligence. RD presented JC with gifts and a certificate to thank him for his long service. There was a round of applause for JC.

RD confirmed that JC's retirement leaves the Treasurer post vacant (despite ample warning and lots of effort to recruit), meaning it defaults to Vicar (Acting Treasurer). RD asked everyone to pray for someone to step up into this role. To reduce the amount of work involved in the Treasurer's role RD advised that it has now been split into 3: Oliver Jones will be bookkeeping and will utilise the new QuickBooks software and Alison Scobie has taken on the role of cashier. RD thanked OJ and AS.

Nomination for election to the Deanery Synod

Richard Waterhouse has stepped down as Deanery Synod rep. A nomination has been received from Tony Holden, proposed by Cecil Thompson and seconded by Kath Bell. RD explained that the Deanery Synod reps represent our PCC to Deanery Synod and vice versa. As no-one else has come forward Tony will be appointed into this position for 2 years (when the 3-year-cycle restarts). DJ confirmed that John MacMahon and Helen Price remain as Deanery Synod Reps for the remainder of their 2 years.

Appointment of Sides Persons (Welcome Team) for the coming year

Morven Longton (née MacDonald) has stepped down. No new nominations have been received, therefore:

The Sides Persons (Welcome Team) for the coming year are as follows: Joan Lewis, Joan Peckover, Dave Withers, Louie Withers, Anne Mellor, Sue Robinson, Christine Watts, Mary Bazeley, Caroline Dunning, Roger Hiley, Lucy Mullins, Angela Geary (née Guess), John MacMahon, John Gibbins, Martin Ayers.

RD prayed for the PCC members, Deanery Synod Reps and Sides Persons (Welcome Team).

5. Financial Report for 2023

JC presented the Annual Report. Undoubtedly the main activity in 2023 was the 800 Appeal. An ambitious target of over £400,000 was set to raise funds for a whole raft of projects that were, and still are, needed to keep the church in good repair for the future. By the end of the year, £87,000 had been raised with future pledges of a further £33,000 making the total £120,000. Inevitably there were costs during the year leaving the appeal fund at £54,000, the auction raised £5,600 increasing the fund to circa £60,000. Although this is good, the new boiler alone is likely to cost more than £70,000, and this really needs to be installed by the Autumn. The church hall kitchen roof requires repair in the region of £25,000 and problems have also been identified with the nave roof.

It costs about £25,000 in basic maintenance to keep the church fit for purpose. Thanks to the congregation, we have been successful in maintaining the income from standing orders. Indeed, there has been an increase of 20% in value in real terms over the last 6 years (after inflation has been taken into consideration). We received an all-time record of £20,000 in Gift Aid, which shows how important this is to us, and another significant source of income was the annual donation from the charity FEOFFEE of £11,000, to be spent on the fabric of the church.

Many people believe we receive money from the Church of England, this of course is not accurate and we contribute financially to the cost of running the CoE. This last year, our contribution (Parish Share) was slightly over £78,000. Average Sunday attendance is 109 and it continues to rise. However, despite keeping a tight rein on our costs, we continue to report a loss of each month of around £2,300.

We have reserves in our investments, principally the Church House Fund, which stands at approximately £80,000, meaning that we have funds to last approximately 3 years. JC reported that he is confident that, with our energetic and forward-looking clergy team, and an amazing phalanx of helpers, St Peter's has a bright and positive future.

6. Presentation of the Annual Report & Accounts, Appointment of the Auditor

JC proposed that we once again use Blencowe's as our independent auditor for this calendar year. VL seconded. All voted in favour.

7. Fabrics, Goods and Ornaments for 2023

RD directed people to the written report on pages 4 and 5 of the Annual Report. RD wanted enormous thanks minuted for the Buildings Maintenance and Development committee, with special thanks to John MacMahon for his tireless service behind the scenes. RD also expressed thanks to Chris Bazeley for taking over as chair of the committee. RD highlighted last year's surprise discovery that Halse Mission Chapel has belonged to Peterborough Diocese for the past century (contrary to what we and those in Halse had believed) and that the St Peter's PCC are managing trustees on behalf of the diocese. We are currently trying to clarify with the Diocesan Registrar the legal implications of this discovery. Halse reps presented a report to the PCC at the March meeting, will attend PCC twice annually, and a written overview is included at the end of our 2023 Annual Report.

8. Safeguarding

RD stated that the safety of our children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance and there is a copy of our Safeguarding Policy available via our website. RD expressed his grateful thanks to Tony Holden (who continues to be the Parish Safeguarding Officer) for ensuring that our PCC members (as trustees of the charity) and those who lead our children's work, have the relevant DBS checks and safeguarding training. Training is available through the CoE website for identifying domestic abuse. RD advised that it is up to all members of the congregation to ensure the St Peter's is a safe place for all and to report anything of concern, no matter how small, to TH.

9. Children and Families Worker Report

HP presented her report. Tots and Junior Church take place each week during the service. The vision in these groups is to help children to know and love Jesus in a safe and fun environment. HP reported that she is encouraged by Junior Church as the groups are consistent and growing with usually 12 to 17 children each week. There is the potential to start a third group but we don't currently have quite the numbers of children or the volunteers. Wonderfully, lots of babies have been born into the church family this year and it is lovely to see our church growing.

There is a Communion Club starting on Tuesday afternoons for 8+ age children. On Thursday, First Steps continues to be a place of support for young families. HP passed on her thanks to Karen and Steve Gees for their weekly support.

We continue to have positive relationships with the local schools. HP visited all 6 at Christmas. Lent assemblies were carried out at Waynflete, BJS, WHS and Radstone. At Easter, assemblies were carried out at Waynflete, Radstone and Bracken Leas. HP thanked Chris Bazeley for his help recently. Schools use the church for their own services, to which parents are invited. We often have visits from schools who are investigating places of worship. We talk not only about the building but also about what we believe and do.

We ran the Easter Experience for schools again this year. Year 5 pupils came to St Peter's for an hour to investigate the Easter Story - if you want to know more you can ask Denise, Alison Scobie and Sue Ball, who kindly volunteered to help.

In August, we hold our Holiday Club, with a medieval theme last year. In October, there was the Light Party. The Nativity Service was well supported, especially by people who don't usually come to church. The Beavers explored the church and gained their faith badge. Finally, at Easter we had 35 children taking part in an Easter Egg hunt after the service. Good Friday children's activities were supported by 17 children, this was the first time we ran this.

HP reported that she was very thankful to the church family and everyone who has helped with children's groups and activities. HP also thanked those present for their support.

RD thanked HP for all she is doing with a round of applause.

10. Vicar's Report

RD wanted to do 3 things: give thanks, speak about giving, and make a proposal.

i) A chance to give thanks

RD advised that his written summary of 2023 can be read on page 3 of the Annual Report.

RD then showed a round-up video of the 800th anniversary celebrations last year.

It was a great year and a huge number of people did an enormous amount to make it successful, especially the Social and 800 Committees. It was a great boost having Rob Wood arrive as curate part-way through the year. Give thanks to God for the Growth Groups, which began in September, since we as a church are keen to grow not only in number but also in depth.

ii) A challenge to give

As a complement to the giving leaflets handed out before the service, RD showed a new giving video, expressing thanks to Kate Duncan for her help with both.

RD then showed a series of graphs showing that the bulk of our income comes from regular giving, that the number of givers has decreased over the past decade and that we are quite reliant on a relatively small number of bigger givers.

As a result, RD summarised that financially it is a mixed picture: on the income side, regular giving is up substantially from 2022 (even when discounting 800: amazing answer to prayer), but the number of givers has gone down. 800 Appeal efforts were excellent and necessary but the remaining £300k must be found somehow. On the expenditure side, there is significant and urgent building-related spending around the corner (to the tune of around £120k from new boiler, kitchen roof and nave roof repairs alone). Therefore, RD said a two-pronged approach is needed: 1) Grant applications to address the big one-off capital expenditure items for the building, for which we have the Fundraising Group of Denise Johnson, Rosemary Leeper and Alison Scobie. 2) A push on regular giving to address the monthly deficit from running costs, hence the leaflet and giving video (which can also be shown next Sunday and intermittently over the coming months). All this should be combined with prayer for God to provide as he has in the past.

iii) A proposal to ponder

RD suggested a proposal to move the main Sunday service back to 10am, as it was when he arrived. Feedback suggests that potential newcomers find 9.30am quite early, as do some of our elderly members, and a 10am start would also facilitate having bring-and-share lunches after the service on a more regular basis. However, RD has not made up his mind and would love to know what people think, saying there would be a box at the back of the church for people to share their thoughts about what would work best for everyone.

11. AOB

No other business received.

12. Q&A

CB put forward a vote of thanks for RD and the team for all their hard work. CB said that everyone appreciates RD's sincerity, leadership, and his bible teaching.

Beverly Bigmore thanked JC and wanted to know who will take over the photocopier now that JC is stepping down. RD responded that we need to look into this.

Anne Mellor wondered what the plans are for working in the care homes, we deliver communion and sing, it is very important and needs to be thanked. RD thanked everyone who goes to the care homes to deliver communion, and emphasised the importance of this continuing, added that he feels one of Brackley's most pressing social needs is for the elderly not to feel isolated or excluded.

Alan Perkins thanked everyone for their prayers for his health.

Jacky Mortimer thanked Anthony Harriss and his son for putting the metal door on the shed to secure it. JM also asked about the payment of expenses. RD confirmed that expenses would be reimbursed through him for the time being.

13. Closing Prayer

The meeting closed in prayer and The Grace at 12.07pm.