

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary the Virgin, Thame held at 7pm on Tuesday 23 April 2024 in St Mary's Church.

Present: Revd Mike Reading, Rector, Revd Andy McCulloch, Team Vicar and **48** congregants, none online. Names of attendees at end of minutes.

PARISHIONERS' MEETING

Mike gave a welcomed and thanked everyone for attending and for the support he, Ronnie and Nat have received during his absence. This was followed by a brief explanation as to why Andy would be chairing the meeting. Andy thanked everyone for their support in what has been an exciting but also challenging year.

1. ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

Helena Fickling and David Brown have agreed to stand again. Helena's nomination was proposed by Janet Pickard and seconded by Carol Wright. David's nomination was proposed by David Jackson and seconded by Owen Davies. No election was needed as there were no further nominations. Both were accepted and approved unanimously.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Carol and Gordon Wright; Marcia and Tom Haley; Sharon Bond; Charlotte Dickinson; Barry & Andrea Yates; Geoff and Gill Rushman, Nena Davis; Linda Ferris and Mary Cleare.

2. NOTICE OF AOB

3. THE ELECTORAL ROLL

Having revised the electoral roll, the number currently on the roll for St Mary's Church is 175 compared to 184 last year. This figure is lower than expected given the number of new people worshipping at Thame Church. 2025 is the year in which the Electoral Roll is renewed. More effort will be made by the clergy and admin team to encourage newcomers to enrol.

ACTION: Clergy & Admin

4. MINUTES OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN APCM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2023

Ann Midwinter raised the issue of the taking up of the red carpet. Mike and Andy explained the reasons for this as a trip hazard and didn't allow for flexibility with seating arrangements for events etc. Mike also confirmed the PCC voted and whilst there wasn't a unanimous decision to take the carpet up, the majority agreed and was adopted. It was proposed by Helena Fickling and seconded by Christine Waring that the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Wednesday 19 April 2023 should be accepted as a true record of that meeting. A vote was taken with no abstentions or dissensions and therefore carried. The minutes were duly signed by Revd Andy McCulloch.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no other matters arising.

6. ELECTION OF PCC MEMBERS AND DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES

Andy thanked Susan Bennett, Gordon Taylor and Robert Patterson who stepped down from their role as PCC members. The other current members wished to continue their term of office.

A nomination for PCC membership was submitted by Sue Lay, proposed by Christine Waring and seconded by Robert Ridgway.

Matthew (Matty) Fearon was co-opted on to the PCC.

David Gurney submitted his nomination for joining the Deanery Synod, this was proposed by Vicki Reay and seconded by Sally Davies.

David Brown and Vicki Reay wished to continue as Deanery Synod Representatives.

There were no other nominations.

The Nominations submitted were adopted with no dissent.

7. REPORTS

The booklet had been circulated in advance of the APCM to all members on the Electoral Roll who had given an email address.

Andy gave a verbal briefing on the following reports:

Children and Families

Andy thanked Hannah for her hard work and highlighted the success of Sparklers; encouraging attendees to offer to help with this. Andy also mentioned Outdoor Church (details in the written report)

Safeguarding

In Sharon's absence Andy gave a brief account of her report.

Anna Chaplaincy

Andy thanked Ann Midwinter and Graham Choldcroft for their commitment to this role and asked people to consider becoming an 'Anna Friend', that would involve visiting the local care homes.

Mission

Andy gave thanks to Robert Ridgway for his passion to bring news from our 13 mission partners. The bring and share lunch held on Sunday was a success and hopefully future lunches will also go well.

Fabric

Rosalie and her team were thanked by Andy for their hard work in maintaining a high standard of care for the interior and exterior of the church.

In response to a question raised by Ann Midwinter, Andy agreed that 'solar panels' would be something to consider in the future. Helena Fickling spoke about past concerns, but in the Diocese is now in favour. Mike Reading concluded that a report would be available next year on this.

Finance

Andy thanked Natasha Challoner and Keith Cival who looks after the overall finances of Thame Church. They have done a fantastic job in simplifying and creating a clearer picture of expenditure and the accounts covering all three churches. Andy reported that we are in a better position than last year and concluded this item with a thank you to the generosity of the congregations. This will allow for increased giving to mission and other areas.

Owen Davies queried the 20% increase to the Parish Share, yet the Electoral Roll figure is down. Andy explained the Parish Share had in reality gone up slightly. Mike referred to the level and where the money goes and comes from. Electoral Roll numbers are only checked every few years.

The Diocese website is transparent and shows how the share is quantified.

In answer to a question raised by Jon Vendy, Vicki Reay gave a brief account of the challenges the Diocese and Deaneries face and she along with others are working hard to have a voice at General Synod. Further details on link below <https://d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/on-the-money.pdf>

A request to the church office office@thame.church can be made by anyone wishing to have sight of the Diocese motion.

Helena explained that the share is calculated by 20% on Electoral Roll; 20% on population of the parish and the remaining 60% on number of clergy in parish.

Andy thanked Vicki for her report and for taking time to condense the full report to a manageable size for the APCM.

Churchwardens

No questions were raised. Andy thanked David and Helena for their support and hard work in their role as Churchwardens.

8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

Critchleys have been the auditors for many years and were named as appointees. This was proposed by David Gurney and seconded by Ian Cleare. All in favour. No Dissention.

Two copies of the Report and Financial Statement booklet for both St Mary's and for Barley Hill Church will be duly signed and posted off to Critchley's this week.

ACTION: Jackie Hurst PCC Secretary

9) REVIEW AND LOOKING FORWARD - TEAM VICAR'S REPORT

Andy gave an account of his report, thanking the PCC, JCC and Standing Committee for their support and all the work carried out over the past year that has seen a growth in unity and purpose.

Andy welcomed the return of Mike Reading and Emma Endean-Mills to the staff team. There are challenges and begs the question **'Where do we go from here?'**

Andy spoke of the Vision; the Mission and the Values and challenged those present at the APCM to ask themselves "Are we hungry to see neighbours and friends have their lives transformed by Jesus?"

“Are we becoming Christlike – as individuals and as a church community?”

“How will we be on this journey?”

We need to be prayerful, and Andy reminded us of Morning prayer, Compline and the Wednesday lunchtime prayers. He also highlighted Alpha and expressed joy that 9 people had signed up for the new course starting with Mike. Andy also mentioned and encouraged as many as possible to attend the United. Ignited. Prayer and Worship gathering on Tuesday 30 April 7.30pm-8.30pm in St Mary's a time to gather together with other local churches for praise, prayer and worship. Followed by refreshments.

Before taking questions from the floor, Andy concluded his report by saying we need to take risks – to trust God and to be generous.

Ian Cleare asked about the 'Operations Manager' Andy confirmed this is a role that will help him and Mike to have more time to be in the community. The role will be that of overseeing and supporting the clergy, co-ordinating their time and admin, with a key role in developing processes. The job will be advertised shortly as three days a week.

Gordon Taylor asked about the JCC recalling this was set up as a trial. Andy confirmed this as correct, and gave a brief outline of where we are at the present time in bringing the churches closer together.

Ian Cleare asked why are Barley Hill Church are formalising their JCC but St Mary's isn't. This is inaccurate and Andy confirmed whilst comments are being made, no decisions are being made at this time. Mike also reported that no one has over all control, but comments on how we go forward are welcomed.

Robert Patterson spoke of the PCC having statutory commitments whereas the JCC do not. Andy confirmed this and explained the Diocese will guide us in any future decisions made. There is one parish in the Diocese had already gone through the process of combining PCCs but was a lengthy one.

Jon Vendy asked if the end point would see a difference in the ways things are managed. Andy wasn't clear on this but unlikely that people would see a difference.

In answer to a question raised by Rosalie Gibson if the JCC was formalised the members be elected as they are for PCC.

Owen Davies asked about communication and how the changes have led to little information being easily available. Andy confirmed the Communications team are looking in to this, but time constraints mean things are not being done as quickly as we would like. Andy also mentioned that Jackie Hurst is to be trained on CANVA an online publicity platform. Volunteers are also encouraged to come forward to help.

Andy also confirmed that Baptisms and funerals are now included on the web Church News and the paper copies made available. Mike explained that the details of these would be handled sensitively.

Ann Midwinter asked a question about the Villages and the role of Peter Waterson. Andy explained Peter will be moving on soon and not everyone will know that we are in fact a Team of 9 churches. Peter's role as vicar has been a house for duty role with him working 3 days a week. In reality this is likely to be 6 days a week.

Emma will take some responsibility to the services in the villages, assisting Peter and during the interregnum.

Mike at this point explained that whilst he was now back, he wouldn't be running on full steam for some time yet and this is backed up by the Diocese.

In answer to a questions raised by Sally Davies, Andy agreed that services held at Meadowcroft, led by teams from Thame.Church could be included in Church News.

ACTION: Andy & Jackie

And Midwinter spoke of her role as Anna Chaplain and visits Meadowcroft and Cuttlebrook Hall regularly. Whilst it is not possible to hold weekly services the residents do appreciate what is available.

Alison Price raised a question over the Mission statement and asked whether we know what people within the congregations do in the community. This was misunderstood by Andy and Mike who responded by explaining the role of the Ministry Team Leaders.

Christine Waring clarified Alison's question by asking 'do we know what congregants to within the community but not under the church umbrella?' Andy couldn't be sure how we could measure this, but rather for the individuals who do serve the community to see it for themselves.

Communication will increase the awareness of what is happening outside of church by individuals. Offers of help can be made by contacting the church office.

Janet Choldcroft spoke about missing the 6.30pm service and whether this would be re-introduced. Andy and Mike's response was that it might be possible in the future when the clergy team is at capacity.

Polly Rea suggested we have a table at the Town Hall handing out service times. She recalled a time when we had a stall at the Christmas Light Switch on and handed out Christmas services fliers alongside chocolates and mince pies. Andy loved this idea. No decisions made.

As we drew to a close, Mike led us in prayer followed by Andy concluding with thanks to Graham, Emma, Jackie and Hannah for their support.

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Attendees recorded:

Gordon Taylor, Mary Taylor, Terry Galvin, Carole Galvin, Janet Pickard, Richard Fisher, Karen Fisher, Richard Deith, Elisabeth Deith, Kevin Wallis, Helena Fickling, David Brown, Robert Paterson, Revd Emma Endean-Mills, Margaret Jewson, Rosalie Gibson, David Gurney, Ann Midwinter, Revd Alison Price, Ian Cleare, Sian Stratton, Robert Ridgway, Sally Davies, Owen Davies, Sue Lay, Christine Waring, Julie Fox, Edward Fox, Andy Clamp, Paul Clark, David George, Sandra George, Andrea Harding, Steve Harding, Ann Warburton, David Warburton, Victor Gaultney, Sara Gaultney, Natasha Challoner, Revd Graham Choldcroft, Zoe Alexander, Gill Harvey, Brian Rea, Polly Rea, Jon Vendy, Vicki Reay, Janet Choldcroft and Jackie Hurst (PCC secretary).