

The Parochial Church Council of St Catherine, Towersey

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of St Catherine's P.C.C. held on Sunday 21st April 2024
in St Catherine's church following the morning service.

There were 10 persons at the meeting. Rev A McCulloch chaired the meeting, Julie Reid took minutes

1. Looking back and looking forward

The meeting opened with prayer led by the Team Vicar, Rev Andy McCulloch.

Sue Civval provided an update, Looking back April 2023 – April 2024.

During the past 12 months we have mostly been able to continue to run regular monthly services on the 3rd Sunday as well as special services. Due to our Rector Mike Reading's continued recovery (he has been off since February since his heart operation), drastic action was taken to cut the numbers of services held at St Mary's Thame to take account of the number of clergy able to hold services. In November due to low staffing, we therefore cancelled our 3rd Sunday service – but we are grateful that all other services have been held in St Catherine's as planned.

During 2023 St Mary's Church, Barley Hill Church and St Catherine's have been through a re-branding exercise to show more visibly that we are part of the same team. We are now part of the "Thame Church" ministry, which will be seen more in the future. Although distinctive we are very much a part of the Thame Church team. There is now a Joint Church Council which meets every other month and looks at matters affecting all the churches, with our own PCC continuing to meet, although less often to deal with matters specific to Towersey.

Numbers at our regular services have held about the same as last year, although we are not growing as a worshipping community. The village has continued to change significantly and there is opportunity as new people move in, so it's a really important part of our ministry to continue to hold out the gospel message to the Towersey community. #We are glad that both the May Day celebrations and the Carol Service continue to draw significant numbers of people from the village.

We were sorry that Pat Cherrington has had to move to Watlington this year, and she has done so much to keep the flower rota going over the years. We are delighted that a number of ladies within the parish are happy to help keep things going. We're also grateful that the church clock is now chiming and thankful for Tim Shreeve who has started to wind the clock (every other day).

Andy has had a full-on year in so many ways with Mike being out of action on a long-term basis and we are grateful for all his support when he's had the time in what has been a very busy year.

Andy updated the congregation about moving forward.

Andy thanked the congregation and Sue and Keith Civval for their hard work this year. By God's grace we have achieved many things; for example, the refreshing of the church branding, the appointment of Hannah Smith, the Children & Families worker. Frustratingly for Towersey, there has been a holding pattern and not moving on to new initiatives due to staff being off. However, Emma Endean-Mills (Curate at St Mary's) returned last week, and Mike is back on phased return to duties.

The three congregation Joint Church Council (JCC) has now produced the Thame Church Vision statement (see copy attached to these minutes). Andy described work of the JCC as a journey, deciding where we are going. We have to decide what that means for Towersey; which could mean Messy Church or gatherings in the village hall etc. Andy has a vision for lives being transformed, as Jesus did, here in Towersey.

In Towersey we have the May Festival in which we have input and can help shape the community, we also have the Church Fete where the village community and wider community come together; we have the Harvest Festival. Melanie Walsh will be an advocate to get the community to attend at harvest time. We also have the Carol Service. We want to get those well-attended services to translate to an increase to belief and our congregation at Towersey. Our greatest challenge is to have a high profile in the village and maintain our current commitments.

The Standing Committee has decided to have ministry leaders for each area within Thame Church, and there will be a ministry leader for Towersey. We give thanks that David Brown is more involved here at Towersey. We would like some people from the village to be involved to achieve our vision but with a deficit budget of £45K last year, we are walking by faith, hoping we can fund everything, such as the funds required for Hannah's role, the post of an Operations Manager, the Alpha course and growing outreach ministries in Thame Church here and in Thame.

2. Parish Meeting to elect Churchwarden

Sue Civval agreed to continue as Church Warden, and it was proposed by Deborah Miller and seconded by Angela Dike that Sue Civval be elected Churchwarden for the coming year. This was carried unanimously. Thanks were expressed for the Sue's work during the past year.

3. Annual Parochial Church Meeting

a. Minutes of last year's annual meeting were proposed by Andy McCulloch and seconded by Jo Gregory and were carried by the meeting.

b. Electoral roll report

The roll stands at 28 this year, an increase of one.

c. PCC annual report

The report had been circulated before the meeting and is attached to these minutes.

d. The Fabric report (Church Property Register and Logbook)

The churchyard boundary wall on Church Lane was re-pointed. Andrew Gillard worked in the bell tower to successfully deter birds, and there are none this year. The church west wall where there was a gap between the wall and the ceiling, was repaired in January. Ironwork, downpipes and lamp posts were re-painted and epicormic growth on the Lime trees was removed.

e. Treasurer's report

Keith said there were reasons to be thankful because the deficit anticipated ended up being a surplus instead. Giving increased on a monthly basis in line with inflation. Keith thanked those in attendance who had increased giving.

We received a legacy from Jean Osborne who died recently, and we allocated this to building fund. It is good to remember Jean and her late husband, Geoffrey.

We rely on the fete for over half of our income, and thank the village community for their support of this major exercise. We retain £10,000 of the Fete proceeds which we use together with proceeds May Festival for the upkeep of the church building.

Our giving to church missions represents the other half of our activities. We just break even. A large part of our commitment is our parish share, which provides wages for existing clergy, their pensions, training and for new clergy. It also provides support to other less financially viable congregations, such as Berinsfield. Our parish share in Towersey reduced last year, which was one of the benefits of joining the three congregations within Thame Church.

The forecast for 2024: Looking forward to this year, the PCC has agreed a deficit budget. We pray for growth so that we can break even financially.

We have three weddings planned at St Catherine's this year.

f. Deanery Synod report

Keith reported that there are meetings three times a year in Aston Cuddesdon. The Rev Derek Witchell stepped down as area chair and Preb Jane Haslam has taken over until January 2025. There was a visit from Bishop Gavin and Mark Humphriss, Diocesan Secretary.

g. Safeguarding

This was presented by Mrs Susan Hazell. Sue said there were no reports or concerns. We continue to use the Parish Dashboard, which highlights when training is due. Training needs to be updated every 3 years. Sue informed the meeting she updated her training last November. Andy thanked Sue for continuing in the role.

h. PCC members

All members were prepared to stand again. It was proposed that Jo Gregory be re-elected by Angela Dike and seconded by Ann Fox. It was proposed that Sue Hazell be re-elected by Deborah Miller and seconded by Jo Gregory. It was agreed by a unanimous vote that the existing PCC ought to be re-elected. Keith Civval continues as Deanery Synod rep.

i. Independent Examiner

Critchley's, who were approached to fill the role, declined mid-way through the year. Tony Pickup agreed to review our accounts. He has agreed to do so again for this year. Keith Civval proposed that Tony Pickup was appointed as Independent Examiner for 2004, and this was seconded by Sue Hazell.

4. PCC meeting

Appoint a Treasurer and Secretary

Keith Civval agreed to continue as Treasurer. It was proposed that Keith be re-elected as Treasurer by Andy McCulloh and seconded by Sue Hazell. Julie Reid agreed to continue as Secretary. It was proposed that Julie be re-elected as Secretary by Sue Hazell and seconded by Jo Gregory. The PCC voted unanimously to re-elect Keith Civval and Julie Reid to continue in their roles.

The meeting then closed with prayer.

Signed.....Date.....