

HERTFORD ST ANDREW'S

Minutes of the meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in church on Sunday, 30 April 2023

Present: Ian Aitken, Jenny Aitken, Christine Barclay, Renee Booker, Barbara Burridge, Eric Burridge, Harold Chaplin, Jane Chaplin, Joan Cheesman, Rev Bill Church, Jane Cohen, Anthony Collinson, Pauline Collinson, Julie Frazer, Gillie Georgiou, Steve Georgiou, Andrew Goodman, Angie Harris, John Harris, Debbie Hartnett, Mary Horne, Barbara Hurford, Carol Kemp, David Kemp, Alan Little, Sue Little, Brenda Maling, Julie Markey, Carol Muhr, Sue Mulligan, Geoff Oates, Barbara Penson, Michael Penson, Stuart Penson, Phil Probert, Sally Rees, Lesley Self, Chris Seward, Melanie Seward, Catherine Sleath, Rev Alan Stewart (in the chair), Richard Taylor, Shirley Taylor, Adrian Walter, Alison Warn and Rosemary Willis

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Colin Eldred, Jane Eldred, Nick Hoyle, Charles Ledsam, Debbie Ledsam, Forbes Mutch, Jenny Mutch, Kath Oates, Helle Penson, Laura Ramsay, Peter Ruffles and Stella Walter

The meeting began and ended with prayers.

Meeting of Parishioners

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 April 2022**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.

2. **Election of Churchwardens**

Shirley Taylor and Rosemary Willis were both willing to continue as Churchwardens for another year supported by Chris Seward as Deputy Churchwarden.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Attendance and apologies as above.

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 April 2022**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.

2. **Election of Parochial Representatives of the Laity**

2.1 Representatives to the Parochial Church Council

Alan expressed his gratitude to those who were standing down as members of the PCC: Joan Cheesman, Colin Crowhurst, Nick Hoyle, Kath Oates, Stella Walter and Rosemary Willis. Rosemary will continue to attend the meetings in her role as Churchwarden.

Malcolm Fry opted to stay on for another term.

Three nominations have been received:

- Anthony Collinson; proposed by Mary Horne and seconded by Carol Kemp
- Julie Frazer; proposed by Rosemary Willis and seconded by Melanie Seward
- Christine Barclay; proposed by Laura Ramsay and seconded by Carol Muhr

There were no other candidates so Anthony, Julie and Christine were appointed as members of the PCC.

2.2 Representatives of the Parish to the Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

Julie Markey and Shirley Taylor agreed to continue for another year.

No other candidates had come forward but Alan said that anyone who might be interested should get in touch with him or the churchwardens.

3. **Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

John Alflatt was appointed as Independent Examiner and has examined and approved the accounts.

4. **Report on the Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll contains a total of 161 people, compared to 159 in 2022, of whom 64 are resident in the parish and 97 non-residents.

5. **Report on the Audited Accounts, Statement of Funds and Property**

Debbie was pleased to report that the year had finished with a surplus of £12,488 in the budget. This has been achieved through increased planned giving and cash and contactless collections, and profitable church events and concerts.

The PCC had agreed that the surplus could be allocated to the following reserve funds:

- £6,000 towards enhancing the audio-visual equipment in the church
- £4,000 towards the refurbishment of the Calton Avenue house
- £565 to complete the funding of the clock repairs
- £360 towards increases in energy bills

The balance goes in general reserves, which is three months of expenditure in line with financial policy.

Debbie thanked everyone involved in making the church events so successful and supporting them.

As expected utility costs rose in the later part of the year and there is allowance in the 2023 budget for these to increase. The biggest maintenance cost of the year was £17K on the bell tower repairs.

The church has donated £13,292 to a number of charities over the year, from mission giving and funds raised from special collections and coffee mornings.

The budget for 2023 is planned to give a small surplus. Increasing energy costs are the main risk but allowance has been made in the budget for these.

Debbie thanked David Kemp and the finance committee for their continued help and support.

Alan thanked Debbie for all the work that she does.

6. **Comments on the Annual Report**

Jane Cohen expressed concern that the church had been involved in an event in association with the multi-faith group of Extinction Rebellion and asked if there were plans to work with them in future. Alan responded that a meeting had already been set up with the churchwardens to discuss this issue.

7. **Churchwardens' Report**

There were no questions for the Churchwardens.

8. **Presentations**

8.1 Mission Committee

Andrew Goodman reported that 12% of the income from planning giving, (£8,730 in 2022) was distributed to charities by the Mission Committee. Twelve different organisations benefitted this year, 65% overseas based and 35% local. The work and ethos of organisations supported by our mission giving seek to see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives and fulfilling their God-given potential. This usually leads to giving to organisations with a Christian basis.

Articles in the church magazine have given details of the work of some of the groups supported by St Andrew's this year.

In 2022, the committee supported two organisations for the first time, neither of which have an explicit Christian basis, but both seek to meet emergency needs and/ or help transform peoples' lives.

- Solar Aid provide solar lights in various African countries as an alternative to families putting themselves at risk of fires developing from burning kerosene and paraffin.
- Hertford Pantry is a collaboration of organisations and individuals which aims to reduce food waste and support Hertford residents with good quality free food. It is hosted in Network Homes' premises situated in the Sele Farm shops.

Andrew felt that for 2023 funding we should consider identifying organisations to support that are working to address the climate emergency which is having a disproportionately bigger impact on poorer communities in less developed parts of the world.

He asked that anyone interested in joining the Mission Giving Committee to help make decisions on funding should get in touch with him.

8.2 Audio Visual System

Chris Seward reported that the Audio-Visual system in the church could be greatly improved and that the PCC had agreed that that upgrading it should be a priority. A good AV system would enhance services, wedding and funerals and make the church more attractive to other groups for music and drama performances. This would help the church to be financially sustainable.

Two companies who are both experienced in church work have been approached to quote for a new system and have given demonstrations of what they can offer. The plan is to develop the sound system in the first instance and then the visual system at a later date. A fundraising drive will start in later summer/early autumn for the first phase and research into possible grants is taking place.

9. **Team Vicar's Report**

Alan started with a quote from Paul's letter to the Philippians "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice! "

Joy was the theme of the joint parish Away Day where we were reflecting on how joy and gratitude create a positive upwards spiral.

There has been so much to rejoice in over the past year:

- the outdoors creative print retreat
- the railway day
- the return of Soul Food
- HarvestFest
- Picturing Advent and Christmas Services
- The Lent Course and Easter Services
- The children being admitted to Communion

St Andrew's has also offered support to the Ukrainian visitors, placed a hot drinks tab behind the bar at the Golden Griffin and offered free Mindfulness sessions at Sele Farm. The Reaching New People group will be visiting the people living in the new housing development with a "Welcome to the Neighbourhood" card and a gift of biscuits.

Alan thanked everyone who is involved in the running of the church and the outreach activities.

Future plans include reinstating prayer ministry during the 10.30am service, in the chapel during communion on the third week of the month and after the service every Sunday. He's also planning several short courses including an introduction to the Bible in the Autumn.

Alan thanked everyone for their support during the past year.

Shirley Taylor thanked Alan for his love and everything he did for the church.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Barbara Burrige asked how much the new Audio-Visual system was likely to cost. Chris reported that the sound system would be in the region of £30,000 and the visual system slightly less.

10.2 Jane Chaplin asked people to consider volunteering to help with Junior Church until a new Children and Youth worker could be found.

The meeting ended with a blessing.