

HERTFORD ST ANDREW'S

Minutes of the meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in church on Sunday, 28 April 2024

Present: Jenny Aitken, Christine Barclay, Renee Booker, Mark Buck, Barbara Burridge, Harold Chaplin, Jane Chaplin, Joan Cheesman, Rev Bill Church, Anthony Collinson, Pauline Collinson, Colin Eldred, Jane Eldred, Sandra Emmet, Julie Frazer, Kim Hamilton, Mary Horne, Carol Kemp, David Kemp, Katherine Kennedy, Sue Little, Brenda Maling, Carol Muhr, Forbes Mutch, Jenny Mutch, Sue Mulligan, Geoff Oates, Phil Probert, Laura Ramsay, Sally Rees, Peter Ruffles, Lesley Self, Chris Seward, Melanie Seward, Judy Sharman, Nick Sharman, Rev Alan Stewart (in the chair), Shirley Taylor, Adrian Walter, Alison Warn, Jo Willis and Rosemary Willis

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Lou Cobb, Andrew Goodman, Claire Goodman, Jenny Gray, Charles Ledsam, Debbie Ledsam, Claire Leonard, Alan Little, Julie Markey, Jean McQueen, Pauline Rhodes, Catherine Sleath, David Spring, Richard Taylor, Stella Walter and Rod Willis

The meeting began and ended with prayers.

Meeting of Parishioners

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2023

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

2. Election of Churchwardens

Shirley Taylor and Rosemary Willis were both standing down. Alan thanked them for their extraordinary work as churchwardens and presented them both with a token of appreciation.

Two candidates had come forward to replace them:

- Julie Markey, proposed by Carol Muhr and seconded by Judy Sharman
- Lesley Self, proposed by Philippa Probert and seconded by Shirley Taylor

As there were no other candidates Julie and Lesley were duly appointed as Churchwardens.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Attendance and apologies as above.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 April 2023

The minutes of the meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising

Item 6 - Alan confirmed that the church had no plans to work with the Extinction Rebellion group in future.

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

3.1 Representatives to the Parochial Church Council

Lou Cobb, Jenny Mutch, Laura Ramsay and Catherine Sleath have opted to stay on for another term of office.

No other candidates have come forward but Alan said that anyone who might be interested in joining the PCC should get in touch with him.

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

Julie Markey is standing down but Shirley Taylor agreed to continue as the Deanery Synod representative for another year.

No other candidates have come forward but Alan said that anyone who might be interested in becoming a Deanery Synod representative should get in touch with him.

(Post meeting note: Jenny Aitken and Renee Booker volunteered to become Deanery Synod representatives after the meeting was finished).

4. **Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

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

5. **Report on the Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll contains a total of 159 people, compared to 161 in 2023, of whom 61 are resident in the parish and 98 non-residents.

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

Nick Sharman thanked Debbie Hartnett for all her work as Treasurer in previous years. He also thanked David Kemp for banking the cash and the Finance Committee for their advice and support.

The budget for 2023 had finished with a surplus of £5,178 mainly due to an increase in planned giving and money raised by coffee mornings and events.

However on-going costs are like to rise: our Parish Share has increased; the utility contracts are due to be re-tendered and continuing maintenance work is needed on the church building.

There are two major restricted funds; the Youth Worker fund and the Sound and Visual Project Fund.

There were no questions so Alan thanked Nick and Judy for taking over the Treasurer's role.

7. Comments on the Annual Report

There were no comments on the Annual Report. Alan thanked all those who had produced the reports.

8. Churchwardens' Report

There were no questions for the Churchwardens.

9. Presentation on the Audio-Visual Project

Chris Seward gave a brief outline of the development of the Audio-Visual Project. The proposal is to have screens and speakers placed around the church so that everyone can clearly see and hear what is happening. The main screen would be retractable when not in use. The control console would be located at the back of the church, but further forward than the present sound desk. This would give much better access to the toilet.

The total cost would be £70,000 to £75,000, to include training and a three-year warranty. So far approximately £42,000 have been raised from grants, events income and parish funds. This is enough to cover the audio element of the project. Chris thanked everyone who had attended events to help raise this total.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee have considered the proposals and will support a faculty application when one is submitted. A public consultation on the proposals will be carried out.

Bill asked if the live streaming of services would be both visual and audio, Chris confirmed that it was. The present sound system picks up interference when the celebrant turns to face East, it is hoped that this will not be a problem with the new system.

Harold asked if the choir would be able to see the screens. Chris reported that they should be able to see the side screens or the confidence monitor, which is placed so that the celebrant can see what is appearing on the main screen.

Chrissy asked if the sun shining in the windows would make it difficult to see the image on the screen clearly. Chris reported that this had been considered and was only likely to be an issue on a couple of Sundays in the middle of summer, if the weather happened to be very sunny. The quality of the image will be very good.

10. Team Vicar's Report

Alan reminded the meeting that the Church is the congregation, not the building or the services. We are called to try to be peaceful, kind, faithful, gentle and loving, even though at times we will fall short.

The recent Awayday had been very special with so many different ages gathered to worship, explore and connect. Alan thanked St Joseph's in the Park for their hospitality.

Tracy Plumpton is working alongside Alan to lead collective worship at St Joseph's, Hertingfordbury Cowper and our Hertford St Andrew's schools, and members of the congregation support St Andrew's school through the Walking Bus and serving as governors. Recently a prayer meeting has started at the school for parents, staff and governors.

Outdoor church activities have been trialled, including Forest Church and a Soulful Walk, and others are being considered. We are fortunate to have Panshanger park near by and it was wonderful to have a New Year's Day walk there.

Alan thanked the wonderful team who so faithfully work with our children and young people supporting TMM, Junior Church and Toddlers. We have not been successful in trying to recruit another Children and Families Worker and we need some new leaders for Junior Church. A day of prayer will take place on 4th May for the work with our children and young people.

A Confirmation Service will take place on 4th June and a number of the TMM members have expressed an interest in joining the Exploring Confirmation sessions in May. Anyone else who would be interested is welcome to join the sessions.

The Parish has expanded with the new housing development in Sele Farm. Kath Oates and Stephane McCarthy have been welcoming the new residents with a card and a gift of some biscuits, and have been having some wonderful conversations

The fortnightly Mindfulness sessions at the Hub on Sele seem to be going from strength to strength and the Wednesday evening Mindfulness and Meditation continues to be popular. From June the Wednesday sessions will also be fortnightly, with one live session per month.

A second Bible course will be starting Thursday 6th June and in October there will be a follow-up course on the book of Romans.

Alan thanked Chris Seward and his team for organising the variety of events that have brought many new people through our doors. He also thanked the Zoom team who enable folk from far and wide to connect with others and with God each Sunday and all the people that help to sustain the ministry, hospitality and mission of the church.

Hertford is holding its first ever Pride Family Fun Day on Sunday 12th May, celebrating diversity and inclusion. With the backing of our wardens and ministry team, we will offer our chapel that day as a safe place of prayer and reflection.

The Church of England has authorised new prayers of blessing for those in same-sex couples entitled Prayers of Love and Faith.. The pastoral guidelines state that it's up to the individual priest as to whether they are happy in conscience to offer these prayers. Alan said that he was fully supportive but would consult with the PCC and with the wider congregation before any decision was made. He asked that anyone who had anything they would like to contribute to that conversation should talk to him.

Alan thanked everyone for their support and care.

Bill suggested that it would be helpful to let people know what was happening with the vacancy at All Saints' Church. Alan reported that we had been part of a Team Ministry, with Rev Jo Loveridge in charge, but the other churches felt that this hadn't really worked in practice. The Diocese has agreed to dissolve the team so the All-Saints' post will be advertised as Priest in Charge.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 Forbes reported that a Ukrainian family were looking for new accommodation and asked if anyone could suggest anywhere.
- 11.2 Soul Food has been running for 10 years and Forbes said that they were carrying out a review of how it was organised. He asked for thoughts and comments.
- 11.3 Shirley thanked Alan for all his hard work and support.

The meeting ended with a blessing.