

**DIOCESE OF ST. ALBANS  
PARISH OF ST. ANDREW, BIGGLESWADE**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)  
HELD IN ST ANDREW'S CHURCH ON  
SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022**

Revd. Liz Oglesby-Elong chaired the meeting.

49 parishioners were recorded as having attended the meeting, 5 of these via Zoom.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Judith Wakeling, Gill Hibbert, Paul Williams, Shirley Williams, Judith Thatcher, Nettie Van de Weerd, Pat Sherwood Saunders, John Dilley, Jessica Mepham, Claire Leeks.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the 2021 APCM**

Lucy Dilley commented that she had raised a question at the previous APCM as to why people on Zoom were not included as attendees; this had not been minuted. Rosemary Bentley noted that the Church of England rules are clear that meetings can be recorded in one kind only; as the meeting was offered in church, those participating via Zoom would not have any voting rights, only those present in church. The general consensus was however that there was no reason why those on Zoom should not be included in the numbers attending – noted going forward. The minutes were proposed as being a true record of the meeting: **Proposed by Vivienne Gayfer; seconded by Philip Rutt. All approved.**

**3. Matters arising from the previous minutes**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Annual Reports**

a) The report of the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

Rob Butcher noted his thanks to the Buildings and Ground team stating that it had been quite a busy year. There was a major issue with the boiler, and we are currently getting specifications for a new system and also part of a project with the Diocese to look at the eco implications; we need something in place for winter and the future. Revd. Liz proposed a vote of thanks to the Churchwardens and the Buildings and Ground team and all who work to care for the fabric of the church building. There was applause from the meeting.

b) Report on the Vicar and Churchwardens' Charities

Rob Butcher referred to his report in the Annual Reports booklet. He noted that there had been an issue with one of the investment companies in the sum of £600 being invested as part of the Peake charity. The investment company could not find anything publicly about the link between the Vicar and Churchwardens' charity and the investment funds they held. We have been offered £125 in compensation. Rob asked Ruth to minute the following:

Dr Butcher's report was received by the APCM. He and Miss Rosemary Bentley, Churchwardens, asked the APCM to note the relationship between the Vicar and Churchwardens' charity account at Lloyds Bank and the income generating investment funds held by M&G as part of the Peake charity.

Rob suggested that this minute could be included on the church website so that it then becomes in the public domain.

c) Report of the Electoral Roll Officer

Ruth Marshall-Jones reported that the year commenced with 125 parishioners on the Electoral Roll, being the fourth year in the six-year cycle. There have been two additions and five deletions and therefore there are currently 122 members as at the closing date of 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The return to the Diocese will therefore show a total of 122 persons, of whom 116 are resident in the parish.

d) Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the parish generally

Ruth Marshall-Jones referred to the PCC Annual Report which forms part of the Financial Statements and confirmed that the Report was adopted at the PCC meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March. She noted that it would be submitted to the Charities Commission in due course. Revd. Liz gave a vote of thanks to Ruth and those who help pulled the report together.

e) The financial statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

The Statutory Financial Statements 2021 and a Summary Sheet of these figures had been previously circulated. Andrew Rutt spoke to these by way of a PowerPoint presentation to highlight:

**PCC Financial Funds**

- Made up of endowment, restricted, designated and general funds a total of £528,000
- There is a restricted fund for 10 Compton Mead
- Designated funds include the Major Fabric Fund, the Emergency Mission Fund and a new Donations and Legacies Fund, which are all shown as cash at the bank
- There has been no movement across the year jointly on the general and restricted funds
- **General Fund over the last five years**
- 2021 showed a surplus of £5K although there was a deficit of £6K on the restricted funds, hence nearly breakeven across the year.
- PCC budgeting on the General Fund for 2022 will be a small deficit.

**General Fund-Regular Giving**

- In 2018 £80K
- Budget for 2022 is £78K, so nearly back to the level of 2018

**General Fund – Other Income**

- Chapter House bookings had a significant drop from £14K (2019) to £3K (2020) but this has recovered and continues to do so into 2022.
- Compton Mead currently rented out at £15K per annum. When the property is no longer privately rented and used for Church purposes that income will need to be replaced
- Other income includes Sunday Lunches and other social activities
- **Expenditure**
- The Parish Share will increase from £71K in 2021 to £77K in 2022
- In 2021 a total of £16K was given to various charities through fundraising and the share allocated from regular giving.
- Other expenditure includes increases in gas and electricity costs

**Questions:**

- Philip Rutt asked how much there was currently in the Emergency Mission Fund. Andrew responded that there was approximately £300-£400.
- Philip Rutt stated he felt the church should not be ashamed to publicise the fact that legacies could be made to St Andrew's Church; he thought this had never been done before and felt that we should be doing this. Andrew added that the PCC would be giving due thought on how to promote this. In fact, this is already an aspect of the Parish Giving Scheme information.
- George Dilley asked if the value of Compton Mead was known. Andrew said he did not know, although from an accounting point of view it is not necessary to revalue the property in the accounts. Lucy Dilley noted that the rental for Compton Mead reflects its current value but that could potentially change.

Vaughan gave a vote of thanks to Andrew for his capacity to present the accounts in a way that could be understood. He added that Andrew had interpreted the wishes of the PCC rapidly which gives the PCC a huge amount of confidence.

f) Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Rosemary referred to the report in the Annual Reports booklet. She asked for prayers for the Benefice of Dunton, Eyeworth and Wrestlingworth who were now without a priest. She added that the Deanery is interviewing for a part time incumbent there. Revd. Liz thanked Rosemary.

## **5. Election of 4 persons as representatives on the PCC for 3 years**

Four nominations were received: Oliver Dilley, Vivienne Gayfer, Ruth Marshall-Jones, and Chris Parker. Revd. Liz gave a vote of thanks to Peter Giles who had decided to step down from the PCC after a three-year term of service. She thanked him for his many contributions during his time of service, including IT, website and putting together of the parish profile for the appointment of a new priest, also recently work around Eco Church and the Eco survey and his involvement in youth work, particularly the 11+. Revd. Liz went on to declare that all were duly elected to the PCC and thanked them for stepping forward.

## **6. Safeguarding**

Vaughan Johnson referred to his report in the Annual Reports booklet. He made a point of stressing that safeguarding is for everyone and that it is crucial to know that every person is part of the safeguarding group. Revd. Liz thanked Vaughan and the entire team and said that it had been good to meet with the team and be confident in the processes here.

## **7. Appointment of an Independent Financial Examiner for the 2022 Accounts**

Andrew Rutt noted that the accounts had been checked by Colin Sparshott, a retired certified accountant; he had indicated that he would be happy to continue in this role. It was therefore proposed that he be asked. **Proposed: Andrew Rutt; Seconded: Oliver Dilley. All in favour.**

## **8. Report from the Vicar**

Revd. Liz referred to her Homily given at the 10 o'clock service (attached as Annex A). She mentioned that she was going on a residential conference during the next few days in Suffolk, entitled "New to Post" which has given her some time to reflect and think about what the experience of coming to a new parish has been like. She referred to the Parish Profile document and one of the pages headed 'Our Hopes, Our Offer.' What we hoped for in our new vicar was that they would be energetic, a team player, a people person, and inspiring. Revd. Liz hoped that some of these qualities could be found in her ministry at St Andrew's. She then turned to 'What we offer' – an active community, a supportive community, a financially stable parish, and a desire to grow. Revd. Liz said that she had found all of that and more for which she thanked God.

Revd. Liz noted her thanks to the following people:

- Paul and Shirley Williams. They are planning to move away and when that time comes, we look forward to giving our thanks and saying goodbye. They have both been extremely active in their 40 plus years at St Andrew's and may we give thanks to God for their life and ministry amongst us.
- Tony and Christine Elcombe as part of the ministry team for some time, although no longer serving at St Andrew's. Since the beginning of COVID they had made a decision to worship elsewhere. They remain in our prayers and thoughts.
- Jackie Collins who we said farewell to as our Parish Secretary in December after seven years of faithful and diligent service. We are glad that she remains a part of the Thursday morning service.
- Gill Hibbert, who has decided to step down as coordinator of the Children's Society. Thanks to Gill for serving the Children's Society over the last number of years on behalf of St Andrew's church.

## **9. Any other business**

Vaughan Johnson noted that as a Chair of Governors of Edward Peake Middle School, they were looking for a volunteer to come on board as a Foundation Governor; this was to replace Julia Black; they would be appointed by the Diocese. He asked that if anyone was interested, they should come and see him. Vaughan also noted that the St Andrew's Festival will be taking place between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

Lucy Dilley noted her disappointment that names of loved ones will be removed from the notice sheet after four weeks. She asked that this be discussed by the PCC/Communications group to be raised and reconsidered. She also asked what plans we have to re-introduce

some form of outreach to new people. Revd. Liz responded that there are no plans at the moment to do so. She went on to say that we are overwhelmed with trying to re-establish what we are doing in the church and that it was symptomatic of not being back to full strength post the pandemic. We have been doing some work but not as a forefront; we are still in recovery time; small steps are being taken and we are getting there. Ros Drakes noted that the Mothers' Union has started running its monthly tea party and people have been joining church because of these monthly get togethers.

Philip Rutt gave a vote of thanks to Revd. Liz. He said he felt that that everyone present would agree that Revd. Liz had made an auspicious start to her ministry at St Andrew's but that there was now a great sense of optimism and progress. He noted that Revd. Liz is the first female vicar at St Andrew's, and she together with her husband Sam, and their two sons Oscar and David are a great joy to all. Revd. Liz responded, saying that this is about relationships and about knowing each other and that role means a lot to her, She added that she was held here in so many different ways; firstly by God and by coming to a place where there are so many talented people. She said it was an utter pleasure to have been called to St Andrew's; her ministry is unfolding, and she felt a real sense of excitement. The meeting applauded.

The meeting closed with prayers.

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(Chair)

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(Date)

## ANNEX A

### Fourth Sunday of Easter/APCM

*Acts 9.36-end, Psalm 23 and John 10.22-30*

***"My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27)***

+In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

It's been a long time since I played the trust game, in a fun, party setting.

You play the game by being blindfolded and led through an unfamiliar place by a person who can see. You are completely at the mercy of that person. You have to trust them and have faith that they will keep you from falling or getting hurt. Now, if a random person asked to blindfold you and do a trust walk, would you do it? What about if someone from our faith community or family member here asked you? You would *probably* be more likely to say yes to them, than to a stranger...

This can be a fun game, but it is more about the trust you have in the person or people with whom you are playing than in playing the game itself. It speaks to the relationship between the vulnerable person who cannot see the way ahead and the person who is responding to their call. There is always a call and a response, just like in our relationship with God.

With our APCM today, it has given me pause for thought and deeper reflection on God's call, and my response; leading to the decision to move myself, and my family from Eltham, Southeast London to Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, to a new Church and a new ministry amongst you as your Vicar last summer. Given the unexpected, and quite frankly, undesired challenges of my new beginnings here at St. Andrew's, namely Covid and health challenges with my ears and labyrinthitis, much of those new beginnings felt like playing a VERY long game of trust.

All of us have been deeply challenged by and through the Covid-19 Pandemic; darker times, at times like lost sheep, going back and forth, but through that, new opportunities of drawing closer and closer can emerge. Trusting the voice to lead us through the valley of the shadows and guide us along right pathways. In goodness and mercy, God pursues us, and, in that relationship, we are cared for like the sheep of a shepherd. God draws near to us.

***"My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27)***

Today is called Good Shepherd Sunday/Vocations Sunday and our APCM, our Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held directly after Church. What a good Sunday to hold our APCM as we look back and give thanks for our life together under God's guidance over the past year and look ahead in love, listening to the call of God on our life together, the Body of Christ, and we in faith, respond.

The shepherd is a familiar Biblical image of God, expressing what we know of God's love, God's protection, God's continual guidance, and patience, especially when we go astray, fully revealed in Jesus the Good Shepherd. All the carefully written reports we have received of our Church's worship, life and mission, tell of God's love, protection, guidance, and patience; and there is more work to do as God calls us onwards.

The image of the Good Shepherd is poetically captured in Psalm 23. The imagery is rich, meaningful, and comforting while we love and serve like lambs in the landscape of practicing resurrection. The psalmist reminds us of how we need to move through transition in our lives—any transition—whether it be bereavement, divorce, job loss, moving, loss of health, or anything with change. Knowing that when we cry out in trust, however dim our sight maybe, God will respond and guide us through those times where the only way out is to live through them – one trusting step at a time. Draw near to God and God will draw near to you. Even when we are having a dark night of the soul, God is still closer than our breath. We must continue to be faithful even when we feel forsaken, because God is still with us.

My Vicar's Report this year, is summed up in these words I share today as we reflect on our Gospel reading today and focus on Jesus our Good Shepherd. So much of what we celebrate and give thanks to God for today at this our APCM is our trust in God and one another; the trust, the

love, the friendship, the common purpose we share in loving and serving God, our neighbour and taking good care of ourselves through what has been another year of challenges and struggles, alongside opportunities and new beginnings, signs of hope and new life, as we emerge hopefully from the past two years of the Covid-Pandemic. We continue to pray fervently for Peace and an end the War in Ukraine, and other worn-torn parts of our troubled and broken world; for those seeking safety and security throughout Europe and the UK; and closer to home for all whose lives are being adversely affected and pressurised by the cost of living crisis, and rising fuel prices, alongside praying for God's grace that we may exercise wise stewardship of this beautiful earth, tread lightly upon it and cherish its resources for the good of all.

All of our steps, however small, taken in faith, hope and love this past year, gives us so much to be thankful to God for, as we look back, and look ahead, in faith.

We are called to listen deeply to the voice of Jesus, our Good Shepherd knowing his love, protection, guidance and patience as we seek to continue God's work in the world: at times with simply one small step in the darkness toward the voice – even a soft shuffle in the right direction; that brings us closer. We can pray also that as we respond to God's voice, others who are at a loss may hear, see, be inspired by us, and will themselves be able to call out to God themselves.

The things we do when we follow Jesus in our daily lives matter, and the ripple effects are clear: Just look around. Just stop and listen.

***"My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27)***

Today, we give thanks to God for all the stories, encounters, experiences, facts and figures, highs and lows, hopes and dreams we tell, and hear today. Read the papers. There is much to listen to, much to hear. Let the stories enliven your hearts and your minds. Be encouraged. It would be folly for me to try and thank each by name, so simply "Thank You". Most especially for the prayers that we've prayed, the Eucharist's we've shared, the welcome you have given to me and my family here at St. Andrews, Biggleswade.

In God we trust. It is God's trust walk that we are all walking together on, as we seek to live out our Baptismal vocation, to be the persons God made us to be, following Jesus, our Good Shepherd; "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me."

As we look at the year ahead, let us re-commit to pray for one another, as we seek live out who we are called to be surrounded by God's love, protection, guidance and patience; living out our vision: worshiping God with joy, growing in faith, serving with love and welcoming all. There is something deeply attractive about that here at St. Andrew's, Biggleswade: an energy, a light. Is this what St. Irenaeus meant when he said, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive"? May this be so as we recover and emerge hopefully, once again.

All that we do, all that are, must always point to God.

For we have a Gospel to proclaim. Alleluia! Amen.

God of our coming in and our going out,  
God of our past, present and our future,  
God of all the ups and downs of life,  
give us bright hope that all shall be well.  
Help us to trust in your promises,  
to find springs of the water of life,  
and to share that with others,  
that tears maybe wiped from every eye.  
Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honour  
and power and might  
be to our God  
that Good Shepherd of the Sheep,  
now and forever,  
Amen.

*The Revd. Liz Oglesby-Elong  
Vicar of St. Andrew's, Biggleswade APCM 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2022*