

Draft Minutes
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
Wednesday 24th May 2023, 7.45pm at Christ Church

90 people attended the meeting which was chaired by Associate Vicar, Revd Gordon Taylor

Vestry Meeting

1. **Apologies:** Graham Hickson-Smith, Angela Nicholls, Brendon & Annie Fahy, Stuart & Suanne Lyell, Nigel & Valrita Gray, Rose Collins, Robert Neave, David and Jill Christmas, Pete Silverman, Yvonne Fry, Sheila Webster, Helen Stone, Jessica Brierley, Ruth McLearn.
2. **The minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting** held on 18th May 2022 were approved and signed by Gordon Taylor.
Approval of minutes proposed by Heather East, seconded by John Wegrzyn. Agreed – by show of hands.
3. **Election of Church Wardens:**
 - Sarah Finch: proposed by Ed Tranter, seconded by Katie Payne
 - Stephen McCreath: proposed by Pete Silverman, seconded by Yvonne Silverman
There being no other nominations, both wardens were declared elected for a term of one year.

APCM

1. **The minutes of the APCM held on 18th May 2022** previously agreed by the PCC, were approved and signed.
Approval of minutes proposed by Sarah Finch, seconded by Maxine Kennedy. Agreed by show of hands.
2. **Presentation of Electoral Roll:** Rita Haxton reported that church has seen encouraging growth in the past year. 66 names have been added to the Roll and 12 names removed, as some had moved away from the area and a few had chosen to worship elsewhere. The total now stands at 316, a net growth of 54, around 21%. All who consider Christ Church to be their spiritual home are encouraged to sign up to the Electoral Roll, as the Electoral Roll is the nearest thing we have to church membership in the Church of England. *Full ER report on file.*
3. **Secretary's Report:** *The full report is on file.* RH gave an overview of the year's PCC meetings and referred to the work done in the sub committees. RH had served as an elected member of the PCC for 6 years and took the opportunity to thank others who had completed their term of service: our two Deanery Synod Representatives: Anthony Bennett and Duncan MacMurphy. Heather East, having served for 6 years, Heather Wright: 3 years, and Peter Mckerchar; one year. 4 others had completed a 3 year term of office but were standing for re-election: John Averill, John Haynes, Graham Hickson-Smith and John Wegrzyn. Jacob Mayho, had been co-opted to the PCC last June and was also standing for election. RH encouraged the church family to pray for all the PCC as they seek God's will for the way forward and encouraged everyone to bring their ideas and questions to the PCC members.

Sarah Finch presented Rita Haxton with a card and gift as a 'thank you' for her six year's service as a PCC member and Secretary.

RH had indicated that she would be willing to be co-opted back on to the PCC for a year in order to serve as Secretary until a suitable handover could take place.

4. **Treasurer's Report:** John Averill presented the examined accounts for 2022. Copies of the accounts had been available on the CC website and in church over the previous two weeks and were also available at the meeting. JA had reflected on our financial situation 6 years ago when our income and expenditure were around half of what they are today. This showed how blessed we are in terms of our growth as well as the generosity of our church family. JA expressed thanks to Sherry Taylor, Anthony Bennett and Stephen East for their time and dedication in looking after the finances of the church, and also offered the opportunity for anyone interested in joining the team to speak to him. Our Independent Examiner, David Stephens, had reviewed and signed off the accounts and the PCC had also approved them. JA was happy to present them to the church. JA pointed out that the main unexpected cost challenge had been the unprecedented rise in energy costs for the year, which were over £40K. However, we had continued to support our Mission Partners and the Diocese with substantial giving. *The full report is on file.* There were no questions from those present.
5. **Appointment of Treasurer:** Gordon Taylor explained that the appointment of treasurer is a PCC decision (not APCM) but that John Averill had indicated he was happy to continue in post. Gordon therefore proposed that the meeting should show their affirmation of John Averill and show their appreciation by applause. The meeting responded whole heartedly.
6. **Report on the Deanery Synod:** *The full report presented by Duncan MacMurphy is available on file.* DM reported that the Tunbridge Wells Deanery comprises 15 churches in the area. Deanery Synod meetings are usually attended by our two lay representatives, Duncan MacMurphy and Anthony Bennett, and also by our Associate Vicar, Gordon Taylor. A highlight of this year's meetings had been the November meeting when Bishop Jonathan was the guest. He had shared something of his background; his likes and dislikes; family life; as well as his favourite scripture, John 10:10. He shared his belief that it is God's intention for us all to flourish and have life to the full. Bishop Jonathan's vision for the church could be summed in three words: Change: Serve: Grow. To do this and to fulfil our role we need wisdom to listen; courage to lead; and hearts to love.
7. **Safeguarding Report:** *The full report is on file and in our Annual Review available on our website.* Bethan McCreath, our Parish Safeguarding Officer, reminded us to read the report, and encouraged us that we are all responsible for safeguarding everyone. Bethan reminded the meeting that she is the main point of contact for anyone who has any concerns. She thanked everyone for their continued vigilance, support and encouragement.
8. **Elections to Deanery Synod:** GT explained that there were 4 vacancies for this ex officio role. Only two nominations have been received and the nominees were declared elected to serve a three year term as lay representatives of the Christ Church parish.

Name:	Proposed by:	Seconded by:
Heather East	Rita Haxton	Hilary Sanders
Alex Haxton	Anthony Bennett	Alan Stone

9. **Elections to the PCC:** There were nine nominations for the nine available places and no further nominations were received during the course of the meeting (*see note below*). All agreed by a show of hands that the following should be duly elected to serve for a three-year term.

Name:	Proposed by:	Seconded by:
John Averill	Anthony Bennett	Naomi Hutchison
Jon Dalton	Graham Hickson-Smith	Alex Haxton
John Haynes	Richard Kemsley	James (Jim) Roberts
Graham Hickson-Smith	John Haynes	Edward Shaw
Jacob Mayho	Alison Lovelock	Emily Grimwade
Ed Tranter	Duncan MacMurphy	Margaret-Anne MacMurphy
Joshua Thomson	Rita Haxton	Andrew Taylor

John Wegrzyn
Katherine (Katy) Wright

Julie Heskett
Julie Matchett

Jasper Galton-Fenzi
Sarah White

Note: A further nomination was received very positively during the meeting but was later discovered to be invalid as the nominee had not yet signed the Electoral Roll. The PCC will make a decision re: possible co-optation once the Roll has been signed.

GT introduced the 5 new PCC members, asking them to share a little about themselves and what makes them feel alive. All were thanked for standing for election and for their willingness to serve.

10. **Appointment of Independent Examiner:** David Stephens had served the church well for over 11 years. David Stephens: *proposed by John Averill, seconded by Alex Haxton. Appointment agreed by show of hands.*
 11. **Appointment of Safeguarding Officer:** Gordon Taylor pointed out that this role is a PCC appointment, and that Bethan McCreath is happy to continue in the role. He thanked Bethan for all her skills as she serves the church in this way and also facilitates all the required DBS checks. GT proposed that the meeting should show our affirmation and appreciation. Again, a whole-hearted response.
 12. **Vicar's Report:** *Tim Humphrey has given a full report in the Annual Review which can be found on our web site.* Tim referred to the cultural moment in which we find ourselves: a feeling of being out of control; chaos; the old certainties are gone and the new haven't fully emerged. The younger generation are challenging the older to build back more resilient and authentic. The challenge is to find ways of sharing the unchanging gospel message in this particular cultural moment. Authenticity is vital. We are not out of control; God is working out His plan; it's on target, and our security is in Jesus. We need the gathered church to remind us who we are; that we are pilgrims passing through. Our longings are fulfilled in the promise of a new heaven and with God's heavenly people. Our role is to illuminate Jesus, for it is in Him that the emerging generation will find hope and courage in the world.
- **This past year** we have sought to empower each of us through Life Groups and a variety of courses. Much time has been spent welcoming and integrating new people; increasing our volunteer base; training lay-leaders for small groups; praying and supporting individuals.
 - **Minster Vision:** This describes what we do and makes sense of what God is doing here. Everyone has a part to play in this.
 - A corporate community, committed to one another
 - Gathered round a corporate worshipping rhythm
 - A place of sanctuary and restoration
 - A missional hub
 - A repository of ministry resources
 - A centre for gospel preaching, holding fast to the core principles of the gospel message
 - **Building Project:** We're pushing ahead with plans. It's on-going.
 - **Living in Love and faith (LLF):** The C of E's LLF process has involved discussions with the PCC as well as the course we ran in November 2022. It has been difficult, and Gordon and Tim have spent much time on it, reaching the conclusion that they will not be able to use the 'prayers of love and faith' which they believe are confusing and undermine the biblical understanding of marriage. It is not a sin to be gay – everyone is equally loved and accepted by God. That isn't the issue, but what Christians understand about marriage. Tim's hope is that the mission and ministry to which we believe God has called us will be our point of unity whatever our individual convictions. The PCC has given wholehearted support to the clergy as they have wrestled with this difficult issue.
 - **Team Effort:** Tim spoke of the fantastic team effort, the wonderful congregation, the huge number of volunteers that make everything happen week by week. Tim thanked Gordon for chairing this year's APCM, as well as each of the staff who work so hard. Our new curate will move into the Broadmead area at the end

of May and will begin work in the church at the start of July. Tim then gave members of the staff team the opportunity to share briefly with the meeting:

Jonathan Wooldridge (Worship Director), Jacob Mayho (Youth Pastor), Jan Humphrey (Children’s Ministry) and Gordon Taylor (Associate Vicar) all thanked their respective teams for their tireless serving and spoke of the challenges and the hopes for the future. *More detailed reports can be found in the Annual Review available on the web site.*

13. Questions – just one question touched on the LLF process and what may happen if the C of E tried to ‘force’ acceptance of the prayers of love and faith. Tim said that there is grave concern about what will ultimately happen to the Church of England. There is still much work to be done on these prayers before the next vote in General Synod. Our focus is on the Lord; it’s about Missio Dei; God is working out his purpose and if He chooses to use us then He’ll use us. Tim reminded us all that that we are welcome to ask questions at any time. We don’t need to wait for an APCM. Tim and Gordon are always available.

Gordon said how thankful we all are to have Tim as our Vicar and the meeting responded with spontaneous applause.

14 Church Wardens’ Report/Closing Words: *Full report on file.* Sarah Finch began by speaking of the privilege of being a church warden and of the immense respect she has for Tim and Gordon. Together the wardens covered three areas:

- **Safeguarding:** Galatians 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.” Everyone is encouraged to look out for those around them so that everyone is free to flourish in their life and faith.
- **The Operations and Leadership teams:** Stephen McCreath spoke of the commitment shown by the teams and highlighted that the ratio of operational staff to congregation is far below the average across the country. We are deeply grateful for the amazing work done by the few to serve the many.
- **The new building:** Sarah encouraged everyone to engage with the plans for CCTW, the building, the Minster vision, and playing a role in the life of the church. This is for the blessing of those people God will call unto Him next year, the year after and for a long time to come.

Stephen closed this part of the meeting with prayer.

The meeting concluded with a short time of worship led by Jonathan Wooldridge and then Gordon closed the meeting with a Blessing (at 9.30pm)

Minutes approved by PCC
Signed

Minutes approved by APCM
Signed