

Minutes of Parish Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting, The Bourne Parish

Sunday 21st May, 2023

Parish Meeting

Chaired by the vicar, The Revd Sandy Clarke

Election of churchwardens

Patricia Goode and Hilary Newman, having been nominated as churchwardens, were unanimously elected by the meeting.

The vicar, Revd Sandy Clark, thanked Peter Neukom for his dedicated and outstanding service as churchwarden over the last four years and presented him with gifts on behalf of the parish. Peter responded saying it had been a privilege to serve the parish.

The vicar informed the meeting that deputy churchwardens would be in place for St Martin's – Brian White and Jent Stephen – and St Thomas's – Rob Horton and Judith Waters – for 2023/24.

The meeting closed.

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Chaired by the vicar, The Revd Sandy Clarke, who opened the meeting with prayers.

- 1. Minutes** of the Parish Meeting and APCM of 22nd May 2022 were approved unanimously with no amendments. Proposed by Roger Bradley and seconded by Ruth Moore.
- 2. Election of new lay members to the PCC.** The vicar thanked Ann Williams for her dedicated service to the PCC over the past 8 years and noted that there were two vacancies for lay elected members as Hilary Newman is appointed churchwarden. Two applications have been received from Janet Hughes and Deborah Wilde (who is standing down as deanery synod representative) and both were duly elected by the meeting to the PCC.
- 3. Election of deanery synod representatives.** The chair thanked Yvonne Bryant and Debs Wilde for their service. As deanery synod members need to be re-elected for a further 3-year term in 2023, Yvonne Bryant and Richard Oswald were both nominated and agreed to serve and were unanimously elected by the meeting.

4. Electoral Roll. Nigel Lewis, PCC secretary and Electoral Roll Officer reported that there were 231 members on the electoral roll after the revision earlier this year –4 fewer than in 2022 due to the death of previous members.

5. Chair's report

The Revd Sandy Clarke expressed her joy at being the vicar of such a busy, lively and flourishing parish. She noted that 2022 had been a year of change with the previous incumbent, Revd John Morris having retired as well as Liz Lane and Clare Marren moving on to new parishes.

Sandy thanked a number of parishioners for their service, including Mike Barter for organising and leading the organ refurbishment fund, Brian White for planning the disabled toilet facilities at St Martin's and Keith Newman for fund raising at Brambleton Hall for the new boxing club building and planning to expand the land occupied by the Hall site.

She was very grateful to Ticia Goode for her service as churchwarden and thanked many who organise parish activities - Liz Witham (holy dusters), Frank Golding (Alf & Co gardeners), Yvonne Bryant (sacristan), Nigel Cuthbert (readers and intercessors list), Mavis Golding (Christian Aid), Frances Garland (work with children and young people), Hilary Newman for organising the welcome team and Roy Picken for taking over the sidesmen's rota – with thanks to Stewart Davidson who had held this role for a number of years.

Sandy also gave special thanks to the team of retired clergy who have been so supportive, especially during the challenging vacancy period at Tilford.

Sandy looked forward to a future where the parish grows in depth and breadth. The coffee mornings at St Thomas's (special thanks to Richenda Wallace for organising over many years, and to Judith Waters for taking over this year) and at St Martin's (organised by Sally May) were essential elements of our outreach and very popular. Foyer groups will be set up later in 2023 to enable members of the congregations to get to know one another better.

The Burns Night and Coronation concerts (with thanks to Vanessa Horne and all other involved) continued our record of hosting events to appeal to the broader community as well as parishioners and to raise funds. Sue Aston and Meg Daniels' organisation of the scarecrow festival was outstanding – many local people attended and participated in this festive fund-raising event.

The parish's music has gone from strength to strength. We will soon have a refurbished organ, and in the meantime the evensong on tour (to Rowledge and St Joan's) had drawn very large congregations.

Sandy noted the need to strengthen the ministry team and that in 2024 we had applied to be considered for a curacy post.

6. Presentation of Financial Statements for 2022.

Michael Cock, Treasurer presented the Financial Statements to the meeting, apologising for the late delivery of the accounts and the small font used in the document.

Regular giving ad increased by 3% (vs 2021 which was an exceptional year) and room hire had doubled to £38k after the ending of Covid restrictions. The organ refurbishment was fully funded including a £9k contingency. General fund spending had been flat despite inflation, although energy costs had increased by 42% to £15k. General reserves now covered 1.6 months of expenditure, a slight improvement on 2021.

Over a longer period – an eight-year trend – the parish had experienced 5 years where income had been lower than expenditure including depreciation. Maintaining the fabric of our buildings perhaps remains our biggest funding challenge. Michael noted that overall income was essentially static over 8 years whereas CPI inflation had increased by over 20%.

Nonetheless the outcome for 2022 was positive with all fund balances other than Youthwork increasing during the year.

The balance of income remained heavily dependent upon regular committed giving which is over 50% of total income. Parish share accounts for almost 50% of our expenditure.

For 2023, at the end of March the trend was also positive with a £9k surplus in general funds (excl depreciation) reflecting £4k from fundraising – mainly Burns Night – and the early impact of the giving campaign in February.

Whilst the value of our major Youth Trust investments – the CBF Investment and Property Funds – fell in 2022, reflecting the weak market conditions – they have recovered somewhat in 2023 and income derived from both funds is increasing.

Our key goal remains to rebuild reserves to cover 3 months' expenditure and raise cash for the flat roof repairs at St Thomas's. Michael thanked all who had supported his work in 2022, including Caz Cullum, Nigel Cuthbert, Sarah Herbert, Tim Devis, Ruth Moore and Keith Newman.

Michael and the Finance, Stewardship and Administration working group were thanked by the vicar for their work throughout the year.

In answer to questions from Catherine Crawford, Michael stated that if a surplus remained in the organ fund after completion of the works it could be used for other parish purposes; and that the reserve level of 3 months is probably a realistic maximum – although in the past we did operate with up to 5 months' reserves.

7. Appointment of independent examiners for 2021.

Shaw Gibbs were re-appointed by the meeting unanimously. The APCM was informed that they had done a good job and fees had been stable for a number of years. Proposed by Michael Cock, seconded by Roger Bradley.

8. Fabric report

Peter Neukom gave a short report, highlighting the challenges from the initial findings from the 2022 Quinquennial Report indicating the work is required to address the flat roof, baptistry stained glass windows at St Thomas's and the gutters and downpipes at both St Thomas's and St Martin's.

9. Safeguarding

The vicar thanked Ruth Moore for her work as Parish Safeguarding Officer and noted that the new PCC would adopt the parish safeguarding arrangements for All PCC members have completed their safeguarding training and been subject to BDS checks.

10. AOB – None.

11. The meeting ended with the Grace

Signed

Date