

PARISH OF ST ANDREW, COBHAM

Minutes of meetings held on Zoom on 16 October 2020

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Election of churchwardens.

The Vicar said that this was an open meeting. Details of the meeting had been on a notice on the lych gate noticeboard. There were two candidates for churchwarden, Michael Elson, who had been proposed by Clive Moorman and seconded by Becky Moorman, and Paul Hurrell, who had been proposed by David Taylor and seconded by James Moreno. He was not able to take new nominations, so he was delighted that they were duly elected. He thanked the outgoing churchwarden, David Taylor, who had served faithfully, so well and with such commitment which he had appreciated very much.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

2. Welcome and apologies.

Approximately 30 members attended. The Vicar said that the meeting was being recorded.

The Vicar welcomed everyone to the meeting. The God of the changing seasons had seen the turning of another year in the life of the parish, We now had a much delayed annual meeting at which we could record the celebrations and hardships and joys and sorrows of the previous eighteen months, with lives which had passed onto eternal life and new lives. There had been many highlights before the shock and horror of the lockdown which had required the closing of the Church for four months.

We could now look forward hopefully and with excitement to a year of change in our life in Cobham and he asked that we should discern with light and realism what we were called to do as witnesses to Christ. He asked that we might live as disciples in these uncertain times and be bearers of Christ's light, love and life for all, and that we should be filled with hope as we moved forward.

Apologies had been received from Rev Moni Babatunde, Elaine & Simon Bray, Hugh Bryant, Helen Goddard, Richard & Bill Hollington, and James Moreno.

3. Minutes of the 2019 Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The minutes had been on the website. There was one amendment; two lines up from: the bottom of page 3 'Beryl Moorman' should have read 'Beryl Mooney', Geoff

Morris proposed and Sue Kilpatrick seconded the motion that, with this amendment, the minutes should be accepted. The Vicar said that he would sign them when he could and get them to Leonard Beighton.

4. Chairman's Report.

The Vicar said that these were not usual times and his report would be different. So he asked for forgiveness if he didn't mention you and your contribution to the life of St Andrew's, but be assured he was truly thankful for all you had done.

Looking Back His last report had been in April 2019. No one could then have predicted the world we found ourselves in today with its restrictions and risks. He read from Scripture - Psalm 137 (Many Jews were deported from Jerusalem to Babylon in 587BC):

By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there
we hung up our harps.
How could we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?

For many of us not being able to sing in church is something we were exiled from! The psalm spoke powerfully of missing the familiar and suffering the changed. Yet we had more to reflect on tonight than our Covid experience.

He thanked all who had contributed to the 2019 Annual Review and to Leonard who had compiled it. If you had read the review, he hoped you were thrilled to see the many community engagements and faith growing opportunities that we were able to provide in 2019.

Highlights of 2019 included:-

Moni being ordained Deacon.

Esther being celebrated and thanked as she moved into her theological training.

"Transforming Lives for Good", shepherded by Carrie Taylor, connecting coaches with students at St Andrew's School and their families. He thanked all who had taken part in that ministry.

Pearl joining us as a volunteer from "Time for God" to help with our children and families' work.

David Fuge joining us as Music Ministry Leader.

Our Lent gatherings who watched The Bible Course.

Plus all the other things being done week in and week out, faithfully by so many of you. He thanked you very much.

Response to Lockdown He had taken a wedding on March 21st and then didn't worship with others in church until August. We were all in a state of shock at just how quickly everything changed.

Your Ministry Team at St Andrew's were quick to respond as a caring force in Cobham. We quickly established a phone line with Churches Together and began to deliver prescriptions for our local pharmacies. We tried to call church members regularly.

However, our steepest learning curve, and the most valuable lessons learned, were as we had tried to stay connected by technology for services and meetings. None of us had been trained in how to broadcast or even knew what Zoom was in March 2020. He was immensely proud of his colleagues for their work in mastering cameras, video switches, and computer software, you have been amazing.

David Fuge had spent hours taping the archived recordings of services at St Andrew's and had produced many videos of hymns and worship songs for our broadcasts and for enjoyment by thousands of people around the world. Many of you had been brave in providing videos for readings, prayers, and most recently "This Time Tomorrow". He thanked you all so very much.

Slowly but surely, as guidance had allowed, we had opened up church facilities when and where it had been safe. This had not been easy, He had been supported wonderfully in the decision-making responsibility by our Wardens, David Taylor and Michael Elson, our Standing Committee and his Ministry Team colleagues. He believed we had managed to find a good balance between the need to overcome isolation whilst ensuring we remained safe.

David Taylor had added information about the "Moving Forward" project, which had considered the future Vision for St Andrew's church

Ministry Turning away from restrictions and back to joys, last weekend Moni had been ordained Priest and celebrated Holy Communion for the very first time. We rejoiced with her as she continued to grow in confidence as she ministered among us.

Peter Vickers had prayerfully discerned that as he approached his 80th birthday and, after 27 years of faithful ordained ministry at St Andrew's, he would be "hanging up his dog collar" at the end of this year. He thanked Peter for all he had given to St Andrew's and Cobham over the years, and for all the help he had given him over the last two years; he truly was a fount of local knowledge.

The Vision Process for renewing our Vision as a Church community was well and truly derailed by Covid-19, yet under the excellent leadership of David Taylor it had been "Moving Forward". He asked David to introduce it.

Moving Forward. David Taylor spoke of the process of moving forward. But first on behalf of the Churchwardens he thanked the Vicar for all he had brought to us, and he congratulated Paul Hurrell on his appointment.

He said that the process had developed out of covid and a number of webinars from the Diocese. He showed slides which started with a number of quotations from Church leaders, the thrust of which was that we could not stay where we were or shut up shop: we had to move forward to build the Kingdom and think outside the box.

He thanked all the members of the team for their contribution: they were Rev Moni Babatunde, Elaine Bray, Judy Brickett, Jacob Costard, Claudia Hollington, Paul Hurrell, Shirley Mensah, James Moreno and himself.

The overall theme was Wider Doors and Deeper Wells. Within that there were five areas of Church life which had been brought out.

Youth Ministry. We needed to reach more young people and make a connection with them. We should empower them to take leadership.

The wider community. We needed to reach out to the lonely, vulnerable and people on the margins. We needed a data base: there were ongoing discussions about how we should keep in touch with them.

Technology. The Vicar was not only a spiritual leader but also well versed in technology. Three areas had been identified: the church operating systems; modernising our hardware; and branding and communications.

Preaching. There was no criticism of our ministry team, but we should be more challenging in today's circumstances. The evangelical churches were the ones which were growing: they sought a personal commitment. We should learn from them without departing from our Eucharistic identity.

Kid's Church. There was a long list of recommendations based on the Archbishops' Council recommendations for a growing Church. We needed to support children and families not only in Church but in their homes. In particular we needed a children's and families' worker.

In all we needed to reach out to the local community and beyond. We needed to build bridges which were strong enough to carry the juggernaut of the Gospel.

The team had prepared a paper which had been passed on to the Vicar and the Ministry team.

Finally he spoke of a dream he had had when he had left his previous Church. It had involved him coming to St Andrew's and seeing it as a leap of faith.

Conclusion The Vicar believed that we had exciting times ahead together. He turned again to the Psalms and to 138. At a troubling time yet permeated with HOPE in times of TROUBLE:

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down towards your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word

above everything.
On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.

So, knowing that the steadfast love of the Lord endured for ever, we moved forward into a future unknown, yet filled with HOPE. He couldn't wait to take the journey.

5. Safeguarding.

Wendy Jane Gray said that she was the safeguarding officer and part of a team at St Andrew's and the Deanery. She also validated DBF checks for people who worked with children or vulnerable adults. The team were concerned to ensure that everyone who came to the Church would feel welcome and safe. It was something which we took very seriously in St Andrew's. We had laid the foundations which were the basis for moving forward. The Safeguarding Committee included the Vicar, Michael Elson and herself; it would include the children's and families' worker when we had one again. It reported to PCC at every meeting and received their support.

The Diocese had arranged to bring safeguarding officers in a Deanery to work together as a team. It was a pyramid with the safeguarding officers at the base reporting to the Area Dean and to the Synod and then to the Diocese on any issues or concerns. She was the representative of the safeguarding officers and there had been a meeting with the Dean the previous evening to which she had been able to report

The Diocese had acquired an app which provided a safeguarding dashboard, Safeguarding had changed considerably and she had the app which members could watch. It would be simpler than the parish audit which it would replace. It could be used across the Deanery to see how we were doing. We now had a framework which focussed on foundations, policies and practices which were joined up and together provided for safety throughout. It would make life easier and would be accessible to a greater number of people. There was a new team at the Diocese.

Wendy Jane thanked everyone for their support and looked forward to exciting times ahead.

The Vicar thanked her and reaffirmed our absolute commitment that everyone should be safe in everything that they did. It was not just a matter of ticking boxes: it was fundamentally important.

6. Annual report and accounts.

Malcolm Graham said that we had not only to look at the 2019 accounts, but we were now into the tenth month of 2020. The financial accounts for 2019 were similar to the management accounts which he reported to PCC. But we now had the examiner's report: the format was different, for example the income and expenditure

on Church Gate House were shown separately, and they were on an accruals basis, which he used only once a year.

Note 9 showed the balances on our unrestricted and restricted funds. The latter were largely used up at £1.4k after the work on the roof and the bell tower. The Investment valuations were unrepresentative of the current situation as they did not reflect the recent falls in the stock market. However due to a large legacy which we had received, it was unlikely that we should have to sell any investments for some time. Our expenditure continued to exceed our income and we could continue to maintain the situation only by selling investments or receiving legacies. He remained very concerned by the high proportion of our regular giving which came from an age group which would largely pass on in a decade or so. This could lead to the gap between our expenditure and income widening, leading to a rapid rundown of our investment reserves. On the positive side, although the pandemic had led to a loss of our hall and plate income, our regular income had held up pretty well and had not decreased by as much as he had feared might have been the case.

In August we had received the main part of the legacy from Gerald Stanford, amounting to £150,000. At the Vicar's suggestion, PCC had divided this into three designated funds, 'Now', 'Later' and 'Never'. These were not restricted funds: PCC would decide how they should be used and could change its decisions. Other churches, such as St Nicolas, Great Bookham, used them. The split which PCC had agreed was 'Now' £52,500, 'Later' £90,000 and 'Never' £7,500. The 'Never' fund would be used for charitable donations and £1,500 had already been given to the Chatterbus which Gerald had used regularly.

The Spire fund had been very successful and had more than covered the original quoted costs. However it had been found that further repairs were required for the internal structure about which David Taylor would speak later. The cost of refurbishing the weathervane had been met by the Standing Committee.

Finally he wished to thank Beryl Mooney for the work which she did in recording donations and applying for gift aid.

In the course of questions, Peter Bound asked about the £5,000 which had been left for work on the bell tower and which was to be used for an update of the bell chamber with wood panelling. The Vicar said that this work had been authorised, but it could not start without a faculty which could not be obtained at present. He said that this matter should be looked into.

Judith Robinson said that we would benefit greatly from Gerald Stanford's legacy. She asked what was our current day-to-day income and expenditure. Malcolm Graham responded that the gap tended to be in the region of £20,000 a year excluding one-off items. The deficit had been a little lower in 2019 because we were no longer paying for a children's and youth minister. Our current donations would not be sufficient to pay for one when we got one. Judith asked about our current monthly income and expenditure: how much were we going down now each month. and whether there had been a drop in donations during the lockdown. Malcolm Graham

responded that we were losing about £2,000 a month which would eventually have to come from investments or legacies.

Leonard Beighton said that he was concerned at the suggestion that legacies could be used to fund the current deficit. Legacies should be used to fund projects; it was for the living Church to fund current expenditure. The Vicar said that he agreed and would be talking about that in future services: the message was 'Mind the Gap' so that we could sustain our ministry and mission. David Taylor said that the moving forward group was suggesting projects: the legacy was a gift from God which would lead to building the Kingdom and to the sowing of seeds.

David Tipping recalled that the flat remained empty and asked whether there might be short term lets. The Vicar responded that we were in a difficult position: under the covid regulations the minimum notice period was 90 days. We should not want the flat to be unavailable for as long as period as that if we found a Children's and Families' Missioner on which we were actively working. On the salary we were offering it would not be possible to rent a flat in Cobham. A couple had been looking for a two months tenancy, but were then offered a flat rent free which naturally they had taken instead.

The Vicar thanked Malcolm for his report and for all his work on the accounts. Freddie Marshall proposed and Clive Moorman seconded a motion that the report and accounts be approved and this was adopted unanimously. The Vicar said that he would sign them and get them to Leonard Beighton to sign and get them back to Malcolm.

7. Report on the fabric of the Church.

David Taylor said that Peter Bound should not be worried about the work on the bell chamber.

He said that we had an excellent Property Committee: its Chair, Clive Moorman, did a lot of work around the Church and Church Gate House for which he was most grateful.

Since the quinquennial survey at the beginning of the previous year we had been working through all the recommendations. The Church was in very good order and repair. Work on the roof had been completed in the previous year. The work on the spire had been completed and paid for. The work on the interior of the spire was for the future. He thanked Keith Baird and Nick Constable for repairing one of the tombs. He noted that Clive Moorman would be putting up our silver Eco Church award from A Rocha.

The Vicar added his thanks to Clive Moorman and the Property Committee.

8. Report from the Deanery Synod.

Michael Elson said that he wanted to put his report in the context of the Diocese who were now more interested in what was going on in Deaneries: the work would be more ahead but for covid. The reorganisation at Church House was complete, with a focus on mission. Peter Harwood, the new Director of Mission, was carrying out a health and viability review to identify which churches were struggling financially with their ministry and meeting needs. The role of the Deanery to handle this was not just for the Area Dean but for the Leadership team in the deanery where work could be brought together better. Within the Leatherhead Deanery there had been a focus on sharing resources and on young people and families to which we had contributed and from which we had benefitted. The Team Secretary had resigned due to work commitments and, when the new members had been elected, would be replaced. There could then be a focus on mission which would make a long term difference.

9. Electoral Roll.

David Greenwood said when the electoral roll had been revised last year we had had 165 people on it. We had gained a few, but had lost three who had died; Gerald Stanford, Jean Fuge and Joyce Watkins: Joyce had been the Sunday School leader for many years. We now had 171 on the Roll: he hoped for one or two more shortly. The Vicar thanked Dave for his work on the Roll.

10. Election of 3 lay members of the Deanery Synod.

The Vicar said that Michael Elson and Geoff Morris were standing down as elected members, but they were also members of the Diocesan Synod and would remain as ex officio members of the Deanery Synod until the elections to the Diocesan Synod next year. Leonard Beighton was also standing down and the Vicar thanked him for his service.

There were three nominations for the positions. Claire Costard had been proposed by Elaine Bray and seconded by Carrie Taylor; David Greenwood had been proposed by Cathy Whitnall and seconded by Helen Goddard; and David Taylor had been proposed by Peter Kelly and seconded by Malcolm Graham. With three candidates for the three vacancies they were duly elected. The Vicar confirmed that they would be on PCC ex officio.

11. Election of 4 members of the Parochial Church Council.

The Vicar thanked Peter Kelly and Sue Kilpatrick for their work on PCC. Sue was standing again, but Peter had chosen to focus his efforts on different areas,

There were only two nominations. Leonard Beighton had been proposed by Clive Moorman and seconded by Becky Moorman; and Sue Kilpatrick had been proposed by David Tipping and seconded by Dorothy Mitchell.

There were two further vacancies. Tolani Martin would have stood for one of them, but the paper trail was not complete as she had not been on the electoral roll for six months: the proposal was that she should be co-opted onto the Council at its first meeting and then should be able to stand at the next APCM in the late spring.

He asked whether there were any further proposals from the floor. There were none, so Leonard and Sue were elected and he welcomed them back onto the Council.

12. Appointment of Independent Examiner.

Malcolm Graham said that he recommended that we continue with Aidan Crilly. He had not spoken to him, but he thought that he would be willing to stand. His appointment was confirmed by a majority.

13. Any other business.

Sue Kilpatrick thanked Leonard Beighton for his work on the minutes: the role could be time-consuming. The Vicar endorsed this.

14. Conclusion,

The Vicar said that he knew of two households in the Church family who had had a positive covid test, one of them with very uncomfortable symptoms. We should hold them in prayer.

He prayed for all families whose lives had had been by the virus, including the two in our church family. He asked that they should recover speedily; that transmission should be kept to a minimum; that we should all be kept safe and stay well, and that the Spirit of the living God should heal us in body, soul and spirit.

He closed the meeting at 9.30 pm with the blessing.