

# **PARISH OF ST ANDREW, COBHAM**

**Minutes of meetings held in Church Gate House on 29 April 2022**

## **MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

### **1. Election of Churchwardens.**

The Vicar said that this was a meeting open to all parishioners. Michael Elson had decided to pause for a time from the role of churchwarden. Paul Hurrell was staying on, and he was grateful to Sam Acquaye for agreeing to stand. Sam had been proposed by David Taylor and seconded by Elaine Bray and Paul had been proposed by Kim Constable and seconded by David Taylor. There were two vacancies and Sam and Paul were duly elected.

He thanked Michael who had stepped in when the previous churchwardens had left: he had been a great help and support which, as Vicar, he had greatly appreciated. Michael said that it had been an honour and privilege to work with the Vicar and first David Taylor and then Paul: the Church was growing stronger and he had no doubt that it would go ahead well with Paul and Sam.

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

### **2. Welcome, apologies and prayers.**

The Vicar welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming to the meeting. There were about 30 people present.: we should seek 16 and 17 year olds to join the electoral roll. Apologies had been received from Rev Charleen Hollington, Revd Dr Moni Babatunde and Geoff Morris, and were also accepted from David and Edna Tipping, Sue Kilpatrick, Cathy Whitnall and Daphne McFarlane.

He said that we should be grateful for the opportunity to gather in order to look back on the events in 2021 and forward to what would be happening in the current year. He asked that our work should be fruitful: we should build on that was already in place with plans which would truly benefit the life of the Church. We should continue to be grateful for what we had and to care for our neighbours in need.

### **3. Minutes of the 2021 Annual Parochial Church Meeting.**

The minutes of the 2021 APCM had been displayed for three weeks without any comments. Paul Hurrell proposed and Malcolm Graham seconded that they should

be adopted without amendment, and they were agreed unanimously. They were signed by the Vicar.

#### **4. Chairman's report.**

The Vicar gave his Chairman's report in the following terms.

How many times will I sit in this chair at an annual meeting and report that last year was a very unusual year? I most sincerely hope that this is the last and that 2022, now almost one third complete, will feel like the years before 2020!

I want to begin by thanking all who make St Andrew's their spiritual home, and especially you who have taken the trouble to come out this evening to play your part in our church governance. The church is made up of all of us, and needs all of us if it is to continue to be the vibrant community of Jesus' followers that seeks to love God and neighbour in all we do. So please hear my thanks now for all you did in 2021 to make our church the special place it is. If in the course of my report I don't thank you by name, I ask your forgiveness, but be assured I am truly thankful for all you have done.

As I wrote in the annual review Covid and lockdowns played their part in what we were able or not able to do. Throughout the year, in consultation with wardens, standing committee and PCC we have made decisions that we believed were safe and gave people choices about where, how, and to exactly what extent, they were comfortable to participate in worship services and other church activities. We have at every turn tried to provide multiple opportunities for people to connect and belong, to worship God, yet feel safe and at liberty to make choices without any hint of judgement. In short we are grown ups, we can decide on what we feel happy with and make our choices accordingly. We will continue in the same vein in 2022, though I am sure we will know a lot less with free Covid testing now a thing of the past for most people. I hope we will provide multiple ways for people to connect, ways that make us feel both safe and comfortable as our church community continues to grow.

I do hope you have taken the time to read the 2021 annual review. Even a quick read through shows not only what great difficulties we faced as a church, but also the creative efforts made by so many to ensure that we remained connected and committed as the Parish Church for Cobham. My thanks to all who contributed, and to Leonard who compiled the annual review and those who helped him publish it. I do not intend to repeat what I have already written there!

I do want to pause for a moment and take you back to July 2021 when we were able to finally gather for a Parish BBQ and have our much delayed celebration of the 27 years that Peter Vickers served as priest for Cobham (and a few other places he

helped too!). I can still remember how exciting (and just a little bit strange) it felt to be together again as a church family, enjoying a social event, and marking Peter's great service amongst us.

As I near the end of my report let's turn to the book of Exodus, Chapter 14 and verse 19, it was part of our first reading on Sunday.

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them.

Pillar of cloud, different by day and night, served different function in the 40 years of wandering, going up Sinai, coming and standing before the tent of God's presence, there it would wait hours, days, or months, when it moved they moved.

It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Protective at first but then the impetus to move. If you like it went from drawing them onwards from the front, to pushing and persuading from the back when the way forward looked uncertain and scary.

After two years of needing to look after ourselves in the midst of uncertain and overwhelming times, when we were all glad of the warmth and light that we found in our church community. I remember the comments coming in on facebook and YouTube when our services were online only, the sense that even in the midst of a strict lockdown we could still be church, was very good for our well being. Even Zoom coffee time, whilst a list taxing for the tech host, was a source of connection and comfort for many. If you like our church community has a fiery cloudy pillar, giving us warmth and light in what were dark days for the whole world. So now I wonder Is that warmth and light now moving from front to back and nudging us onwards and outwards, to help others come within the saving embrace of the Lord who calls us and is equipping us to offer ministry and mission in His name.

I want to close my report by thinking for a moment about the other place that the cloudy fiery pillar famously appears.

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty;  
Hold me with thy powerful hand:  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
Feed me now and evermore,  
Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain  
Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
Let the fiery cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through:  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
Be thou still my strength and shield,  
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side:  
Songs and praises, songs and praises,  
I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.

Hold me, lead me, land me, the verses go.

I would like to suggest that for us as a church,

2020 was very much a “hold me” kind of year,

2021 a “lead me” kind of year,

And 2022, well, I think you see the pattern, this is a “land me” year!

Where He will have us land? That is the adventure that awaits us as St Andrew's Cobham in 2022.

There were no questions.

## **5. Safeguarding report.**

The Vicar said that there had been no safeguarding events during the year. He reminded all those concerned, including members of PCC, that they should take a training course every three years. The new course was, he thought, very good.

## **6. Annual Report and Accounts.**

Malcolm Graham thanked Beryl Mooney for continuing to do the gift aid recording and, now that Covid restrictions were being eased, returning to banking cash and cheques. He said that he would also like to thank James Moreno for the assistance he had given, in particular as this month we had transferred payroll processing to his firm for no charge. This was much more efficient as they had a superior payroll package compared with the one supplied by HMRC which did not provide a payslip.

The significant number of those present who were on PCC would have seen the figures in draft form for presentation to the examiner. The only change was that the property purchase had gone through on 31 March as stated in note 5b on page 12 and the examiner had given us a clean report.

Our asset position was now radically different from the accounts as at 31 December 2021. £485k had been spent on the house purchase and legal costs and our investments and cash deposits were correspondingly decreased. There was a need to raise cash if we were to continue with the current levels of expenditure. Cash would also be required if refurbishment or improvements to the Church and to Church Gate House were to be implemented.

We had had a deficit of approximately £23k. One reason was that since April we had been paying Shirley as the Children's and Families Missioner, whereas Pearl had been a volunteer. Out of Gerald Stanford's legacy of £241k, we had paid £18k on upgrading the sound system and £5k on the rebranding exercise, so the combined cash outflow had been £48k.

Investment values had increased significantly by £77k compared with a decrease of £37k in 2020. The investments had been sold at almost their year-end value and the money had been used to buy the house. This gave us a modest cash balance with no liquid investments to access.

The accounts which had been circulated included an incorrect page so that they could not be approved at the time. The Vicar said that they would be signed when they were complete. Malcolm said that the examiner had seen the correct version.

In reply to Judith Robinson who asked what costs we would incur when the curates arrived, the Vicar said that the Diocese would pay the Council Tax, but we would be responsible for the water rates – the property was not metered – and for insuring the building. Derek Bullman asked what discussion there had been about the purchase, The Vicar said that it had been discussed with the Churchwardens, the Standing Committee and in PCC. The decision had been ours: had we rented a property, there would have been a considerable cost. Becky Moorman asked what would happen at the end of the three years. The Vicar said that his personal view was that it would be good if we could continue to use the house for clergy, but, if not, it could either be sold or used to give us income.

The Vicar thanked Malcolm, James and Beryl for all their work on our finances.

## **7. Investing in Ministry and Mission.**

The Vicar showed a video which he said had been sent to everyone with the Weekly Notes.

In it, he said that at his appointment he had had no idea of what was to come, but we had lived through an incredible time with many uncertainties and changes and we were now emerging back to more like normal times. He was thrilled that we had stayed together strong and had maintained our numbers – indeed more people were joining us week by week using the youtube function.

We were now facing another enormous challenge as we embarked on the adventure of the arrival of the Silettis and their family. He had been very surprised to be asked by the Archdeacon whether we would take a training curate as we would be a great place for one. He had responded that he only wanted a mission curate who would be looking for a church plant. The archdeacon had said that this was just what was in mind. He had explored the possibility and had spoken to the Standing Committee and the PCC, and it had been agreed. He had thought that this was something which we might do later, but God had been ahead of him and he was trying to keep up.

PCC had agreed that we should purchase a house for them out of our reserves, but we had dug deep and now had not much money left. Over the years our regular income had fallen short of our expenditure and we had had to rely on the past and on generous legacies. We were now at a crucial point where we needed to invest in our mission and ministry if we were to do all the things which we wanted. He asked that we should come together so that we could increase the exciting opportunities we had before us and that we should pray and consider exactly what we could do.

We would each receive a card in the post inviting us to consider prayerfully how we could invest in our mission and ministry in a number of different ways. First, we might offer a one-off gift. Second we could join the regular giving plan or, if we were already in it, increase our commitment. We should ensure that, if we were a taxpayer, we had pledged gift aid under which the Government paid to the Church the tax which we had paid to them at no cost to us. Then to sponsor a project, some of which had happened and others which had yet to happen, and some of which were big ticket items.

He asked that we should prayerfully consider how we might respond to the call to invest and to complete a pledge card and bring it to church on either Saturday 7 May or the Sunday so that we could rejoice together.

In discussion he confirmed that it would be possible to contribute to core costs and said that another option, which he had not mentioned, would be to make a no or low cost loan.

He hoped that Beryl would be very busy on the day after the gift weekend counting the responses. His dream was that the giving of the living church would cover our mission and ministry, so that legacies could be wholly used for projects.

## **8. Churchwardens' Report.**

Paul Hurrell referred to the church repairs which had been completed and to the porch which had now been re-stained after its earlier repairs. He confirmed that everything which had been said in the quinquennial report to be urgent had now been done, but some of the things which had been said that it would be prudent to do remained outstanding. He also mentioned the noticeboards which had been renewed or refurbished. He thanked Clive Moorman for all the assistance that he had given.

## **9. Deanery Synod.**

Michael Elson said that there was nothing to add to what had been said in the Annual Review.

## **10. Electoral Roll.**

Dave Greenwood said that, thanks to responses to the recent notices, a number of new people had joined the roll, sufficient to make up the number of deaths over the year. So the number on the roll remained at 173. He would be pursuing the suggestion that we should look to our 16 and 17 year olds.

The Vicar thanked him for his work on this, It was important that people should see being on the roll as part of playing a part in the life of the Church.

## **11. Election of five members of the Parochial Church Council.**

The Vicar said that five people had been nominated to the Parochial Church Council.

	Nominated by	Seconded by
Keith Baird	Jenny Vickers	Judy Brickett
Kim Constable	David Taylor	Sue Kilpatrick
Michael Elson	Judith Robinson	David Robinson
Clive Moorman	Derek Bullman	Jill Newman
Geoff Morris	David Robinson	Judith Robinson

In the absence of any other nominations all these people were expected.

The Vicar thanked them for standing for another three year term and welcomed them back to the Council.

## **12. Appointment of the Independent Examiner.**

Malcolm Graham said that Aidan Crawley had agreed to be our independent examiner again for the coming year, and his appointment was agreed.

## **13. Any other business.**

### **13.1 The elements.**

Becky Moorman asked that the collection should not start during the offertory hymn until the elements had been taken to the altar. At present those taking the collection bags around sometimes got in their way. The Vicar asked the Churchwardens to ensure that the collection did not start until the elements had been taken up.

### **13.2 Collection box at coffee.**

Clive Moorman asked that the box for people to make voluntary contributions for coffee should be reinstated. David Taylor said that the intention was that there should be a collection in Church Gate House on one Sunday a year for each of the charities which we supported. The Vicar said that Clive's request should be considered by the Standing Committee.

### **13.3 The Clock.**

Judith Robinson said that the Church Clock had often stopped or was telling the wrong time. The Vicar said that firm who had repaired the clock came from time to time to reset it. Each time they said that it was now working satisfactorily, but in practice it worked for only a few days before going wrong again. The bellringers were rarely around to reset it, and he himself could not go up to the ringing chamber on his own.

### **13.4 Sam Acquaye.**

Keith Baird said that today was Sam's last day with Exxon Mobil after 20 years and he was probably saying farewell to his colleagues. He had been head-hunted by a Canadian firm and he should now have greater flexibility with his time.

### **13.5 The Vicar.**

David Taylor said that the Vicar had thanked everyone else, but thanks were also due to him. It had not been an easy year, but he had a heart for the new year going forward and there was a buzz about the Church.

The Vicar closed the meeting at 9.05 pm with the Grace.