

## **PARISH OF ST ANDREW, COBHAM**

### **Minutes of meetings held in the Church on 19 April 2026**

#### **MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

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

The Chairman said that this was a meeting open to all parishioners. The term of the office of Churchwarden was one year only. Lynn Moreno had been nominated by James Moreno and David Taylor. Paul Hurrell had completed the ordinary maximum of six years and Nigel Goddard was standing in his place. He had been nominated by Paul Hurrell and seconded by David Greenwood. In the absence of any other nominations he declared them duly elected.

#### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He said that everyone on the electoral roll was eligible to vote. There were about 50 people present.

No apologies for absence had been received.

He prayed for the Church of England in its life for the nation and that we should likewise be a force in the community. He asked that the APCM should be fruitful in bringing us all together in the life of the Church,

##### **3. Minutes of the meetings on 27 April 2025**

The minutes of the previous Parish Meeting and APCM, with the addition of the paragraph which had been circulated, were approved without amendment and signed by the Vicar,

##### **4. Chairman's Report**

The Vicar said:

'This is the fourth time we are holding our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday morning not Friday evening. We are meeting here in our Church not in Church Gate House, again with the purpose of maximising the opportunity for members of St Andrew's to take part in this important part of our life together as Jesus' people gathered in Cobham as St Andrew's Church. Fundamentally a Church

is people, not a building, and whilst we are blessed with a wonderful building that has been cared for so well, we are blessed with even more wonderful people! So this morning I want to take time to say some thankyous and also hold out a vision of why we exist.

So let me begin with thanks, thanks to all who make St Andrew's their spiritual home, and especially you who have taken the trouble to come out this morning to play your part in our church governance. As I have already said, the Church is made up of us all, and being together on Sunday morning and in the many other ways we gather in groups large and small at other times through the week is what will keep us alive as a community of those trying to follow Jesus in our daily lives. So please hear my thanks now for all you did in 2025. 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.

I do hope you have been able to read the 2025 Annual Review which shows just how busy we are. My thanks to all who contributed, and to Leonard and his team who compiled the annual review. I do not intend to repeat what I have already written there.

I am grateful for my clergy colleagues who were part of the team during 2025, six of them in total, Bryan and Tori who moved on in May 2025, Charleen & Moni, who worked throughout the year for the welfare of our parish, and our two wonderful new curates, Linnet joining in July and Kelly changing roles in September. The other church staff, David in our Music ministry, Shirley with our children and young adults, and Elaine giving such a warm welcome to everyone throughout the week, all do amazing work and we are blessed to have them share their skills and talents with us.

I do want to pause for a moment and thank our Churchwardens, Paul and Lynn, who I meet regularly and do so much on our behalf - particularly Paul as he now steps down, his help and support have been invaluable over the six years he has served, starting from the time we were tackling the issues relating to Covid. Thank you very much Paul.

In recognition of all that you have done for the church and the many hours you have spent on projects and helping me, we would like to give you a small token of our grateful appreciation. [The Vicar gave Paul a red and a green acer.]

I would also like to thank the members of the Parochial Church Council and the many others take significant responsibility in charring committees or championing our mission partners, offering hospitality and caring for our buildings. There is a great deal of work which goes on all the time and which is so valuable. I give thanks for you all.

I haven't deliberately forgotten our treasurer, I am very thankful for James for the generosity of all the time which he gives us. I have spoken a lot about finance and

money over the last three years and don't want to double up on what James has to say. I just want to thank James and all of you for the generosity that helped us reach the end of 2025 with a small surplus of income over expenditure.

So to the Bible for a moment, during our Lent group this year as we walked the first five books of the Bible I was struck again by the significance of the promise God made to Abram in Genesis chapter 12.

**Genesis 12.1-3 Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'**

*(The New Revised Standard Version)*

With Abram, who later is renamed Abraham, God does something new. Up until that point in history every tribe on earth existed to be a blessing to itself. Now as Abram is called to leave his hometown and journey to a land as yet unknown, God makes a bold statement. Abram's tribe will be a tribe like no other – it will be a tribe that exists not just to bless itself but rather be a blessing to others - indeed in the boldness of this claim Abram's tribe will be a blessing to the whole world!!!

So it was for Abram then so it is for us. We here at St Andrew's do not exist just to be a blessing to ourselves within these walls from one Sunday to the next – no we exist to be a blessing to Cobham and all who make their homes here.

There are three ways that are coming before us that we may choose to move forward and do something new.

- 1 – Our Plans for Carbon Neutrality and even wider use by the community.

We have two gas boilers for heating the Church, one of which is broken and the other is old. Rather than replace them, in line with the recommendations of the Church of England the PCC has commissioned a feasibility survey to seek a carbon neutral solution. The survey team was here a fortnight ago and I asked for an update report for me to give you today.

They are looking for potential locations for a water source, air source or ground source heat pump. They have done a geothermal survey which shows favourable conductivity up to 150 metres below the surface. The last test

showed the water flow rather low, but there would still be potential for a water source pump with suitable infrastructure. Another possibility would be a ground source pump with bore holes in the Field and the car park with a centralised pipe system. The intention is to heat both our buildings and provide a small network for heating the other buildings in the area if they wish to join. The team is looking at further details before it reports.

We have been able to take this first step towards something new because of the imagination and generous legacy of one of our former members, Sue Kilpatrick.

It may also be possible to use the opportunity of the underfloor heating in the north and south aisles to widen the community use of the Church. This would require removing some of the pews while leaving pews in the centre of the Church.

This is in an early stage of consideration and there will be more reports back on these issues

- 2 – Partnering with other community groups to take over the delivery of services at the Cobham Centre for The Community,

On Thursday the Cabinet of Elmbridge Borough Council agreed to Walton Charity buying the buildings which house the Cobham and Walton community centres. We are in negotiation with the Walton Charity so that in Cobham the services will be run by a coalition of groups led by St Andrew's Church and including the Cobham Area Foodbank, Oasis, St Andrew's School, the Cobham Cedar Centre, Cobham Combined Charities and may be the Cobham United Church and the Kingsway Church. A Community Interest Company will be set up to bring these together, and PCC has already decided that David Taylor and Charleen Hollington should be our directors on it. My job will be to get all the papers signed by the end of May and, all being well, the new service will start by the end of July.

- 3 – Helping secure the place of St Andrew's School at the heart of our community.

It is generally known that the school has had issues with falling rolls: there are too many school places for the number of schoolchildren in the area. So the governors, who include for our Church apart from myself Moni Babatunde and Linda Shaw, have agreed to welcome from September a school from Guildford for children with severe needs. In addition a number of the governors are showing great enthusiasm for regenerating the swimming pool and adding a multi sports facility.

If all this comes about, it will put St Andrew's School at the heart of the community.

**So through those three projects we are trying to live into the fullness of the call to Abram as it echoes down the centuries, you exist to be a blessing to others, that they might come to find the fulness of God's saving love for themselves. Actually it is not just through those three projects, but in all the things we do collectively and individually in Jesus' name. We exist to bear God's blessing to others, we are the living and breathing Good News of the empty tomb. We exist so that others might know that because of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, God is for us and not against us, and that is indeed a blessing that each of us can know and share. Amen.'**

No questions were raised on the Vicar's report.

## **5. Safeguarding Report.**

The Vicar said that were fully compliant with all our safeguarding, with thanks in particular to Alison Greenwood, our Parish Safeguarding Officer, who kept us fully up-to-date with everything which was needed to be done. We had had an inspection by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer who had put us well within the top category. As he had said, safeguarding was not what we did but who we were.

## **6. Annual Report and Accounts.<sup>1</sup>**

In presenting the Church's accounts for 2025, James accepted that they were not an easy read. In an unusual year we had been blessed by legacies amounting to £155k. This had been a huge vote of confidence and we had to use them wisely. One-off income included the fundraising event for the entrance to Church Gate House which had raised £10k net of expenses. The Discipleship Group trip to Moldova had in the event been fully funded by donations and by fundraising by the participants.

Overall excluding legacies we had had a surplus of £3,585. This was the third year running that the living Church had had a surplus. It had been a tough balancing act with some activities being self-financed.

64% of our income had come from donations and appeals and a further 14% from the associated gift aid. Flat rentals and the hire of the Hall had both contributed 8%. Fundraising had raised 4% and wedding and funeral fees and interest 1% each.

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<sup>1</sup> The slides to which James Moreno spoke are attached at the end of the note.

He asked that anyone who was not in the planned giving scheme should join it. He noted that the use of yellow envelopes for giving during services had declined and was being replaced by contactless giving.

The main items of our expenditure had been 39% on the diocesan parish share; employment costs had been 24%; repairs and maintenance had cost 11%; and outward giving 8%. Office costs and lighting and heating had contributed 4% each; insurance 3%; music and the choir 2%; and other items totalled 6%.

He was using budgeting to ensure that we got value for money for our expenditure.

2026 would be a challenging year. Our parish share had risen by over £6,000 and we were facing higher costs for our energy and for much else. If our income remained static we would face a significant deficit, so as we moved forward there had to be a financial response to the challenges which we were facing.

There were no questions on James' report.

## **7. Report on the Fabric of the Church.**

In addition to the report in the Annual Review, Paul Hurrell said that, as the last quinquennial review had shown, for a building of its age and significance the Church was in a remarkably good condition and had been maintained very well.

He added that the garden was now in a very good condition, thanks to the Gardening Group led by Judith Robinson. He noted that the fence at the bottom of the garden had been kindly donated by Judith and David for which we were most grateful.

## **8. Report from the Deanery Synod.**

The report was in the Annual Review.

## **9. Electoral Roll.**

David Greenwood said that the gains and losses since the last meeting nearly balanced and the number on the roll was now 155.

## **10. Election of lay members to the Deanery Synod and to the Parochial Church Council.**

The Vicar said that we now had five places on the Deanery Synod, compared with three previously: they would be members of PCC ex officio. Claire Costard had been proposed by David Greenwood and seconded by Carrie Taylor; David Greenwood

had been proposed by Nigel Goddard and seconded by Cathy Whitnall; and David Taylor had been proposed by Judy Brickett and seconded by David Greenwood. In addition Adam Skinner had expressed an interest in being elected, but had been delayed on a business trip abroad and had not completed the relevant papers.

The meeting agreed that Claire Costard, David Greenwood and David Taylor be elected, and that Adam Skinner should also be elected provided that he completed the relevant papers on his return to the UK.

It was noted that this left us with a vacancy.

Turning to the elections to the PCC, the Vicar noted that there were six vacancies. Nick Constable had been nominated by Cathy Whitnall and seconded by Paul Hurrell; Paul Hurrell had been nominated by James Moreno and seconded by Richard Hollington; James Moreno had been nominated by Lynn Moreno and seconded by Paul Hurrell; and Cathy Whitnall had been nominated by David Greenwood and seconded by Judy Brickett. Leonard Beighton chose to be considered for election to PCC rather than to Deanery Synod for which he had been proposed by David Taylor and seconded by Carrie Taylor. The meeting agreed that these five be elected to the PCC, and also that, were someone to come forward at the end of the meeting, he or she should also be elected. Subsequently Louise Fuge was nominated by Nigel Goddard and seconded by Paul Hurrell to take that place.

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

It was agreed that Tim Beevers FCA be appointed as the independent examiner.

#### **12. Any other business.**

Clive Moorman said that on a recent occasion when there had been two bookings of the Hall, the second party had arrived to set up before the first party had had time to finish and tidy up. The Vicar asked the Church Gate House Committee to look into the matter and ensure that there was sufficient time between bookings.

#### **13. Conclusion.**

The meeting ended with the singing of a hymn and a blessing by the Vicar.