

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH VESTRY MEETING, SUNDAY 14TH MAY 2023

The meeting held in the church, began with prayers at 11.30 and was chaired by Revd Paul Seaton-Burn. Forty-nine parishioners were present.

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parishioners' Vestry Meeting of Sunday 8th May 2022 were accepted as a correct record.

Election of Churchwardens

Revd Paul Seaton Burn explained that the main business of the Vestry meeting was to elect two churchwardens to serve for the forthcoming year. Paul thanked David Watts and Charlotte Ellis for their service during the last year especially since most of the time had been during the Vacancy, with the additional pressure of the recent lighting project in the church.

There were two nominations for Churchwarden: David Watts and Charlotte Ellis. David was first appointed in 2017 and Charlotte in 2021. David had therefore served for 6 years and could not ordinarily stand again due to the note below in italics. However, Paul said that the Church of England is pragmatic and, providing that those present agree, a dispensation could apply to the relevant section. Molly Warrington agreed that continuity would be helpful as Paul was relatively new in post but pointed out that David deserved a break and the same thing should not happen next year. David Parry-Smith said that the PCC would then have a year in which to prepare and encourage someone else to stand.

Paul asked people to vote that David Watts's term could be extended by a further year. No one was against and no one abstained.

The meeting moved to a vote for both David Watts and Charlotte Ellis to be elected for a further year. They were unanimously elected – no one was against and no one abstained.

It was noted that at the March 2017 PCC meeting, members had agreed that the normal term of office for a churchwarden at St Mary's should revert to being 3 years, with the option of extending to a maximum of 6 years if wished; and still to be elected annually in line with the guidelines in the Churchwardens Measure 2001.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING, SUNDAY 14TH MAY 2023

Apologies

Margaret Cox, Gordon Cummings, Charlotte and Mark Hays, Charles Parker, Revd Janet Parker, Judith and Richard Tonry.

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of Sunday 8th May 2022 were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising

There were none.

The reports presented to the 2023 meeting are summarised below and can be found on the church website www.stmaryslinton.org.uk. Look under Resources and APCM reports.

Parochial Church Council Report May 2022 – April 2023

Two particular issues added to the PCC workload. Some aspects from the Covid pandemic restrictions were still present in services and church activities. Each change or relaxation required discussion, risk assessments and due consideration of people's fears and concerns. Secondly, the Vacancy continued for a further nine months, giving a total of eighteen months without a Rector and three rounds of adverts. We were very grateful to David and Charlotte, our Churchwardens, for all that they did during this time and to Revd Michael Wilcockson for being willing to take many of our regular services along with help from other clergy.

We were pleased to welcome Revd Paul Seaton-Burn as Rector in February 2023. Organising Revd Paul's Collation and Induction service was not straight forward as the church was undergoing major work. Scaffolding was erected in January in order to undertake repairs specified in the five-yearly inspection, to completely redesign the lighting system which had been poor for years and to clean and paint the plasterwork. The church was closed during the week to allow the contractors to work without interruption. A great deal of cleaning and furniture moving was carried out by volunteers each weekend to allow Sunday services to take place, as well as coffee mornings and other events. The contractors kept to their schedule and scaffolding was removed by Easter. In addition to maintaining the fabric of the church, the benefits of the decoration and the lighting are obvious for all to see. We were indebted to The Friends of St Mary's for funding the project.

PCC meetings were held in church from March 2022 to take advantage of the extra space but hearing each other speak was difficult and the lighting then was so bad. We reverted to using the pavilion from January 2023. The standard six meetings were held during the year. Regular agenda items included reports from the churchwardens (in lieu of a Rector) and the four main PCC committees: Fabric, Finance & Stewardship, Children & Families and Events. Reports were also received from the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Ministry Team for worship and spiritual initiatives, the Pastoral group, St Mary's two Deanery Synod representatives and the Chair of Governors at Linton C.E. Infant School.

Financial Review – to 31st December 2022

Income of £140,758 and expenditure of £163,111 resulted in a deficit of £22,352 for the year. Sue Ellis, Treasurer, pointed out that the regular outgoings are kept to a minimum but still exceeded the regular income, including gift aid refunds. The Parish Share, paid to the Diocese, is a significant sum and is beyond our control. Other expenses are closely monitored. The PCC aimed to address the imbalance by deferring some projects and encouraging increased giving by the parish as well as the wider community who appreciate St Mary's Church being in the village. Options for giving are on St Mary's website: look under Church Life and How to Donate.

Sue said that the deficit would be covered by church reserves but that cannot continue indefinitely, although another deficit budget had been set for 2023.

Sue Ellis proposed that Kate Sargeant be reappointed as Independent Examiner; seconded by Sue Filby and agreed by those present.

Michael Younger reiterated that using reserves should not continue as funds would very soon run out. He thanked people for their existing giving; pointed out that the fees and subscriptions for outside organisations and activities increase regularly and our church giving should be viewed in the same light. The Parish Giving Scheme allows for annual increases and is strongly recommended.

Anne Parry-Smith asked whether there was any progress in finding a Stewardship Officer - see later questions.

Sue Ellis was thanked for being treasurer with great efficiency. The accounts were adopted.

Electoral Roll Report

The report from Jo George, Electoral Roll officer, stated that no one had been removed from the Roll but six new names were added so the number was recorded as 132. New lists were displayed on the internal notice board by the church door. The Electoral Roll was completely revised in March 2019. Jo added that she had since received a further application for the Roll.

Fabric Report

Richard Tonry's report described the extensive work undertaken from November to March, for repairs related to the Quinquennial report and a major re-lighting project for the church. There was also ongoing servicing and repairs in other areas. The Rector commented that he was very pleased that the church could now be open and accessible every day once again.

Deanery Synod Report

Andrew Gore and David Parry-Smith had been elected to represent Linton on the Deanery Synod from the APCM in October 2020 until 31st May 2023. The Synod met three times during the year. Discussions included completing the work on 'Living in Love and Faith', talking to parishes in order to create the Deanery Development Plan for the next 5-10 years, supporting youth work via Youthinc, recording that three clergy vacancies had been filled and monitoring payment of the various Parish Shares.

Election of Deanery Synod representatives

Andrew Gore and David Parry-Smith had been nominated for a further term of three years. There were no other nominations. Andrew and David were duly elected.

Election of Parochial Church Council members

Continuing members on the PCC were confirmed as:

Elected in 2021: Helene Evans, Sarah King, John Organ, Richard Tonry, Molly Warrington.

Elected in 2022: Jacqui Burge, Andrew Cornell-Webb, Sarah Nickolls

Churchwardens (ex-officio): David Watts, Charlotte Ellis.

Sue Ellis, Sue Mudge, Patricia Scofield, Michael Younger had served their three year term of office, giving 4 vacancies.

The electoral roll number allows for up to 12 elected members.

Nomination forms had been completed for Tom Dodd, Sue Ellis to be re-elected, Ann Slaymaker and John Thorne. These four people were elected; with no votes against and one abstention.

The requirement for retiring members to stand down for at least a year had been removed from the updated Church Representation Rules 2020.

Reports from Committees and Organisations

Reports from the following groups were included in the 2023 APCM booklet in paper form and on the website:

Beacon Youth Trust; Bell ringers; Events committee; Flower Ministry; Linton C E Infant School; Church links with Linton Heights Junior School; Children and Families Ministry; Together with God and Space for the Spirit services; Warm Hub initiative; Mothers Union; Music Ministry; Pastoral Group; The Friends of St. Mary's; The Monday Gang.

The Rector said that he was pleased to note that we had two Governing Body Chairs in our congregation. He thanked Nicola Collard and Gill Powell for their Christian ministry in the Infant School and Linton Heights Junior School, respectively. Paul also thanked the Friends of St Mary's for their financial contribution, the bell ringers, the Events committee for enriching the church fellowship, David Parry-Smith for his commitment and the musicians who enhance the worship at the various services.

Rector's report

The Rector said that the annual meeting provides a time to look back and also a time to look forward to the new season – as in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 – a time for everything. God has been faithful to us and will be faithful. If God is present, he will endure for ever, in Linton and the wider world. No one is more important than any other person; but all are inter-related with God at the heart of everything.

Paul thanked the church family for his welcome in February and also thanked Michael Wilcockson for his tremendous contribution during the Vacancy and David Parry-Smith as Lay-chair of the PCC.

Questions

In answer to Anne Parry-Smith's earlier question - Paul said that one person was considering the Stewardship Officer role.

Andrew Cornell-Webb stated that he felt that 2023 could be a defining year. Andrew has long term family connections in Linton, spanning two world wars and asked what does post-Covid St Mary's look like? He is waiting to make a contribution, as some of his ancestors were unable to do – waiting for a new Rector and no excuse now to be passive. Paul responded, saying that he was grateful for Andrew's personal insight. Paul sensed that different offerings for worship could be helpful – some contemporary reflection as well as more formal worship drawing upon traditional music.

Michael Younger reminded the meeting that the PCC shelved the question of being a member of Inclusive Church during the Vacancy so that a new Rector could be involved. Michael hoped that the PCC would return to the issue.

John Organ said that he had been approached about taking the role of Stewardship Officer and, after prayerful consideration; he was pleased to say that he would do so.

Sue Filby asked for more information about Mental Health First Aid. David Parry-Smith responded that we all have mental health in the same way as physical health. Training was offered after a presentation at Deanery Synod about three years ago. People can be referred

across the Deanery and signposted to other organisations, e.g. Samaritans, bereavement counselling. More local training can be arranged if required.

David Watts concluded by hoping that we may be like Paul the apostle and know utter extravagance, inner energy and boundless strength. God has provided a Rector for Linton and has not finished with us yet – and we welcome Paul to our community.

The meeting ended with prayer at 12.35.