

## Parish of Holy Trinity & St. Mary's

### Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held in St Mary's and via Zoom on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm

**Note.** The APCM was widely advertised through the weekly newsletter, by reference during services and on the website. Paper copies of the notification of elections, together with the Annual Report, were on display in both churches. The Agenda, the Annual Report and all other supporting papers were also published on the website.

Present: 59 people in person, 11 on Zoom – **70 in total**.

1. **The rector welcomed all those present and online**, and the meeting opened with prayer.
2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Charles Howes, Sheila Hodson, Martin Kettell, Maureen Wright,
3. **The minutes of the last Annual Meeting**, held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters arising.** None
5. **Elections.**
  - a) Wardens: Jenny Nockolds was re-elected for SM. Helen Parkinson and Ginnie Gregory were re-elected for HT.
  - b) PCC: Charles Howes, Jane Hedgecock, Nicky Matthews and Angus McIntosh were re-elected to the PCC. Stephen Bampfylde and Jan Hancock were newly elected to the PCC. The meeting welcomed them. Catherine Antcliffe, John Hawksworth and Bill Latto are retiring from the PCC.
  - c) Deanery Synod: Carolyn Graham and Alwyn Marriage are continuing to serve. Maggie Perrins is standing down. Ginnie Gregory and Annika Mathews were elected.

The Rector thanked those standing down, those newly elected and those who continue to serve.

#### 6. **Rector's report**

He commended the Annual Report, as a visible record of all our activities. There will be no additional verbal reports this year, with the exception of Safeguarding, as the written one is very comprehensive. He expressed thanks to the Secretary for compiling the Report. He noted that the report is usually supplemented by the sermon he preaches before the meeting, but as this year's meeting is being held on Tuesday rather than Sunday, he gave the following reflection:

Life at HTSM is not on a plateau, neither is this a golden age, rather a progression. Last year we lost Martin, but now we have Nick, for instance. It is a pilgrimage – a continuing journey, with signposts. He recalled that on the Pilgrimage route to Santiago di Compostela a local priest started putting up signposts on the, an initiative soon followed by priests from other villages. That is part of what we do. There have been some marvellous moments – the courage of the Methodists in moving from their church in Woodbridge Road to St Mary's – stones from their church, including the foundation stone, now lie on St Mary's chancel steps. We are all on a road trying to be signposts to others, and it has been his privilege to join with us on the journey – which of course continues. The church is

constantly changing – there is less of everything – money, status, numbers, clergy, young people – but we can respond.

In 1996 HTSM was seen to be mainstream but is now seen as marginal. There is disapproval and misunderstanding in some quarters over the importance of choirs, church schools, hospitality and other things dear to us. Not everyone sees things as we do. He recalled that, exalted and excited after the recent Coronation Evensong, he had met someone who made it clear he had only really liked the organist. He also commented that while what we do might now be seen to be unusual within the church, it generally meets with approval from outside it.

Holiness is attractive – holiness is place, and people, and character – and he quoted the following lines, engraved on the Statue of Liberty:

*Give me your tired, your poor  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

We are called to be signposts, but also recognise holiness in others from outside. Examples of how we try to put this into practice is shown in the Annual Report.

He went on to thank everyone – not by name, but those who make a noise (the musicians), offer silent service (the office), Pippa, the clergy (who want us to be signposts), the Wardens, Hilary for walking beside him and taking the church outside with her work at Send Prison – and everyone for being so positive. He concluded by pointing out that HTSM could also be shorthand for ‘Home To So Many’.

## 7. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022

### a) Report by treasurer (Paul Graham)

The Financial Report for 2022 is in the Annual Report. The Treasurer gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining the present financial situation and the projection for the year to come, the details of which are outlined below:

Good News: the General Fund Surplus +£1,600 (budget -£4,016). The rental from 27 Pewley Way has been a significant factor.

Bad News: The Planned Giving decline continued and has dropped from £219k to £185K, with contributions in 2023 set to be lower. 50% of the contributions received are from 20 people.

- Budget: A balanced budget has been set for 2023 but is dependent on rentals from 27 Pewley Way providing about £23k. We have not had a planned giving campaign for a number of years.
- Lettings: It is vital that we maximise revenue from hirers, but 2023 was disappointing: Jan-Apr 2021- £5k, 2022 - £22k, 2023 - £22k, *please make every effort to welcome hirers, to safeguard our mission.*

- Energy: There has been a sharp increase in costs (gas 4x): Jan-Apr 2021 £6k, 2022 £9k, 2023 £18k. A fund was set up in 2022 to compensate, but *please save energy*. The Standing Charge alone is £3,000.
- Parish Share: our highest cost at £112k. The diocese seems unable to cut costs, plus future rises seem likely as there is strong pressure to move to Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

How we are saving money:

- Switched to independent examiner (£5k saving)
- Ended choral scholarships (£5k saving)
- Moving Café Club to the Trinity Centre and asking for a small subscription
- Asking social events to break even
- Keeping thermostats turned down low.
- Asking for contributions (ie for Easter flowers etc)

The Financial year ahead

- To expand youth offering: we spend <£8k on youth, excluding the choir, our parish profile indicates more commitment.
- Moving digital: increase use of SumUp and CAF Donate, move to Parish Giving scheme. We have now also introduced text giving.
- Improve cost control: need to stick to budgets – regular updates to be sent to users – please get involved if you spend money.
- Outward giving: budget held at £19,500 but the pressure from other users is making this very challenging.
- Chasing hirers: using ExpensePlus to monitor and be very proactive to recover all outstanding debtors. He thanked Corinne in the office for her work in chasing debtors, There are currently no outstanding invoices.

The Rector thanked the Treasurer for the report, and for his tireless work.

#### b) Audit Resolution (Venetia Howes)

The Choral Scholarships have been ended but have been replaced with singing lessons.

The meeting was asked to approve the appointment of Helen Lee as the Independent Examiner.

The motion to appoint Helen Lee as Independent Examiner for 2023 was approved unanimously by the meeting.

The Chairman asked the meeting formally to receive the Annual Report and Financial Statement.  
Approved.

### 8. **Appointments**

- a) Sidespeople will be appointed or co-opted where necessary by the PCC, but it is often an informal arrangement with people – including children – helping as required.

### 9. **Safeguarding**

Mari Gardner, the Safeguarding Officer introduced herself and the Safeguarding Lead, Grayson Jones, to the meeting. She reminded all PCC members that they are requested by the Diocese to complete two training courses – the Safeguarding Foundation Course and the course on Domestic

Abuse. Both are free, are given online and only take about 90 minutes to complete. She thanked members in advance for taking the time to complete the courses.

**10. Any Other business**

The Lay Deputy Chair Mike Bishop thanked Robert Cotton, the outgoing Rector and Chairman, for his leadership over the last 27 years, and especially in 2020/21 during the Covid crisis. He also thanked Hilary Cotton for sharing Robert with the parish. A presentation was made.

11. The date of the next meeting will be arranged in due course.

The meeting ended at 8.15 with the Grace.

Signed:.....

Date:.....