

**MINUTES of the PARISHIONERS & APCM Meetings
of St Mary's Woburn 2019**

Date of meeting	Thursday 4 th April 2019
Time of meeting	7.30 P.M.
Meeting Venue	Crypt, St Mary's Church, Woburn

Meeting of Parishioners

1. Prayers and Introduction

Steve opened the meeting with prayer. Steve explained that the Parishioners meeting is solely for the purpose of electing Wardens.

2. Election of Wardens

Steve explained that Alison Macpherson is willing to continue in office but this will be her tenth year as Warden. The normal tenure of a Warden is 6 years and therefore the meeting needed to approve Alison's re-appointment for a further year. Richard Langford proposed and Yvonne Mills seconded that Alison be allowed to continue for one more year. This was unanimously approved. Both George and Alison had been formally nominated and as there were no other nominations both appointments were confirmed.

Steve thanked George and Alison for all their help and support in the past year and said how good it was to have such a dependable leadership team.

The meeting was then closed.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence.

There were 21 people at the meeting.

Apologies of absence were received from, Bob & Angela Franklin, Pat Nuth, Sarah Atkinson-Clark.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 9th April 2018

Acceptance of the minutes of last year's meeting was proposed by George, seconded by June. There was a unanimous vote in favour by all those who had attended the meeting.

3. Election of PCC members

Richard Langford, Sean Stokes, Ian Wayment and Pauline Adamson had all served three years on the PCC and therefore needed to be re-elected. All were willing to stand and had submitted their nomination forms. As there were no other candidates they were automatically elected back onto the PCC.

4. Presentation of the accounts and report for the year to 31 December 2018, for approval and adoption by the APCM.

David Knapman had previously distributed by email, and placed copies in church, of the "Report and Financial Statements, 31st December 2018.

He reported as follows: -

- The purpose of his report is to enable the Annual financial report and accounts for the year to 31 December 2018 to be adopted by the APCM.
- Whilst the accounts do not need to be prepared with the full statutory information, as a matter of good practice, they have been prepared on an accrual's basis, in line with the relevant accounting and legal requirements for Charities.
- It is Important for the meeting to understand that the PCC operates good financial Governance by:
 - Pre-counting and recording cash collections before passing to the Treasurer
 - Two signatories on all cheques.
 - Transactions are supported by 3rd party documentation
 - PCC approval is needed for major items of expenditure
 - Regular quarterly management accounts are issued and monitored by the PCC against a budget preapproved by the PCC
 - The PCC reviews and approves the Statutory accounts for presentation to the APCM.
 - Annual examination of the books of account, records and Statutory accounts by an Independent Examiner.
 - Annual accounts and financial return are sent to the Diocesan Board of Finance.
 - The books are available to PCC members to inspect, if they wish.

David then gave a resumé of the accounts:

- Page 1 sets out the Aims and Mission of St Mary' s; Structure, Governance and Management and Membership of the PCC.
- Pages 2 to 7 cover Committees, Church attendance and the Electoral Roll; a review of the year's activities & achievements; Risk Policies; the main activities of the Fabric Committee; the financial review and aims and finally details of the PCC's Reserves and Investment policies.
- Page 8 is the Independent Examiner's report (Tim Gage, qualified accountant) and he has given the accounts a clean report.
- Page 9 sets out the Statement of Financial activities, in other words the income and expenditure for the year, culminating in net income of £62,082. The high amount of net income is due in the main to funds for the new lighting scheme.
- Page 10 is the Balance Sheet showing the assets and liabilities of the PCC which at the end of the year disclosed £ 112,326 of net assets. The majority of the assets are represented by bank deposit accounts.
- Pages 11 to 13 contain the detailed accounting policies used in preparing these accounts.
- Pages 14 to 15 contain further notes backing up information in the Statement of Financial Activity on page 9.
- Pages 16 & 17 discloses further information as required to support the Balance Sheet.
- Page 18 shows new information in that the movements on all the funds managed by the PCC are shown here in more detail, as required by the accounting rules. This is a helpful change to the disclosures.

He told the meeting that looking forward the PCC has approved a deficit budget for 2019 which will reduce our funds by £2,471. He emphasised it is important to enable the PCC's work and mission to continue as fully as possible with the intention of attracting new members to church. However, it is a concern that we are faced with another deficit budget.

He told the meeting that if this shortfall materialises, then it will take our reserves below £20,000 which the PCC has defined as its "back up" level that is prudent to hold in reserve.

He assured the meeting that the PCC realises very clearly that it cannot fund budget deficits indefinitely. This would be irresponsible and a sign that our income is not keeping up with day to day costs.

David explained that whilst the reserves policy of £20,000 is a large sum, it is less than 4 months expenditure for the church. He emphasised this point so the meeting understood the fragility of the day to day financial position.

David reminded the meeting that without its regular providers of funds, St Mary's Woburn would not be the flourishing church it is today. On behalf of the PCC he warmly thanked all donors for their support whether by small or large sums.

He also asked that anyone writing a will for the first time or amending their will, to think about leaving some funds to St Mary's Church. This will help to keep the Church here for generations to come. If anyone needs advice about giving, David asked them to speak to himself or Steve.

Concluding his report, he thanked Fran Brown for her assistance in dealing with the reclaim of tax due from gift aid funds.

Having given the meeting opportunity to ask questions he then proposed the adoption of the Statutory accounts for the year to 31.12.2018.

This was seconded by Jean Wayment and unanimously approved.

David proposed Tim Gage be appointed as independent examiner of the church accounts for 2019. Pauline Adamson seconded the proposal and the meeting unanimously approved.

5. Adoption of the Mission Action Plan (MAP)

Steve reminded the meeting that the MAP is the statement of the activities the church is undertaking to achieve the Diocese Mission directive. He referred everyone to the MAP document that had previously been circulated and proposed it be approved by the meeting. Yvonne Mills seconded the proposal and everyone voted in favour.

6. Electoral Role report

Pauline Adamson gave the following update of the electoral roll:

- This year there are 86 members on the Electoral Roll of this Church, comprising 23 Woburn residents of the parish and 63 non-residents.

7. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Compliance with House of Bishops guidance.

Sean reported that the Safeguarding policy has been adopted by the PCC and is on display on the church notice board. There is also a "Promoting a Safer Church" poster on display which has Sean's name and contact details as our Safeguarding officer. All of this information will be added to the church website.

8. Other Reports

Prior to the meeting reports had been made available covering: Fabric, Sunday School, Explorers & Followers, Let's Get Together and Deanery Synod.

George gave brief overview of the main activities relating to the church fabric in the twelve months to 31st December 2018.

9. Rectors Address

Steve started his address by reminding everyone of the importance of our statements of Faith and Identity and that these were very important as they underpinned and determined all our activities.

The last 12 months

He then reviewed some of the main events and activities that had happened in 2018:

Prayer.

This had been a mixed story. There had only been one evening prayer event. Every fourth Sunday there are 9am prayers in church before the 10 a.m. service. Chris Langford is pushing on with Prayer Ministry team development.

Retreat Day

This had been organised by Chris Langford at the Howland room Woburn Abbey and had been a great blessing to many

Followers and Explorer's

Ian and Jean had continued running the monthly club for Explorers (6-10 year olds). They had stopped running Followers (11+ age group). Steve and Jenny had planned to take this over but due to Jenny's health and other issues had not been able to do so. Someone to take on this role is needed.

Lighting project.

This had now been completed and we can praise the Lord for His provision

Wedding couple's ministry

Work with the wedding couples continues in the form of the Marriage Prep Course and making them feel at home at church. It does have an impact on young couples with no first-hand experience of faith in Christ and His church. We do get many returning couples

150 years celebrations - Flower Festival.

This was a huge success with many thanks to June for making it all happen. It had been a great demonstration of Community and Church family participation. It had been honouring to God and the raising of funds had been a bonus.

Discipleship course completed.

This had started well. However, there had been an enforced break in the series due to the Flower Festival and the momentum had not continued for the later studies.

Home Groups

There is now only one home group currently running but it is hoped more will be restarted in the Autumn.

What else has happened?

Numbers of regular attenders at the main Sunday morning service is increasing. There are several people who will be joining the electoral role this year.

Growth in Financial provision

God has blessed us financially through the provision of the sale of land and other unexpected donations.

Hosting large Services.

During 2018 we hosted a number of services including,

- Christmas Services
- Archdeacons collation
- Lord Lieutenants service

Steve concluded his review of 2018 by thanking everyone who had given so much of their time and effort to supporting and leading the activities going on in the church. He referred to the written reports and accounts as a source of more detailed information of all that has happened in the last 12 months.

The next 12 months

Looking forward to 2019 Steve made the following points:

The need for an equal balance between Prayer and activity. He said that there was a lot of activity happening BUT it is important this is balanced and supported by prayer. His aim this year will be to make this happen.

Steve then referred to our Vision:

- Know - through worship and study of the word,
- Grow - in faith in Christ and through fellowship
- Go - outworking through service.

He emphasised the challenge for us to continue to grow as a loving open Church family. This is what we are rightly known for. A blessing and strength under God

Extended Study Leave (ESL)

Steve reminded the meeting that he is taking his ESL between 23rd April and end of July. He will use this time for study and praying and seeking guidance for the future direction of the church. He also has planned a trip to Sri Lanka with Dr Sam to see first hand the work of Hope Outreach. This is the charity headed up by Dr Sam and which we support with regular donations.

Same Sex Marriages in Church

Steve told the meeting that this is the big issue facing the CoE in the next few years but it is not being talked about, even by Bishops. Within the next 2-3 years it will be necessary for churches to make decisions on this topic. He said it is important that St Mary's membership is able to make a decision based on a position of knowledge on this topic. To ensure this happens it is important we are well informed and can talk about it in a respectful manner within our church community. A short series of Bible studies covering the topic of same sex relationships will be run later in the year. They will look at the traditional Bible interpretation, which Steve said he firmly supports. However, he will also look at the opposing points of view and explain how these are arrived at.

Vision Day

Steve reminded the meeting that a Benefice Vision Day will be held on 1st February 2020. The purpose of the day will be to map out a Vision for the Benefice to Summer 2023 when he will be retiring.

Youth group provision. Sunday School and Next generation development challenge

Sunday school and Next Generation happens most Sundays during the morning service. The monthly youth club for the 6-10 year olds – Explorers – is flourishing and is led by Jean Wayment with help from Ian. However, they have now stopped leading the club for 11+ age group - Followers. As no one has been found to take this over it is no longer happening.

Home group development.

At the moment there is only one daytime home group running. They are an important part of church life and fellowship so Steve said he will be seeking God on the future of these groups during the three months of the ESL

Shoe Box appeal

Major changes have been made by the host organisation, Samaritans Purse, to the organisation of the annual Shoe Box initiative. This means St Marys will no longer be a national distribution centre. Because of this it is with great regret that Steve informed the meeting that the November 2019 fortnight of collection and distribution activities will be the last time we will be involved. He thanked everyone who has so faithfully supported and organised this over the years we have been involved. That included John and Ann Miller who originally started the whole initiative and Ros and Paula who then took it over from them.

Evensong development

Steve said Tim Gage has suggested developing Evensong by Inviting other Churches and choirs to join at these services.

Conclusion

Steve then concluded his address by encouraging everyone with the reading from 2 Corinthians 3:17-18.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

He then led the meeting in thanksgiving and prayer using the passage from Ephesians 1:15-19.

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe

10. AOB

George Atkinson-Clark (Warden) took the opportunity to thank Steve for his work and leadership. He used the simile of Steve being like an orienteering leader. Because of his clear faith and vision, he will take us on our journey and get us to where God is leading us.

Alison then led the meeting in a prayer for Steve.

There being no other business Steve closed the meeting in prayer.