

St Marys APCM Minutes

7th April 2024

Chair – Rev. Dr. Rachel Snow

Meeting of Parishioners

1 Opening Prayer – Rev. Rachel Snow

2 Election of Church Wardens:

- George Atkinson-Clark stepped down from his role as church warden at St Mary's, which he took up eight years ago. He was warmly thanked for his committed service to the church and wished well for the future alongside his wife Sarah.
- Ian Wayment agreed to take up the role of church warden – proposed by Angela Franklin, seconded by Robert Franklin, agreed unanimously.
- Steve Apted agreed to continue as a church warden – proposed by Paul Hughes, seconded by Maurice Campbell, agreed unanimously.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

3 Apologies received:

- Debbie Galliford, Peter Galliford, Yvonne Mills, June Vyse, Pippa Wilkinson.

4 Adoption of minutes from APCM 2023:

- Minutes from the APCM of 2023 were proposed by Paula Sawers, seconded by Jackie Stacey, agreed unanimously as a reliable record of the proceedings of the APCM 2023.

5 Election/re-election of PCC members:

Two PCC members were due for re-election in 2024 and had agreed to continue to serve on the PCC.

- Debbie Galliford – proposed by Anne Turner, seconded by Steve Apted, agreed unanimously.
- Pippa Wilkinson - proposed by Anne Turner, seconded by Steve Apted, agreed unanimously.

Yvonne Mills has elected to step down as a PCC member and has been thanked for her many years contributing to St Mary's PCC.

6 PCC Reports:

Finance and accounts – David Knapman

David presented his reports regarding the financial activity and accounts for 2023. He reminded us that these have been prepared on an accrual's basis in line with the legal requirements for charities and that the accounts have been seen and approved by the PCC. The final outturn was a small surplus, which given the financial pressures was very good. David thanked everyone for their continued financial support of the work of the church. He also stated that if anyone has any queries or would like to inspect the accounts then they are very welcome. Tim Gage has examined the accounts as an independent examiner. David invited questions:

Derek Snow thanked David for preparing the accounts and asked whether the PCC has proactive plans in place to address the budgeted deficit of ~ £20K. David explained that the financial position will be closely monitored on a quarterly basis and he encouraged generous giving where possible. Steve Apted explained that the forecast is conservative and that not all costs were fixed. Discretionary costs can be reviewed as needed. Utility costs are expected to fall and contract renewals will be reviewed in the next two months.

Bob Franklin asked whether the budget would be reviewed at the APCM. David explained this would not normally form part of the business of the APCM.

Accounts - proposed by David Knapman, seconded by Janice Windon, agreed unanimously.

Tim Gage to stand again as independent examiner – proposed by David Knapman, seconded by Jean Wayment, agreed unanimously.

PCC annual report – George Atkinson-Clark

George gave a verbal report (with photographs) that complements David's report. Highlights over the past year include:

January – Souper Tuesdays were started with thanks to all involved, this has been re-run in 2024.

March – new rector's licensing service.

May - Bob and Angela Franklin celebrated 55 years of marriage, Woburn coronation picnic (in the crypt due to inclement weather), Lord Lieutenant's service.

June – Beds fire and rescue training exercise was run very successfully.

August – big kitchen clean

September – ChurchSuite was introduced – everyone encouraged to sign up to this

September – November – Alpha course ran with 25-30 attendees.

October – Quiz night organised by Yvonne Mills & Harvest Festival where Woburn Lower School attended.

November – Remembrance service & card readers installed.

December – Christmas Services

Over the past year we have seen 3 weddings, 4 baptisms and 8 funerals. Wedding numbers have dropped after the Sculpture Gallery closed for weddings.

Fabric report - George Atkinson-Clark

George provided a report about all the activities pertaining to the fabric of the church. He has now given a thorough handed this over to Ian Wayment. No questions raised.

Electoral Roll report – Judy Knapman

There are 65 people on the electoral roll – 17 resident and 48 non-resident in the parish. 9 names have been added (3 resident, 9 non-resident) and 12 have been deleted (6 resident and 6 non-resident). Judy encouraged anyone who would like to be added to the electoral roll to contact her in order to complete the appropriate paperwork.

Safeguarding report – Paula Sawers

Paula thanked everyone in the church for their support in completing mandatory training when she has requested. This has meant her role has been made easier because she has had very little chasing up to do. Paula reminded us that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the safeguarding officer. Rachel explained that St Mary's has adopted the diocese's safer church policy to ensure that everyone feels safe when attending church. No questions were raised.

Youth Ministry report – Anne Turner

A short report was presented explaining how St Mary's has encouraged and involved children and young people in the life of the church. Rachel explained that at the present time there is insufficient resource to provide regular weekly children's work – something we need to continue to pray for as a church. We have been pleased to see four of our young people being presented for confirmation at St Alban's Cathedral and Elstow Abbey. No questions were raised.

Synod report – Maurice Campbell

Maurice has attended one meeting and provided a thorough report of the proceedings. No questions were raised.

Rachel thanked everyone for the reports they have written for the APCM.

7 Rector's Address

Rachel thanked everyone for the love and support both she and Derek have received whilst she has been on sick leave. She hopes that the comfort she has received will allow her to bring comfort to others.

The Mission Action Plan was due to be refreshed but this has needed to be deferred. Instead, Rachel gave us an outline of her core values for the church including:

Loving the Lord – meaning that Sunday worship remains a priority. She thanked everyone who helps to make these run so smoothly and is very aware that Sunday services are a 'shop window' for visitors into the life and values of the church.

Committed community - As well as spending time on Sundays seeking fellowship and support during the week is also important. Examples include the connect groups or simply spending time as the early church did by caring for each other and meeting everyone's needs.

Sincere worship – which is accessible to all that is seasonally refreshed. Technology needs to be used to help with services, which will include a new projector as our current one is not fit for purpose. Ian was thanked for his help with the sound during services which has improved making the spoken word much easier to hear. Two or three more people are needed to help support the audio-visual systems run smoothly each week. Accessibility issues concerning wheelchair users and access to bathrooms continue to be discussed – Rachel would like to consider the possibility of kitchen and toilet facilities upstairs rather than solely in the crypt.

Relevant evangelism – she thanked all those involved in the Alpha course and was glad to hear that several attendees has started to attend St Mary's regularly. A further course for consideration is the 'Bereavement Journey', which aims to support bereaved people and introduce the Christian faith's approach to death and grieving.

Loving service – Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as an example of how we should all humbly serve each other in His name. Rachel thanks all those who volunteer in church and was especially grateful for Souper Tuesday and how well this has been received in Woburn.

Rachel also mentioned a return to the 'common cup' during communion services, which the majority of churches within the diocese have re-commenced. She explained the theology of communion in that whether receiving the bread or wine, communicants are receiving the full presence of Christ. She appreciated that not everyone will be comfortable with taking wine from the common cup and encouraged discussion about this if needed. Dipping bread into the wine is now considered the least hygienic approach and therefore will not be encouraged. However, wine itself held in a silver cup is believed to reduce the risk of infection.

Rachel is looking forward to the coming year and continues to pray for us as we continue to pray for her.

8 AOB: Nil

9 Closing Prayer: The Grace