

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 25th April 2023 in the Church Hall

Present

Revd Will Hunter Smart (Rector and Chairman), Revd Joy Mawdesley (Associate Rector), Revd Jackie Fountain (Curate), Rick Coward and Tania Wolak (Church Wardens), James Lancaster (PCC Treasurer), Phil Davis (Lay Vice Chair), Chris Philip (PCC Secretary) and 45 other members of the Church family.

Welcome

Will thanked everyone for attending which showed their sense of care for God's Church and for the mission we have been given. There was much to give thanks for over the past 12 months.

1. Opening Worship

Will read verses from Ephesians Chapter 5 in which St Paul compares the love a man should have for his wife with the love God has for his church; this was followed by the singing of two worship songs lead by Beth Mawdesley and Andy Laidler.

PART A: The Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the election of two Churchwardens

Will thanked Tania Wolak and Richard Coward for their support, encouragement, and wisdom over the past year. Both had expressed their willingness to serve for another one-year term and had been duly nominated, proposed, and seconded. As there had been no other nominations, he declared them both elected. Chris Philip was invited to pray for them both as they began a further year of service.

PART B: The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Chris Ortiz, David and Gill Parry, Samantha Mullender, Bob Meldrum, Tristan Davies and Paul Mawdesley.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the APCM held on 4th May 2022

These had been made available as part of the papers for the meeting.

Will proposed from the chair that they be accepted as a true record. All present were in favour.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

None were raised.

4. Annual Reports to the APCM

a) PCC Annual Report

This report had been detailed in the first half of the document entitled Annual Report and Financial Statements. The report contained a summary of the proceedings of the PCC as well as other significant events in the life of the Parish.

Will invited questions from the floor. None were raised.

b) Electoral Roll Report

Mandy Maskell reported that there were now 307 members on the Electoral Roll. 7 people have left during the last 12 months; some had moved away; 4 had died. 20 new members had joined the roll this year. She reported that she would continue to encourage newcomers to the Church to join the roll but it was not always easy. Will thanked Mandy for her report.

c) Finance

James began by confirming that since the last APCM the accounts showed that the finances of St Nic's had maintained a healthy position and we had finished the year with a modest surplus favourable to our 2022 budget, in no small way due to the dedicated giving of the congregation. James then thanked the members of the Finance Committee who had worked with him over the past year – and especially Vanessa Hutton who had been the committee secretary for the last two years. She was sadly leaving as her family were moving away from Newbury. He appealed to the congregation for help to find another volunteer to take over the role. He thanked the Standing Committee of the PCC and also Shalini Philip who looks after the planned giving and gift aid and Sheila Moore, the Financial Controller.

Review of 2022 accounts (page 16 -18 of the financial statements)

James explained we had recorded an **UNRESTRICTED SURPLUS** in 2022 of around £6,000. Aside from the one-off cost reductions that contributed to this financial position, given the uncertainty and challenges faced in 2022, outperforming our budget is something we should be incredibly thankful for.

Our **RESTRICTED ACTIVITY** in 2022 showed a **DEFICIT** of c. £18,000 which was largely due to:

- using all of the 2022 grant from the NCAAC for the upkeep of our church building plus £4k of residual funds from grants received in prior years (this was due to the works we had to do to the church heating).
- depreciation of about £13k on assets purchased by restricted funds.

James commented that total funds of just over £1m (page 17) include fixed assets such as our buildings and equipment. It is not all cash!

Review of the 2023 Budget

James reported that the Budget at an unrestricted level showed a deficit of £41,000. The PCC had voted to use £47,000 of free reserves (which now stand at £67,000) to be able to fulfil our plans for 2023, but he commented we would not be able to continue to do this in future years. We had been much blessed over the past 12 months, but we will all need to continue to play our part however we can as we face financial challenges in the coming year.

d) Report of Parish Activities

Libby Lake & Elaine Canniffe had compiled and collated reports from all the groups working voluntarily within the church. It demonstrated the enormous diversity and was very encouraging to know that so many people participated in outreach and ministry in so many ways. Will commended the booklet to all and thanked Libby & Elaine for all the work involved.

5. Election of members to the PCC and Deanery Synod

Four members were due for re-election to the PCC for a three-year term as well as 5 members to represent St Nic's on the Deanery Synod.

Will thanked Helen Dean, Chris Davis, Mark Knight and Chris Ortiz who were standing down this time.

Nominations for PCC had been received from

Phil Davis
Viv Staunton
Sharon Coward
James Lancaster

As there were no further nominations, no election was required. Will declared that the above 4 nominees were duly elected to serve until 2026.

Nominations for Deanery Synod had been received from

David Parry
Chris Philip
Rosie Davis
Samantha Mullender

As there were no further nominations, the above four were duly elected to stand for three years.

Becky Bird, who is currently serving as the Parish Safeguarding Officer, will be co-opted to the PCC at the next full PCC meeting.

6. Appointment of the Independent Examiners of the Church Accounts

James acknowledged the excellent service the church had received from the firm of James Cowper Kreston, who have examined our church finances over several years.

He proposed that the firm of James Cowper Kreston be appointed as independent examiners for a further year. Sheila Moore seconded this motion. All present were in favour.

7. Any Other Business

- a) A member asked whether in view of the high energy costs any thought had been given to installing solar panels on the church, and church hall roofs. Will reported that a small group within the church are looking at various projects to save energy. He was unsure how far they had come but agreed to make it an item for an imminent PCC meeting.
- b) A question was asked about how church growth was measured. Will explained that each year Statistics for Mission were collected from every Church of England, including attendance figures at services on four specified consecutive Sundays. The findings are tabulated and are available to view on the Diocesan website.

8. Closing Remarks and Prayer

Will began his remarks by thanking the clergy team (Joy, Jackie and Janice) as well as retired clergy Revd Pam McKellen and Revd Geoff Sowden. He also thanked the whole Staff Team, including the very newly appointed Facilities Manager, Samantha Bryant. He said that it was always encouraging when members of the congregation prayed for the clergy and staff team in services and prayer meetings. The congregation should know that in their staff meetings, the staff regularly give thanks and pray for the congregation, and the wonderful ministry of the whole people of God at St Nic's!

Will thanked Jane Sutton, our Licenced Lay Minister, who after many years of dedicated service to this and other churches is retiring. The church has much to thank Jane for and there will be a farewell tea followed by Evensong at St Mary's, Speen next Sunday to mark her retirement.

Over the last year we have had much to be thankful for: we made good initial progress in our four priority goals, agreed by the PCC as part of the 2022 vision review: Welcome, Worship, the Building Project and Prayer. There is still much to do, and in some areas we have lost momentum, particularly with our Building Project and Prayer. These priority goals will be high on the agenda for the new PCC. He asked the congregation to pray for the new PCC in their work.

Will commented that we still have challenges ahead in the coming year;

- a) how we as a church respond to the General Synod vote on the Living in Love and Faith process in July;
- b) the recruitment of a new Children's Minister; and
- c) re-establishing the CAP Debt Centre and the recruitment of a new Debt Centre Manager.

Will was confident that together, and under God, we would be able to face the challenges before us. He quoted Colossians 1:29 - "To this end I labour, struggling with all His energy." The work of the church is hard work; it is also a labour of love: love for God, for the world and the church. As Christ loves his church, so we are called to the same love. Will thanked the congregation for their labour of love – expressed partly through their attendance at this meeting.

Following the singing of a hymn and a final prayer, the meeting ended at 9:30pm.

.....
Chair

.....
Date