
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS 2023



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

was held in St Mary's Church on Thursday 4 May 2023 at 7.30pm

MINUTES

The Rector opened the meeting in prayer.

Present: Rector, churchwardens, Honorary Treasurer and 30 members of the congregation

A. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2023

for the purpose of electing two churchwardens to serve for the coming year.

Two nominations were received:

- Fouki Heller, proposed by Lucy Hine and seconded by Peter Siddall
- Paul Teverson, proposed by Fouki Heller, seconded by Geoffrey Barnett

There being no other nominations, both candidates were appointed. The Rector thanked Steve Cox for his insightful contribution over the past year and gave him a gift.

B. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

1. Apologies: Nikki Urquhart, Lucy and Chris Hine, Patty Darke, Sue Mackworth-Praed, Jo Teverson & Joan Wheeler-Bennett.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 5 May 2022 were signed as a correct record.

3. Elections to the Parochial Church Council of three representatives to serve for three years.

Two nominations were received:

- Deborah Stewartby, proposed by Geoffrey Barnett and seconded by Christabel Gairdner.
- Richard Nickels, proposed by William Heller and seconded by Phil Bladen

Both candidates were elected. The Rector thanked the 3 retiring members for the contribution over the past years:

William Heller (although he will be co-opted onto the PCC as Chairman of the Kitson Hall committee),
Lis Munden (who will continue at Safeguarding Officer)
and Michael Murison (who will continue as Gift Aid Secretary).

4. Elections to the Deanery Synod of five representatives to serve for three years. There was only one nomination and Fouki Heller, nominated by Patty Darke and seconded by Claire Boyling, was duly elected. The Rector encouraged others to consider membership of the Deanery Synod. Members are automatically a member of the PCC but it is not necessary to attend all PCC meetings.

5. Report on proceedings of the PCC was received. Helen Gibbs was welcomed as new PCC Secretary, Judy Gowing was thanked for her work over the years and given a gift.

6. Report on the Church Electoral Roll:

Rachel Skilbeck, the Electoral Roll Officer, reported that there were 289 on the Electoral Roll, an increase of 12. Rachel thanked Cheryl Cole, the Parish Administrator, and Trisha Hawkins for their help in updating the Electoral Roll.

7. Report on the annual accounts.

Michael introduced himself and stated the principal changes in 2022 regarding the church finances – appointment of Pauline as bookkeeper/financial administrator, monthly management accounts to PCC including a cash flow forecast and quarterly financial summary in SMB Weekly News.

Financial Strategy Group (recently renamed Financial Advisory Group or FAG) had been reinstated. It would meet twice a year and comprise 6 members (3 from PCC and 3 lay) to provide an independent review of the church's finances / investments and to report conclusions to the PCC.

Stewardship (a services firm to charities and churches) had been appointed as independent examiner for 2022 and had performed a comprehensive review of the 2022 Report and Accounts that concluded with the signing of their report on 24/4/23 following approval of the PCC.

The 2022 deficit was £78k compared with a surplus of £567k in 2021. If the 2021 gain on sale of Boileau Road house and unrealised gains/(losses) on investments were removed, 2022 had an operating surplus (income less expenses) of £6k compared with a £32k deficit in 2021.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24/2/22, stock market values had declined globally. St Mary's incurred a realised loss in 2022 of £24k (as a result of selling part of the portfolio to invest in two other funds in order to further diversify risk in accordance with the PCC's approval) and unrealised valuation losses of £60k – unrealised loss compared to cost was 8.7%. The valuation loss might reverse over time – the valuation gain in Q1 2023 was £18k.

The total reserves at 31/12/22 were spread over 12 funds, aggregating to £1.3m including Kitson Hall at a historical value of £460k. The endowment fund, £653k at 1/1/22 from sale proceeds of Boileau Road, had reduced by the investment losses to £577k – it was currently ring-fenced in order to produce income to meet the shared costs of James Marston.

The Charity Commission required the PCC/Trustees to consider and approve a reserves policy each year and the present policy was approved in April 2022. The church was in compliance with the policy, as there was a modest cash surplus during 2022 in excess of the policy minimum requirement.

2023 was expected to be a challenging year as evidenced by the budgeted net deficit of £66k. Lower net income from Friends and Hall letting was expected together with higher costs (chiefly Parish Share, staff (James Marston, more hours, higher rate per hour) and utility costs); partly offset by higher offerings / donations from the 2023 Stewardship appeal.

Michael thanked Richard du Parcq and Michael Murison for their valuable contributions in 2022 as banking officer and gift aid officer respectively. He also thanked Andrew Summers for the large surplus from Friend's events and William Heller and Kitson Hall Lettings Manager AJ for the increased net lettings in 2022. Lastly, he thanked Cheryl Cole for her ongoing assistance to Pauline Clarke and himself.

Michael answered a question from a member of the congregation regarding the investment portfolio. As the members role was to "discuss and receive", no resolution was required.

8. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2023

Based upon the satisfactory examination by *Stewardship* of the 2022 Report and Accounts, Michael recommended the re-appointment of Stewardship as the independent examiner for 2023. This appointment was proposed by Michael Murison and seconded by Geoffrey Barnett.

Richard du Parcq who has been Banking Officer for the many years, was thanked by Rector for meticulous work, and given a gift. He is handing over to Patrick Findlater.

9. Reports on the fabric of the church, and of Kitson Hall were received. Peter Boyling informed the meeting that the Diocese has approved the installation of new audio-visual equipment, which had been ordered. The Rector gave huge thanks to Peter (Fabric) and William Heller (Kitson Hall) and their committees for all their work.
10. Statement on Safeguarding. Lis Munden reported that we are fully compliant with the Diocese requirements. Nicola King is replacing Natasha Mold and will be joining her as another Safeguarding Officer. Rector thanked Natasha for all her work.
11. Report from the Youth & Children's Workers was received. Jackie Davis and Julie Smith were thanked warmly for all their work in an active and full year with the children.
12. Report on the Team Council was received. Employment of James Marston has changed the nature of the Team council. He splits his time between St Mary's and St Michaels and All Angels. All 3 churches have regular and friendly contact.
There was a question about an item of *Overpaid Council Tax and insurance* in the Team Accounts which was included in the Team accounts last year too. This will need to be resolved by the Team Treasurer before the account is closed – when the proceeds from the Boileau Road house have all been distributed.
13. Report on Deanery Synod was received.
14. Rector's reflection. There is a balancing act between old and new. We are asked to follow the ancient paths but God is ready to urge us on to new things ahead. It is a challenging time for Church of England, with various issues including marriage and blessings of same sex couples causing controversy. It is very likely that there will be division within the Church of England. We should be remembering Archbishop Justin Welby in our prayers with all that he has to carry. Change is very healthy sign in a church. There are a huge number of volunteers in the life of St Mary's and we could not run our multiple events without them, but there are still many more needed. Lots of celebrations will take place over the coronation weekend.
The PCC has agreed the new Mission Action Plan for the next 3 years which is simple and easy to grasp. The Rector thanked everyone for their all support, not only for James in his ministry but also for Alice and the family. The level of kindness in the parish is extraordinary.
There was a question about the level of division within the Church of England and was referred to <https://www.churchofengland.org/> for more information.
There was a question as to whether the collection plate would return. The Rector said he felt strongly that passing the plate around interrupted the act of worship. There is still a plate at the back of church if people wish to leave a cash donation.
Another thank you: Cheryl Cole plays a very important role as the Parish Administrator. She is the first point of contact and displays considerable pastoral skills as well as all her admin and design work.
15. Churchwardens' report was received. Fouki Heller gave a big thank you to James for his leadership and all the new initiatives he has introduced and wished him a restful and fulfilling time on sabbatical.
16. Any other business – none.
17. Date of next annual meeting – To be confirmed at a later date.

All the received reports can be read in the Annual Report and Annual Review on <https://www.stmarybarnes.org/about-us/#parishcouncil>.

James Hurling

Revd James Hurling 26/4/2024