



(Reg Charity No: 1132488)

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Meeting Information:

Date: SUNDAY 12th May 2024

Location: ST MARGARET'S CHURCH **Meeting type:** APCM

Chair **Revd David Wallis** **Minute Taker:** T M Haughton

1 – WELCOME by Revd David Wallis and Opening Prayers

2 – APOLOGIES: Carl Belfield, Kate Belfield Colyeen Blanchard, Tony Blanchard, Margaret Bovill, Sherrian Guest, Brenda Hall, Ian Henley

MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

Churchwardens are elected annually under the provisions of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 by the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, as the senior laypeople of the parish and congregation. Their term of office is one year, and they may serve for up to six consecutive terms of office, unless the Annual Meeting passes a resolution to set aside this rule. They are the Bishops' officers, and are admitted to office each year by the Archdeacon, on behalf of the Bishop.

3 – ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS:

St Margaret's Ditchling:

Name: **Keith Hine**
Proposer: Virginia De La Pole Seconder: Elizabeth Curry
All present in agreement

Streat:

Name: **Michael Sewell**
Proposer: Susan Sewell Seconder: Margaret Bovill
All present in agreement

St Martin's Westmeston

Name: **Paul Charman**
Proposer: Rosemary Herbert Seconder: Roderick Pryde
All present in agreement

Church Warden of the Beacon Parish

Name: **Tessa Haughton**
Proposer: Brenda Hall Seconder: Deborah Miarkowska
All present in agreement

Voted and agreed by all present therefore duly elected

Meeting closed

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1 – MINUTES

- Revd Wallis asked for approval of the Minutes of the APCM held on Sunday 30th April 2023. The Minutes were agreed by all present and the Minutes were then signed and dated by Revd Wallis.

2 – MATTERS ARISING

- No matters arising

3 – ELECTORAL ROLL – Electoral Roll Officer Paul Charman

- A shortened version of the Electoral Roll with names only was on display for 14 days for everyone to check their names. We had several new members added during this time.
- The numbers on the Electoral Roll for 2024 APCM now stand at 191, with 71 being residents living outside the Beacon Parish.
- The numbers have gone up with new people joining the church while sadly a few people have passed away.
- The revised shortened Electoral Roll will be available for the next 14 days. If anyone wishes to check their full details are correct on the Electoral Roll please let Paul know.
- In addition, if anybody has not signed up to be on the Electoral Roll, please contact Paul for an application form to fill in and then hand back to Paul or one of his fellow Churchwardens.
- Next year, 2025, there will need to be a full new Electoral Roll.
- Revd Wallis asked that this report be formally adopted. Proposed by Heather Evans, Seconded by Tessa Haughton. All present in agreement and the Report was adopted.

4 – ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS Mark Moody-Stuart Treasurer

Treasurer's Report to the APCM 12th May 2024

The full Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 is available on the Beacon Website. The following is a shortened extract of the financial report.

The Parish posted another material operating deficit in 2023, although there was some comfort to be derived from a reduction in the deficit compared to last year. The headline deficit reduced from £80,379 in 2022 to £58,480 in 2023, due in large part to the tailing-off in expenditure related to our major works at Streat Church. 2022 had also seen a number of required material investments in all of our churches, which were not repeated in 2023. However, some of this benefit was offset by double-digit increases in the costs of running the churches – like many organisations, the Parish has been affected by inflation in all of its input costs, including staff, utility costs, insurance, materials and service costs.

Income: Our Planned Giving stabilised in 2023 and an increase in Unplanned Giving was offset by reductions in collections at services and lower grant receipts, resulting in an **overall 17% reduction in voluntary income.** With dividends reducing as a result of a run-down in our investments and a fall-off in income from church activities (including weddings and funerals), overall incoming resources suffered a reduction of some 13%.

Costs: These are dominated by three items, together accounting for over 70% of total resources expended. The most material item, the **Parish Share**, saw only a modest increase; as indicated above, **Major Works and Purchases** reduced as the Streat works drew to a close; and, whilst our **Youth Worker (YW)** costs rose, this was only to be expected in the inflationary environment we saw in 2023. It should be noted that 50% of the YW costs were borne by our neighbouring Parish of Clayton with Keymer and their contribution appears under 'Sundry Income' (note 2e). This cost-sharing agreement came to an end on 31st March 2024, after which the YW is employed on a new contract with the Beacon Parish for 4 months, while we seek to identify other sources of potential funding.

Net Assets: The overall net assets of the PCC decreased by £11,032, from £481,593 to £470,561. The great bulk of these funds (£338,936 are in Restricted or Endowment Funds reserved for the use for which the original endowments and donations were made. The largest parts of these Funds relate to Streat Church and St Martin's Westmeston and the dividend income derived can be used to fund major works at these churches. The Friends of St Margaret's charity fund holds significant reserves committed to the fabric of St Margaret's. We are thus fortunate that the current underlying situation in relation to the preservation and maintenance of our three ancient and historic buildings remains reasonably sound. Unrestricted and Designated Funds stood at £131,625, a reduction of £46,733. Expenditure on Streat Church and the funding of operating deficits continued to run down these investment funds, thus reducing future income generation. **The cushion used to fund our ongoing underlying deficits therefore continues to deplete.** Whilst welcome, the recovery in market conditions cannot be relied on in every year to increase the value of our investments and the aim remains to return to a position where the Parish operates with a day-to-day surplus, using its investments to fund only major works and purchases.

Outlook: Whilst the Parish has been able to reduce the operating loss this year, the financial position remains unsustainable, as investments are being run down to meet ongoing costs. With this in mind, the PCC has made the following decisions, which will impact on the 2024 financial performance:

- **Parish Share:** we have made the difficult decision to reduce our payment to the Diocese by £30,000 per annum. This action has not been undertaken lightly, as we are very conscious that the Diocese faces financial challenges of its own. However, we very much hope that this will be a temporary action, to give us time to develop other sources of sustainable income (see below).
- **Youth Worker:** Clayton with Keymer Parish has taken the decision to discontinue its funding of its costs and our YW is, at the time of writing, on a part-time short term fixed contract which expires in August 2024. We are searching for other sources of funding to maintain the status quo, as the YW is a key part of the Ministry and will help ensure the long-term sustainability of the Parish by encouraging young people to follow the Gospel.
- **Major Works & Purchases:** we do not anticipate any expenditure of the scale of Streat Church for the foreseeable future. However, as discussed in last year's report and above, the sagging floor in St Martin's Church will be addressed in 2024, incurring expenditure, which will be covered by utilising dedicated endowment funds. Expenditure on St Margaret's should be manageable.
- **Fundraising campaign:** recognising the need to put the Parish on a more sustainable footing and to restore our ability to pay the full Parish Share in the future, as announced on Sunday 28th April the PCC has made a decision to reach out to the wider community in the Parish for financial support. The Appeal has been launched and will be supported by material in all three churches illustrating the contribution of the churches to the wider community.
- **Outlook for 2024:** the current budget for 2024 shows a core activities deficit of some £25,000 even after the PCC decision to reduce our allocated Parish Share contribution by some £30,000 over the year but before taking into account any positive outcome from the Appeal.

Questions from the congregation

- **What is our Parish Share?** Our Parish Share was just under £79,000 for 2023, but as mentioned we have elected to reduce the 2024 share contribution by £30,000. The Parish Share pays for our incumbent, his pension, accommodation and contributes to the running of the Diocese. We will await discussions with the Diocese in the longer term.
- **Gary is an important part of our Parish and is working really hard with the young people. What can we do to help?** We are looking for funds for a replacement Youth Worker and hope that we can find support but at the moment nothing appears available.
- **What happens if the Parish is bankrupt?** This is not exactly clear. Apart from our Unrestricted and Designated funds of some £131,000 on which we currently depend to fund our deficit, we have large endowment and restricted funds of some £339,000. If we have used up our Unrestricted reserves we would have to consult on repurposing some of our Restricted and Endowment

funds. These are largely in Westmeston and Streat for the fabric of those churches, but only to the maintenance of the fabric.

- **How long do we have before our Unrestricted funds are exhausted by the ongoing deficit.** Depending on the results of the current appeal, at the present rate it would be three to five years (assuming a continuing reduced payment of the Parish Share).
- **Can we close churches?** Yes, but the Endowments may remain in place for the maintenance of the fabric. Also, closing one or more churches may well impact attenders linked to those churches and we may lose attendance and contributions.
- **Streat Barn Mission Fund?** When the Barn was sold the money was moved into our general funds on the understanding that a proportion in the future would be used to create facilities to replace the Barn. This has been done. Over the years the Parish has benefitted from the income generated by the investments made at that time. With other reserves this has enabled us to fund ongoing deficits for the last seven years.
- **The appeal – is there any news?** So far there have been encouraging responses, but these may not be enough to help cover our income shortfall.

Revd Wallis thanked:

- Mark Moody-Stuart for all his work over the past years as Treasurer of the Beacon Parish as he retires. Mark Moody-Stuart will remain involved until Ian Henley has fully taken over the accounts, etc.
- Sue Sewell. Revd Wallis thanked Sue for all her past work over the years as the Beacon Parish bookkeeper. Also Mike Sewell for his work while Sue has been so ill prior to the appointment and handover to our new bookkeeper.
- Ian Henley as he takes over as Treasurer and for his work on the letter to the Parish for our Appeal. As this is targeting the whole community we have interest from people who have already reengaged.
- Thank you to Stuart Curry for his work on the budget and investments and also the whole Finance Committee.

Presentation

- Revd Wallis presented gifts to Mark Moody-Stuart and Sue Sewell as appreciation and gratitude for their help over the past years.

Accounts and Elections

- Mark Moody-Stuart confirmed that the Annual Report and Financial Statement had been adopted by the PCC at their meeting on 10th April 2024.
- As Mark Moody-Stuart (Treasurer) and Sue Sewell (Bookkeeper) have resigned the following were elected:
- **Treasurer – Robert Ian Henley**
Proposer: Tessa Haughton Seconder: Margaret Bovill
All present in agreement
- **Bookkeeper – Lynn Lashbrook**
Proposer: Mark Moody-Stuart Seconder: Sherrian Guest
All present in agreement
- It is hoped that the position of Bookkeeper will eventually be filled by a volunteer.

5 – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

- Maxwell Gumbleton in Lewes, were Proposed by Mark Moody-Stuart, seconded by Tessa Haughton to continue as the Independent Examiners. All present in agreement.

6 – DEANERY SYNOD UPDATE – Tessa Haughton

- Tessa Haughton reported that she had attended, with Revd Wallis, the Deanery Synod meetings over the past year when available and reported back to the PCC on occasion.
- Revd Wallis said it was important to support the Deanery. We have a meeting with our Archdeacon towards the end of June to talk about our reduction of payment to the Parish Share and what we are attempting to do to rectify.
- **Deanery Synod Representative – Tessa Haughton**
Proposer: Brenda Hall Seconder: Deborah Miakowska
All present in agreement

7 – ELECTION OF PCC MEMBERS

The following have agreed to stand for a further year:

- Margaret Bovill, Heather Evans, Sherrian Guest, Virginia De La Pole, Mark Moody-Stuart who will remain on the PCC during the handover period to the new Treasurer.
- The PCC also includes the following Churchwardens: Keith Hine, Paul Charman, Mike Sewell and Tessa Haughton.
- The following are proposed as new PCC Members: Luke Biersteker, Lydia Biersteker, Ian Henley, Deborah Miarkowska and Nina Weltrowska
- Voted en-bloc and all duly elected to the PCC.
- Revd Wallis thanked all who are working on the PCC now and in the future. The PCC is integral to the study of love and knowledge of Jesus. It is not just about the finances. Each of us must choose what we are most enthusiastic about and be an ambassador of that area. We will team PCC members up with members of the congregation to help.
- Our new PCC members are already involving themselves: Luke & Lydia for Little Beacons, Ian as Treasurer, Deborah attended a prayer conference, Nina with fresh eyes and enthusiasm. We have well established roles already in place but also new ones.
- We must not forget our mission through prayer and worshipping with our church family.

8 – APPOINTMENT OF WELCOMERS/SIDES PERSONS – Maz Hine

- This is an important role as people are met and greeted when they arrive in Church. We are the first person they meet with a smile and good morning.
- The following have been reappointed and if you wish to join the team, please let Maz know. Maz Hine, Carl Belfield, Brenda Hall and Stuart Curry.

- For large events, Maz will continue to ask members of the Congregation to help out when necessary.

9 – REVD WALLIS ADDRESS – Main Points

- Thank you to each and everyone of you. I cannot list everything through the year but here are some:
- Thank you to Gary for all he has done for the Youth Group in our Parish, the School collective worship, leading services, covering study groups and being enthusiastic with our Young People.
- Thank you also to those people who say hello when people arrive in church, help with coffee, organise social events, put things out and away, being a smiling face. Helping with weddings, with funerals, with other special services. Cleaning the church, looking after the churchyards, preparing and arranging things on Sundays, being a school governor and many more.
- When we do these things on earth it brings heaven closer. Closeness enables us to make that connection and it brings people in contact with God.

10 – VOTE OF THANKS from Keith Hine

- Last year I mentioned all of the activities that David has been doing over the year which we forget. This year it has got busier. It is 20 years since David's ordination which we celebrated last year and we have blessed him, thanked him and prayed for him.
- David sows the seeds of the gospel at every opportunity.
- We thank God for the growth in our numbers and in the faith of our congregation.
- We have sowed the seeds that we gave out to celebrate David's ordination and there is promise of something more.
- Myself and Tessa have been speaking to John Saunders, who is a Professor of Marketing at universities, and he has some interesting suggestions going forward. He also said that if we all just recruited one extra person each year, we would double the congregation annually.
- We cannot leave it all to David.
- I thank him for his consistent inspiration, his example and love for Jesus, innovating ways of presenting the seeds of the gospel.
- Thank you to Sally as his soul mate and I'd like to propose a vote of thanks to you both from us all.
- I would also like to propose a vote of thanks to Tessa for her help within the Parish and her husband Michael for letting her do this.

The meeting was closed with a prayer by Canon Revd Dr Peter Sills

FIRST MEETING OF NEWLY ELECTED PCC

Meeting Information:

Date: **SUNDAY 12th MAY 2024**

Location **ST MARGARET'S CHURCH** Meeting type: **TO ELECT**

Chair **Revd David Wallis** Minute Taker: **T M Haughton**

VICE CHAIR: **Tessa Haughton**

Proposed: Paul Charman Seconded: Heather Evans
All present in agreement

TREASURER: **Robert Ian Stuart Henley**

Proposed: Mark Moody-Stuart Seconded: Tessa Haughton
All present in agreement

BOOKKEEPER: **Lynn Lashbrook**

Proposed: Mark Moody-Stuart Seconded: Tessa Haughton
All present in agreement

SECRETARY: **Margaret Bovill**

Proposed: Heather Evans Seconded: Mike Sewell
All present in agreement

DATE OF NEXT PCC MEETING
WEDNESDAY 12th JUNE 2024 at 6.00PM
Meeting Closed