

## **Minutes of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting,**

**Saturday April 22nd 2023, held in Church House, Milborne Port**

The meeting was chaired by Mrs Nicki Edwards (NE). Reverend Rona Stuart-Bourne, who, in September, had been appointed as Priest-in-Charge to the Benefice, was in attendance. The meeting was preceded by the Meeting of Parishioners (see the minutes in the Vestry Book in Church cupboard).

**Those present:** Rev. Rona Stuart-Bourne (RS-B), Ann Bennett, Elaine Ennis-Bunt, Mary Clothier, Frank (FC) and Gill Coley, Nicola Edwards (NE), Pat Elliott, David Grant, Robert (RH) and Jacquie Hall (JH), Jenny Hill, Trevor John, David (DJ) and Anne Johnson, Brian and Lesley McConnell, Sue Morgan, Linda (LM) and Peter Mumford, Christine Porter, Richard Redman, Graham (GS) and Janice Sharpless, Jenny Sherwood, Clare Silk, Anthony and Naomi Thorp, Brian and Barbara Tindale, Susan Wales, Trudy West, Frank Wright (FW)

**Apologies were received from:** John and Margaret Barker, Robin and Anne Bawtree, Neil and Anne Briggs, Harold Clarke, Patricia Dawson, Ronnie and June Goodman, Tone Higgins, Chris and Sheila Lockyer, Lesley Oldham, Anne Salkeld, Caroline Woodall

**Minutes of APCM April 3rd 2022:** These were accepted and signed by NE as a true record of the meeting with no amendments.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

### **Reports:**

**Electoral Roll:** GS reported that, following revision of the Electoral Roll, there were now 118 parishioners listed, comprising 102 from Milborne Port, 7 from Milborne Wick, and 9 who are non-resident. He commented that, as such, we are the only parish in the Deanery that can return three representatives to the Deanery Synod. 2024 will see another revision, whilst in 2025 a new Roll will be compiled. RS-B thanked GS for his work on maintaining this.

**Church Wardens' Annual Review:** Both NE's and JH's annual Church Wardens' reports can be found in the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022 which had been distributed to parishioners by email prior to the meeting, and which will be available on the Church's website. Paper copies were also available to those who required one.

NE reported to the meeting that the highlight of the year was the appointment of the Reverend Rona Stuart-Bourne as Priest-in-Charge to the Benefice, and that we were looking forward to moving forward together in her ministry with us. She highlighted the successes and achievements post-Covid and during the Vacancy, and that, as a community, we work well together, providing a welcoming place in which to serve God.

JH summarised the content of her annual report by commenting that it had been a quiet year on the church fabric front, although the Quinquennial Survey will take place within weeks, and no doubt there will be matters to attend to after that.

NE thanked Ronnie and June Goodman for their continued work in the day to day running of the building, and to RH and JH for their work in maintaining the fabric of the building and keeping everything in good order.

**Financial Report and Accounts:** The 2022 accounts were prepared in accordance with the PCC accountability handbook. RH presented an overview of the accounts, which had been approved by the PCC on 27th March 2023, and which had been independently examined by Martin Freeman. The complete set, together with a comprehensive report by RH, was made available for all parishioners to peruse, and which had been sent to all parishioners via email in advance of the meeting. The accounts will be submitted to Bath and Wells Diocese Board of Finance in due course, in line with statutory requirements.

In his précis, RH began by advising that Milborne Wick Church's accounts were reported to have been examined by Evans & Co Accountants of Stalbridge. However, no independent Examiner's report has been presented to Milborne Port PCC in support of their receipts and payments summary. The accounts show that the finances remain in a healthy state, and that we have fared remarkably well post-Covid and during the Vacancy and that, with RS-B here to take us forward, this will no doubt maintain this situation. RH summarised the main sections of the report. Regarding the Parish Share, DJ asked how much is apportioned to each

individual. JH responded that it is around £600 per person (£553). RH completed his summary by highlighting the challenges for 2023, namely: the continued impact of inflation on outgoings; the increases in shared Benefice costs with a secretary/administrator having started work; the impact of Deanery re-organisation. RH commended everyone to read the annual report. NE then thanked RH for the ten years of loyal service that he has devoted to the role of PCC treasurer, his attention to detail and fastidiousness, and that he will be handing over to the new treasurer, Paul Springett, with everything in good order. NE then presented him with various gifts, for which he thanked everyone. The meeting showed its appreciation further by way of a round of applause. There were no further questions of the treasurer.

**Reports from Committees:** These were presented in booklet form, and available to read either on the website, or email or by hard copy. There were no questions.

**Inventory and Log Book Terrier:** These had been checked and updated by NE and JH and were duly signed.

**Vicar's Report:** RS-B then addressed the meeting, firstly by saying how happy she is to be here and that she is settling down in our community. She continued by thanking the many individuals and groups who volunteer and work together in our community to keep our church going so that others may use it whenever, and for whatever reason. She said that she would like to encourage, and hopefully inspire us all, to do even more, to reflect even more on what our unique part in this beautiful whole we can play. However, she cautioned everyone by saying that she has found a lot of anxiety here, and throughout the Benefice, about Church attendance numbers and suggested that this worry be put away, and to remember that it is God who brings growth. By being faithful and behaving with integrity, and by keeping our eye on our particular part of building this kingdom, we will grow. She finished her encouraging and inspiring talk by referring to when Jesus asked Thomas to 'Put your finger here' and how, as a community and as individuals, we can all work and grow together to fulfil God's intentions for us here. She concluded by thanking us all for being here, for listening, and for being willing to hear what it is that God is asking of us.

**Elections:** Both Churchwardens are willing to stand for a further year. Three members of the PCC, co-opted in 2022, are willing to stand again. Two parishioners have agreed to stand as new members. Robert Hall and Anne Salkeld are to not seek re-election to the PCC and will stand down. The posts of deputy wardens and sides-people will be set by PCC at the next full meeting. The present three members of the Deanery Synod are prepared to stand again. Therefore the following nominations took place:

- **PCC** – Graham Sharpless (Proposed by Nicola Edwards; Seconded by Jenny Sherwood)  
Trevor John (Proposed by Susan Wales; Seconded by David Johnson)  
Mary Clothier (Proposed by Lesley McConnell; Seconded by Pat Elliott)  
David Johnson (Proposed by Robert Hall; Seconded by Richard Redman)  
Louisa Schreiber (Proposed by Nicola Edwards; Seconded by Graham Sharpless)
- **Deanery Synod** – Linda Mumford (Proposed by Susan Wales; Seconded by Nicola Edwards)  
Jacqueline Hall (Proposed by Susan Wales; Seconded by Nicola Edwards)  
Harold Clarke (Proposed by Nicola Edwards; Seconded by Susan Wales)

All were in favour that these should be elected to these positions.

**Appointment of External Examiner:** Martin Freeman has now retired. The independent examiner for Charlton Horethorne will be approached to assume this task next time.

#### **Other Matters of Parochial or General Church Interest:**

**Reorganisation of the Deanery:** LM, one of our representatives on the Deanery Synod and member of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group (DPMG), apprised the meeting of the present situation. Due to the fact that the finances of the Diocese are in deficit by some £2.2 million, costs have to be cut. This has already happened at Diocesan level, but now it is necessary to reduce the number of stipendiary parish clergy across the Diocese. For the Bruton and Cary Deanery, this will entail cutting the number of paid posts from 8 to 7.5. Discussions to this effect have been taking place over some months, both at Deanery and also parish level, originally with some 21 options of ways to divide the Deanery. These have been gradually whittled down, with the likely scenario that Compton Pauncefoot and Blackford be added to our Benefice. Further informal discussions have taken place with the possibility of Maperton being added, due to its geographical proximity to Charlton Horethorne. However, a more radical option would be to

set up group ministries whereby clergy would retain their own benefices, but would be licensed to work across the group, rather than just in their own benefices. The process is well on the way to being decided upon, with the final selection happening on 5<sup>th</sup> July. LM expects this reorganisation will happen within the next calendar year. FC asked how much this would save: each stipendiary post costs around £50K p.a. FW commented that a shared ministry is invaluable for clergy, as it provides opportunities for mutual support and the care and development of individuals. He added that there is a wind of change across the CofE, with our inherited model of the vicar at the top helping the parishioners shifting to governance in the hands of the parishioners. RS-B and NE both thanked LM for her succinct explanation, and her continued involvement in this uncertain time.

Parish Administrator: Helen Solomon has been appointed and will be working three mornings per week.

Dates of Future Meetings of PCC:

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – to include commissioning service for new PCC

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November

RS-B then thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting and concluded with the Lord's Prayer and Blessing. The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.