

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

**Saturday April 20th 2024, held in Church House, Milborne Port**

The meeting was chaired by Reverend Rona Stuart-Bourne, Priest in Charge. 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), Dianne Barrett, Harold Clarke, Nicola Edwards (NE), Robert (RH) and Jacquie Hall (JH), Jenny Hill, Des Isley, Reidun Sannes-Isley, Trevor John, David and Anne Johnson, Chris and Sheila Lockyer, Brian and Lesley McConnell, Lesley Oldham, Christine Porter, Richard Redman, Graham (GS) and Janice Sharpless, Clare Silk (CS), Paul Springett (PS), Naomi Thorp, Gillian Topp, Susan Wales (SW), Caroline Woodall, Frank Wright

**Apologies were received from:** Tone Higgins

**Minutes of APCM April 22nd 2023:** These were accepted and signed by RS-B 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 117 parishioners listed, comprising 101 from Milborne Port, 7 from Milborne Wick, and 9 who are non-resident. In 2025 a new Roll will need to be compiled, with new forms completed by all those parishioners wishing to be included.. 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 2023 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 thanked JH for all her work whilst undertaking the role of fellow churchwarden over the past year, and also over the last ten years.

NE observed that, accompanied by murmurs of agreement from the floor, she had been musing on the fact that the stones of our church hold, in all their moments of joy and sadness, the prayers of all the people who have worshipped in the building over the past hundreds of years. Also that the evening light shining through the beautiful stained glass window in the Gethsemane Chapel reminds us of the message of hope that God is here with us, and that we are mindful of our heritage with the focus on hope, love, and generosity in this world; to love our neighbours; and for the church to be at the heart of the community here. She thanked members of the congregation as representatives of the body of Christ, for their support, and for a good year to come. She concluded by thanking RS-B for her leadership in bringing us to where we are now.

**Financial Report and Accounts:** The 2023 accounts were prepared in accordance with the PCC accountability handbook. An overview of the accounts, which had been approved by the PCC on 12th March 2024, and which had been independently examined by Alison Cooper of Charltons Accountancy Ltd, 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.

PS introduced himself as the new treasurer. He explained that, after taking over the role from RH last year, he had investigated different ways of operating the church's accounts, based on fund accounting. He has adopted "Expense Plus", an on-line accounting package devised specifically for PCC treasurers.

He explained, by analogy, the different funds held within the PCC accounts viz: 1) the General Fund, which is unrestricted; 2) two funds which are designated, (are unrestricted) although earmarked for a particular use; 3) eleven funds which are restricted and legally held for specific charitable purposes. PS explained that, to enable these funds to be used more flexibly as the PCC sees fit, restrictions on some of these funds need to be lifted. For example, the amount held in the CCLA amounts to some £165K, £80K over the ceiling that is "protected".

He asked that, subject to a vote being held at the next PCC meeting, with this meeting's agreement, moves be made to lift these restrictions. All were in favour that this should happen.

PS cautioned the meeting that the future is uncertain. He warned that, for example, the Parish Share at present is unobtainable as it stands, due to an increase in what PCCs are required to contribute. He implored everyone to adopt the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) as a means to make regular donations to the church, and to choose the option to index link annual increases in donations. He added that, if everyone on the Electoral Roll from St John's gave £50pm for example, that would give £61Kp.a. The PGS calculates Gift Aid too, making the job of the treasurer easier.

2024 will see the final transition to the new system with Expense Plus, with one main bank account being held with the Co-Op Bank, which has proved to be infinitely simpler to use compared with the old NatWest account. PS concluded that he has enjoyed his first year working with St John's, and thanked everyone for being so helpful and welcoming.

CS asked for clarification about how PGS works.

RSB then explained the calculation used to arrive at the final figure for this year's Parish Share. It will be necessary, in order to keep churches going, we as a parish will need to think ways in which we can keep going. RSB thanked PS for his hard work in his first year.

**Reports from Committees:** These were presented in booklet form, and available to read either on the website, or email or by hard copy. RSB thanked everyone who had contributed in any way. There were no questions.

**Inventory and Log Book Terrier:** These had been checked and updated by NE and JH in February and were duly signed. NE added that the church owns a silver flagon dating from the C18th the value of which is around £16K. Latterly it was held by NatWest, but has now been placed for safe keeping in the church safe. Its final home is up for discussion, and the church's insurers will be advised.

**Report by the Priest-in-Charge:** RS-B picked up on NE's earlier comments on the stained glass window of St John the Evangelist namely that the light shining through the window shines through us. 2023 saw her first full year with us. The first year is always hard, and because the last few weeks were missed due to an untimely period of illness, she felt things didn't quite completely settle. However, RSB felt that, despite this, it had been a really good year and that she had enjoyed working with all volunteers and paid staff. There have been a large number of "occasional" services, (predominantly baptisms), which have been a joy. She has tried not to make too many changes, and thanked everyone for being such an outstandingly faithful congregation. Moving forward, she wants to focus on our faithful witness. She referred to the Holy Week services, (repeated in 2024, but might need to be changed in 2025); the successful Lent Course; the Open The Book initiative; the involvement with the schools. She thanked everyone for their help and support: NE and JH as churchwardens; SW as PCC secretary; PS as treasurer; Ronnie and June Goodman as Vergers; Pat Elliott as Reader, all the retired clergy in the different ways they approach worship; Becky Ayres-Harris; TJ and RR as loyal and trustworthy Servers. She continued by thanking the bell-ringers, choir, organist, cake makers, welcomers, flower arrangers, brass cleaners, churchyard team, Helen as parish administrator, GS for maintaining the website, DJ, RR and PS for collecting money and banking it, the Foodshare team. She apologized if there was anyone that she missed. Moving forward, she wishes to focus on the foundations and principles of faith, then asked what principles WE would like to see, given the present world situation and the continued rise of the secular society. She asked us to consider what we can do as individuals: i.e. actions built on LOVE – for God, each other, neighbours – rather than actions emanating from negative emotions. She expressed the desire to return to prayer and worship; for more involvement with the schools; to explore faith through art and creativity especially working with the wider community especially at Easter and Christmas. She would like to launch fellowship groups and wishes to develop opportunities to meet to discuss these issues, and to work to becoming an Eco-Church. All this based on the foundations of our faith.

**Elections and notifications:** There are at least three vacancies on the PCC. Tone Higgins has agreed to stand: nominated by NE, seconded by SW. RSB has asked that others consider putting themselves forward. With SW becoming churchwarden it will be necessary to find a new PCC Secretary. There should be three Deanery Synod representatives - presently Harold Clarke, Linda Mumford and Jacquie Hall. Nicola Edwards will stand in place of

Jacque. Sidespeople: Caroline Woodall, Will Redman, Gillian Topp, Anne Schreiber, Jenny Hill, Christine Porter, Sue Morgan, Anne Briggs and Margaret Barker,

With SW being elected as Churchwarden at the Meeting of Parishioners held before this APCM, a new Secretary to the PCC will need to be found. RSB asked if there was anyone present who was willing to take on this role, or if anyone knew of anyone suitable, then to let her know.

**Appointment of External Examiner:** As previously mentioned, this is now Alison Cooper of Charltons Accountancy Ltd, Charlton Horethorne. PS commented on how helpful she has been, giving her time freely to assist him. It was agreed that a small gift be given to her by way of grateful thanks.

**Other Matters of Parochial or General Church Interest:** GS asked if those present could check with friends and other members of the congregation if they are successfully receiving the monthly Pew News by email.

**Dates of Future Meetings of PCC:**

The first PCC meeting of the new year will be on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

RS-B then thanked everyone for attending and their contribution to the meeting. The meeting closed at 4.20 pm.