



BINFIELD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting Both held at St. Mark's Church Monday 13th May 2024 at 7:30pm

Present: Revd. Luke Taylor (Rector), Sue Cledwyn-Davies (Churchwarden), John Hargreaves (Churchwarden) and 17 members of the congregation.

The meeting was opened in prayer led by the Rector.

Meeting of Parishioners

The Rector, Luke Taylor, called a Meeting of Parishioners (vestry meeting) where the Churchwardens are elected.

A nomination was received for Sue Cledwyn-Davies who was re-standing for one of the two Churchwarden positions. She was re-elected unanimously as Churchwarden by those present. John Hargreaves stepped down from his Churchwarden position but will continue to serve in an unofficial "Assistant Churchwarden" role.

Sue and John were both thanked for their work over the past year.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sue Green, Kate Ellison-Bourne and Margaret Edgington.

2. Minutes of the previous APCM held on the 24th April 2023

These were agreed as a true record, approved unanimously and signed.

3. Matters Arising (not elsewhere in agenda)

None

4. Reports

Luke gave those present a chance to review the Rectors and Churchwardens Reports as provided and an opportunity to ask any questions.

Luke commented on the volume of activity and how exciting it was to see more going on.

There were no questions on the reports.

5. The Electoral Roll

Sue Green provided an update on the Electoral Roll to give in her absence.

The roll now stands at 232, up from 227 with 6 new additions and 3 removed.

It was noted that next year, in 2025, there will be a complete revision of the electoral roll and Luke anticipates that the numbers will drop.

Luke thanked Sue for her work.

6. Adoption of the 2023 Annual Report and Accounts

Luke moved on to the Financial Reports and Sarah Muller (Treasurer) gave a summary.

Sarah pointed out that the full financial review can be found on page 4 of the Trustees report and the figures for 2023 on pages 8 to 16.

Looking back at 2023: Sarah mentioned that we were delighted to end the year in profit on

unrestricted funds which enabled us to continue to support our three designated charities: Bracknell FoodBank, Oasis trust and Five Talents.

This was achieved by:

- 14% rise in unrestricted planned giving, mainly due to a full year of increases made during 2022
- 36% rise in collections at services
- 190% rise in interest on savings
- 33% rise in church activities (Parochial fees, Beacon advertising and Hall letting). This was mainly due to a full year of higher hall letting charges that came into effect during 2022.
- 13% net increase in Fundraising in unrestricted funds

However other non-planned giving in both unrestricted and restricted funds fell by 65%. This was largely expected as the 2022 figures were high in response to appeals for cover predicted shortfalls and maintenance projects (e.g. new cemetery path).

Our restricted funds were also blessed with grants from the Binfield Parish Council, St Mark's Religious Education fund, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Tesco (food for the Lighthouse initiative).

Sarah note that our unrestricted expenditure in 2023 only rose by 9% which was achieved through careful management by the PCC despite:

- 101% increase in utility bills as the Parish Buying Energy basket scheme had protected us from the full impact of price increases until October 2022.
- 31% in Software costs
- 16.5% rise in staff costs.

General maintenance expenses were kept to a minimum by use of restricted funds wherever possible. The PCC also chose to take over the purchase of Binfield Primary year 6 leavers' Bibles when the St Mark's Education fund closed.

Looking to 2024 and beyond: We are incredibly grateful for the individuals that support the work of this church with gifts both large and small. We cannot operate without the regular unrestricted donations to support our buildings and people. And our ministries run from the donations given from individuals, grants, trusts and businesses as well as through the hard work of the fundraising team. We are also blessed by the support of other fundraisers such as the annual Binfield Scarecrow trail and Binfield 10K run.

That said our costs continue to increase and our budgets rely on an annual increase in income to keep us functioning and maintaining our two beautiful churches and churchyard. This is in addition to the funds needed to continue expanding our ministries to connect people to Jesus, the Bible and others.

And on a personal note, Sarah commented that she would like to thank all those that have helped her in her role - Mandy Bryant for running the payroll and pension scheme, Andrea White as gift aid coordinator, Julie Nixon for inspecting the accounts, Jonathan for doing all the banking, Luke, Sue, John, Hayley, Kate, Daisy and the rest of the PCC for their continued support.

Sarah noted that she is now stepping down from her position as Treasurer and that she is delighted that Gigi Ho has stepped forward as her replacement with the assistance of Pam Foster. Sarah commented that she is as ever humbled by God's answer to prayer and continues to be challenged by God's timing rather than her own deadlines!

There were no questions on the financial reports and adoption of the accounts was passed unanimously.

7. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

The 2023 accounts were reviewed and signed off by Julie Nixon.

Sarah confirmed that Julie Nixon would be happy to act as Independent Examiner one more year for the 2024 accounts to aid the transfer to the new Treasurer.

Sarah proposed Julie Nixon act as Independent Examiner for the 2024 accounts. This was seconded by Luke and those present voted unanimously to approve this.

8. Election of Deanery Synod Members

2024 was not a year for election of Deanery Synod members. No additional nominations for our two current vacancies were received.

9. Election of Lay Members to the PCC

There were eight vacancies for lay members of the PCC; five for three-year terms where those people had come to the end of their term, and additionally two vacancies for two years of service and one for one year of service were still open.

Nominations were received for John Hargreaves and Stuart Wharpshire and they were welcomed back onto the PCC.

Tony Muller and Amanda Downs both chose not to re-stand, and they were thanked for their service.

This leaves 6 vacancies, three for a three year position, two for the two year position and one for the one year term.

10. Rector's Address

Luke mentioned that he'd recently met with a member of another church and they were discussing our Mission Statement (to Connect people with Jesus, the Bible and Others). He wondered how we work towards the mission without getting distracted by the next thing to do or making it too business-like.

Luke reflected on John 5:19: Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

And also Acts 1:7-8: ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Looking at what has past and what is ahead of us, Luke noted that Jesus himself relied on God to know what to do and to say. We too should rely on God and look to him as the head of the church.

"...Church leaders should stop praying, "Lord, bless what I'm doing" and start praying, "Lord, help me to do what you are blessing."

— Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission

Luke closed his address with a prayer.

11. Any Other Business

Luke noted that the only AOB was relevant just to the present PCC members.

He noted that the safeguarding policy had been updated – only to remove reference to John Hargreaves as Churchwarden. He asked the PCC members to approved this update to the policy which was agreed unanimously.

Luke closed the meeting with a prayer after offering thanks to all those who attended for coming.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm with the Grace.