

Minutes of the Annual Meetings of Christ Church Eaton, in the church on Sunday 21 May 2023

The meeting began with a prayer at 11:30am. Patrick Richmond (PR), Vicar, welcomed the 45 people present and introduced the meeting.

A. The Meeting of Parishioners

1. Election of Wardens:

Catherine Jeffries has come to the end of her second 3 year term as Church Warden and so a replacement is required. She was thanked for all her efforts over her time as Warden. Colin McLean has been proposed as church warden and there being no other nominations he was declared elected unopposed, with unanimous applause. Ruth Vaughan was willing to stand again and was elected unopposed to unanimous applause.

B. Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Patrick reminded the congregation that only those on the electoral roll can formally attend the APCM and vote.

1. Apologies were received from:

Matt Wright, Sue and Chris Mitchell, Richard and Andrea Middleton, Hugh Back, Lucy Grubb, Tony and Mary Sword, Gerald and Thelma Cooke, Mike and Steph Brookes.

2. Minutes of the 2022 Meeting:

The Minutes of the APCM held on Sunday 15 May 2022 were **unanimously approved**

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

PR advised that during the year we had adopted a new strapline for use with the church logo, "Here for Christ – Here for you".

4. Vicar's Report and PCC Secretary's Report:

Patrick proposed that the Vicar's Report and the Secretary's Report (included in the Annual Report) should be read and asked if there were any questions. There were none. He thanked Ian Parkes for the Secretary's Report and his work as secretary since last May and invited applause from the congregation.

5. Report on the Revised Electoral Roll:

David Archer summarised the electoral roll which now stands at 141 [153 in 2022]. Sadly, two people had died and 3 had moved away but there had also been a handful of new people joining. PR expressed thanks to David Archer for revising and updating the electoral roll and everyone applauded.

6. Presentation and Approval of Accounts for 2022:

Tony Grubb explained that the examined accounts for 2022 had taken longer to prepare than expected as we have used a new examiner this year. However, this has had the benefit of the accounts being scrutinised with fresh eyes. Key changes were the 400% increase in gas costs, despite the Wardens efforts in managing our use of the heating which helped us to use less gas than last year. He also reported that we were grateful for a £2k grant from the Norfolk Community Foundation towards the cost of heating the church on Mondays for the Baby and Me and Chat over a Cuppa groups. There were higher costs for the Cottage this year in terms of maintenance that was carried out in between tenants. Tony mentioned the new Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) whereby reclaiming Gift Aid was much more streamlined and minimised administration costs. He encouraged the remaining 50% of regular givers still on Direct Debit to switch to the new PGS and said that he could supply the necessary forms.

7. Report on the Financial Affairs of the Parish

PR asked TG if we were regularly spending more money than we were getting in. TG said that the income was down by £4k compared to 2021 when we had had a large donation, but the expenses for 2022 were broadly similar or neutral compared to 2021. He also said that

some of the 2022 expenses were one offs and not to be expected every year. His conclusion was that our finances are good and relatively consistent from year to year.

PR invited questions from the congregation.

Alistair McDougall asked if we had any large expenses hanging over us. TG replied that there were none he was aware of at present, but Ruth Vaughan commented that there was a Quinquennial Inspection due in 2023 which might identify fabric repairs that would need to be addressed. PR suggested that, thanks to Mike Brookes good work as Fabric Officer, the Church fabric was in a good state and there had been no major crises or repairs put off.

Colin McLean asked about the increasing utility costs. TG reiterated that the gas costs had increased by 400% and the electricity by 74%, but that he envisaged them coming down again soon. Although our gas usage is low, the daily standing charge had gone up from £0.93 to £8.88, which ironically disincentives being economical in our use. Jane Darnton asked if we had a green energy provider. It was confirmed that we did and it was via the Church of England Parish Buying scheme. Roger Glenwright asked if we could get another £2k grant from the Norfolk Community Foundation for next year. Charles Bartram asked if we were obliged to use the Parish Buying Scheme for our gas and electricity. TG confirmed that he would look out for any available grants and potentially review our provider. Roger Glenwright proposed thanks to Tony for doing a tough job. All applauded. The annual accounts were **received unanimously**.

8. Church Wardens' Report including the Fabric Report for the Church and Report on Colman Road Parish Hall and Cottage:

PR mentioned that Mike Brookes the Fabric Officer was in hospital and lead a prayer for him.

All these reports are in the Annual Report which had been circulated in advance and taken as read. There was applause for the reports and they were **agreed unanimously**.

9. Presentation of the Church's Terrier and Inventory:

Catherine Jeffries explained that the Terrier and Inventory is a list of all moveable items in the Church, including Sunday school equipment, which runs to 6 pages. The only missing item is a photograph of the Choir but this is not significant as it only has sentimental, not monetary value. The wardens were thanked for all their work.

10. Retirements and presentation of tokens of thanks:

Patrick said that Catherine Jeffries was retiring and expressed great thanks for all her work and commitment as Church Warden over the last six years. She will also step down from the PCC, Deanery Synod and Premises Manager which was a role she took on during the Coronavirus pandemic. As a token of appreciation, a bunch of flowers was presented to Catherine to unanimous applause. Ruth Vaughan said that it had been a pleasure working with Catherine this year and looked forward to working with Colin McLean.

11. Elections and Appointments:

a) Election of members to the Deanery Synod:

Patrick reiterated that Catherine Jeffries is retiring from deanery synod. Vivien Humber, Tony Grubb and John Harrison are standing again. There is one vacancy and Patrick asked if anyone present wanted to volunteer but no one came forward. He thanked those who are continuing and they were **unanimously re-elected**.

b) Election of members to the PCC:

Catherine Jeffries is stepping down as she is retiring as Warden. Caroline Gibbs, who is also the Safeguarding officer, and John Ladd have come to the end of their first 3 year term on the PCC and both were willing to stand again for a second term. Linda Dryburgh-Smith who is a key member of the Chat over a Cuppa group was also willing to stand for election to the PCC for the first time. All three were nominated and elected to the PCC unopposed to

unanimous acclaim. Ian Parkes has come to the end of his second 3-year term on the PCC but said that he was willing to be co-opted back on so he could continue in the role of PCC Secretary.

c) Group Council:

Patrick thanked present members, Vivien Humber, Tong Grubb and David Archer all willing to continue. There is now a vacancy as Catherine Jeffries has retired.

d) Appointment of Sides People

Alistair was thanked for his role in arranging the Sidespersons and read out a list of those who were willing to stand. These are: Jeff Arden, Rowena Atkinson, Charles Bartram, Mike Brookes, Antony Colman, Gerald Cooke, Thelma Cooke, Leisa Devlin, David Edmonds, John Elbro, Roger Glenwright, Vivien Humber, Catherine Jeffries, Ed Kent, Alistair MacDougall, Andrea Middleton, Richard Middleton, Chris Mitchell, Sue Mitchell, Ian Parkes, Robin Quine, Jenny Sawyer, David Scott, Jacky Sutcliffe, Garry Wheatley, Joan Wheatley. They all received great applause and the list would be ratified at the next PCC meeting.

e) Election of Independent Examiner:

Tony Grubb recommended that we should appoint Shelly Clark from Newman & Co, the same accountants as this year, to be the examiner for the 2023 accounts. Patrick proposed this to those present at the meeting and it was **agreed unanimously**.

12. Updates on various matters:

- Patrick apologised for asking people to sort themselves according to age bracket in the service but said it had been a useful exercise to demonstrate the age profile of Church members. The majority of the congregation was over seventy, but on the plus side this meant they were likely to have more time to devote to church activities than younger people. Nonetheless we will keep praying for more people to help out with Sunday school activities to encourage younger families to breathe new life into Christchurch. PR said that children's activities will be reviewed. Roger Glenwright said we need to offer something for toddlers building on the foundation of the Baby and Me group. Catherine Jeffries said that the church building was not particularly safe for toddlers due to several hazards. PR said we need to take account of what other local churches are doing so we don't replicate the offer and tailor our offer so that all age categories are covered across the churches. Ros Wright commented that reaching out is not just attending the 10am service as we have many activities outside of these times. Catherine Richmond explained that as a church we will not be able to do so many things as we are all getting older, Geraldine Verschoor said we need young parents to get involved as well as their children, and Roger Glenwright echoed that young parents can also help get things done.
- PR asked if anyone had noticed the prayers for growth in the services and asked for a show of hands which indicated that many had.
- PR reported that at the Parish Awayday it was suggested use of short silences during services. He also asked for volunteers to write prayers for the Notice Sheet
- PR thanked Ros Wright for her social media activities for the church. John Ladd has taken on a new press officer role but would be grateful for help on the social media side from Ros
- PR thanked for Craft activities, including quilt making and all age craft activities especially at Easter, and social activities, including hospitality to students and singles
- We ran a Living in Love and Faith (LLF) course at Advent and this issue is being discussed further at the General Synod and PR will provide an update afterwards.
- Geraldine Verschoor had arranged a group of about 10-15 people to watch together the television drama called *The Chosen* which they have found very moving and she thanked Anna for helping her to set this up.

13. AOB:

- Alistair Bolt proposed a vote of thanks for Patrick and his family for all they do for the church.
- PR said that if there was any business the congregation wanted considering by the PCC they should advise the PCC Secretary.

14. Closing Prayers and the Grace

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

Signed
Chair

Date