

Parish of Saffron Walden

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held at St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden immediately following the Meeting of the Parishioners on Sunday 7th May 2023

Chairman: Rev'd Jeremy Trew, **Clerk to the meeting:** Anna Martin

Present: David Birchall, Susan Birchall, Jim Butler, Trevor Carver, Gill Caswell, Emily Downing, Mary Downing, Vivian Falk, Bron Ferland, Heather Finch, Richard Freeman, Marion Garvey, Richard Garvey, Gill Gibson, Edward Gildea, Lesley Green, Paula Griffiths, Chris Hall, Judith Hasler, Steve Hasler, David Hoy, Martin Hugall, Kathleen Huey, Barbara James-Gillespie, Charis James-Gillespie, Oli King, Jenny Kirkaldy, Lesley Lancaster, Patrick Li, Michael Lovegrove, Gill Lovegrove, Pam Russell, Roger Manse, Shawn Martin, Pamela Mugliston, Helen O'Neill, Ruby Parsons, John Pickthorne, Simon Potter, Hannah Razzell, Ian Suntherland, Janet Sutherland, Noel Starr, Denis Tindley, Angela Want, Clifford Want, Matt Williamson, Jean Wooderson

A23/1. Confirmation of the Notice convening the Meeting.

The Rector confirmed that notice of the meeting had been properly prepared for all three churches of the Parish.

A23/2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Marisa Baltrock, Rufus Barnes, Rev'd Andy Colebrooke, Hazel Colebrooke, Tessa Hawkes, Tracey Nicholls, and Jan Siewertsen

A23/3 Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 8th May 2022.

The minutes of the APCM held on 8th May 2022, distributed prior to the meeting and online, were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and approved by show of hands.

A23/34. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

A23/5. Report on changes to the Electoral Roll since the previous annual meeting.

Clifford Want, presented the Electoral Roll Officer report. (Paper A23F)

The electoral roll for the parish was revised between 8th and 22nd April 2023 and now includes 289 members, compared with a total of 304 at the time of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting in April 2022, a net reduction of 15.

Statutory notice of the revision was given in St Mary's Saffron Walden, St John's Little Walden and St James, Swards End from 2nd March 2023 and in *The Grapevine*.

The names on the new roll have been displayed in the churches or made available from 16th April 2022 for the correction of errors and omissions.

22 members have died, moved away or asked for their names to be removed and 5 new members have been added to the roll, a net reduction of 17 people in the number before the revision. (This differs from the change since the previous APCM because additions are made throughout the year and in the annual revision but deletions on death only in the annual revision.)

Of these 289 people, 18 also qualify to take part in the annual meeting and proceedings at Little Walden and 36 also qualify to take part in the annual meeting and proceedings at Swards End, because of where they live or worship.

The roll will be open again for new admissions after the APCM.

There were no questions and we thanked Clifford.

A23/6. Annual report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

The report and the accompanying Annual Review have been circulated and there were no questions. The Rector thanked the groups mentioned in the Annual Reports for their contribution to the community.

A23/7. Financial statements of the PCC for the year ending 31st December 2022. (paper A23B)

David Birchall, the treasurer talked through the Treasurer’s report, stating that:

- The Financial Statements for 2022 had been independently examined and signed off by Bentens (a local firm of accountants that we chose to replace Peters Elworthy & Moore) and were approved by the PCC on 15 March 2023.
- Unfortunately, the General Fund suffered another poor year in 2022 and ended the year with a deficit of just under £16k. Income had still not recovered to pre-Covid levels. For example, collections, donations and fees from weddings & funerals are still some way off 2019 levels, but slowly catching up. However, as mentioned last year we had lost a large number of our regular givers through death or moving away in recent years. Planned giving in 2022 was around £25,000 lower than in 2019. The table below clearly shows the decline in the number of regular stewardship givers since Covid & the interregnum.

	As at Dec 2019	As at March 2023
Standing orders	144	118
Numbered envelopes	26	7
Total	170	125

The £16k deficit was despite implementing several cost savings initiatives:

- moving the annual church insurance premium to the Fabric Fund (£11k saving)
- changing auditor from PEM to Bentens (£2k saving)
- reducing Outward giving from £12k to £7k (saving £5k)
- The Christmas Fair had been held again, after a gap of 2 years and was good for the church finances, raising £5k

- £10,000 was raised through special collections and concerts for Ukraine
- The church underwent major works to the Chancel Roof repair (see p12 of the accounts)
- Our free cash reserves, down from £97k at 31/12/21 to £81k at 31/12/22 are still good at present, but we need to reverse the downward trend as soon as possible
- The Restoration Fund benefitted from a £10k grant from the Friends of Essex Churches Trust which was put towards the cost of the Chancel Roof repair.

The Fabric Fund benefitted from a substantial legacy of £50,000. (from Patricia Brobyn)

- The Buildings Development Fund was unused during the year and still has £66k in the bank

David went on to highlight other pages in the Report: details of Income & Expenditure and Fund balances

- Were on pages 11 & 12 give the breakdown of income and expenditure &
- page 15 is probably the most useful page – it shows opening balance, plus income less expenses and closing balance on all the funds

Hard copies of the accounts are available on demand and the accounts are also available to read or download from the church website.

During the time for questions a comment was made that electronic giving using the touch points in church had not been mentioned. David replied that the money raised in this way had been included in the accounts and amounted to about £5,000.

A23/8. Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of the parish. (paper A23C)

The Rector commented on the Churchwarden's report, which had already been circulated, and noted that work on the chancel roof had been completed and that the inventory/terrier had been completed but that the brass plaque from the North chapel still had to be replaced back. The Quinquennial Inspection had taken place and that once that report has been received it seemed likely that the North aisle roof would need replacement within the next five years. The report issued prior to the meeting was taken as read and accepted with thanks.

A23/9. Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.

The report was accepted with thanks. A comment was made that it was difficult to find out where and when Deanery Synod meetings took place. The Rector explained that each church sent representatives, who were allowed to vote at meetings, but that everyone is welcome to attend and listen to these meetings. He agreed that we could publicise them better in future.

A23/10. Rector's Report

The Rector commented on his printed report, which had been circulated before the meeting; nationally it has been suggested that most Christian congregations have lost around a third of their active membership during Covid, representing a decade or more of numerical decline in just two years, and stressed the need for intentional discipleship: a lifestyle reflecting the character of God and offered as an act of worship to God, seeking to reform the world we live in.

He also commented that issues of sexuality [raised during the General Synod's Living in Love and Faith deliberations] seemed to have led to several people leaving the church, although unfortunately the people who had left had not been prepared to talk about their reasons for leaving. Once Church of England guidance has been given there will be further discussions concerning what the outcome will mean for local congregations. The final decision as to how to proceed will rest with individual clergy, as it does in the case of re-marrying divorcees. He commented that leaving one church and joining another was not a reasonable solution since the Church of God is one church, and some people who feel strongly about these issues will leave whichever future course is chosen.

A23/101. Annual Review

The Annual Review leaflet, containing reports from various church groups, had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Rector thanked all those who had undertaken roles in the church represented by all the reports

A23/12. Appointment of tellers.

As we did not anticipate a contested election we agreed that it would not be necessary to appoint tellers.

A23/13. Election of four representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod for a three-year term

In 2023, all Synod members have to stand down and then be re-elected for the next 3 year term. Nominations had been received for:

- i. Anna Martin nominated by Simon Potter and seconded by Caroline Goulder
- ii. Shawn Martin nominated by Anna Martin and seconded by Chris Hall

There being no further nominations, the above representatives were approved by show of hands. Upcoming focus at Deanery Synod will include new allocations of parish share.

A23/14. Election of six representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council for three years

Nominations had been received as below:

- i. Lisa Brooke nominated for PCC Membership by Mike Felgate and Simon Potter
- ii. Denis Tindley nominated for PCC Membership by Gillian Caswell and Pamela Russell
- iii. Robin O'Neill nominated for PCC Membership by Lisa Brooke and Richard Garvey
- iv. Stephen Robert Hasler nominated for PCC membership by Bill Rose and Patrick Li
- v. David Birchall nominated for PCC membership by Gillian Caswell and Martin Hugall

The above representatives were elected by a show of hands with thanks to everyone who served for the last three years whether standing down or continuing to serve.

**Also Election of 2 representatives of the laity to the PCC to fill casual vacancies for a 2 year term
And 2 outstanding vacancies for a 2 year term (there were no nominations)**

A23/15. Notification of Sidesmen (welcomers)

The prospective new welcomers were welcomed and a list of the welcomers read out:

Armon-Jones Anthony	Garvey Marion	Martin Shawn
Baltrock Marissa	Green Lesley	Martin Anna
Barnes Margaret	Hallinan Jenny	Mugliston Pamela
Barnes Rufus	Hasler Judith	Nguyen Hoang Auh Thu Bella
Bennett Kathryn	Hasler Steve	Norris Carol
Brace Gillian	Huddlestone Keith	Oelman Petronella
Carver Trevor (Paddy)	Huddlestone Jo	Palmer Sonia
Daker Julie	Kirkaldy Jenny	Parsons Ruby
Downham Aileen	Knight Chris	Pilsbury Tessa
Downing Mary	Knight Jane	Richards Libby
Falk Vivian	Li Patrick WARDEN	Robinson Andrew
Flaxman Barbara	Linney Wendy	Smith Julia
Forster Alison	Lovegrove Gill	Stanton David
Forster John	Marsh Sandra	Troughton Tricia
Gardner Gerald		Want Clifford
Gardner Mary		Wrigley Freda
Garvey Richard		Winter Paula

A point of order was raised that Welcomers can only be elected by the PCC meeting.

A23/16. Appointment of an auditor to the PCC.

David Birchall proposed that Bentens be reappointed as independent examiners this year. The meeting expressed itself content by show of hands.

A23/17. Any other business.

There was no other business.

A23/18. Vote of thanks

Jeremy thanked everyone who contributed to the work described in all the reports referred to in the meeting, which represent a huge amount of work in our community, including behind the scenes. He encouraged people to read the reports and pray for the different groups in our community.

A23/17. Closing prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer