

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH – WEST MALLING

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held

on Wednesday 21 October 2020, 7:30pm

using Zoom conferencing

PRESENT: Revd. David Green (Chairman), Members of the PCC and parishioners were in attendance.

1. Reading from Scripture and opening prayer

1.1. The Chairman thanked all for attending. The meeting began with a reading from scripture and opening prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. Apologies for absence from members of the congregation were acknowledged.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 March 2019

3.1. Approval as a correct record

3.1.1. The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 March 2019 were proposed as a correct record by David Day, seconded by Isobel Macdonald and unanimously approved.

3.2. Matters arising not covered by rest of the agenda

3.2.1. There were no matters raised.

4. Resolution relating to Churchwardens Measure 2001

4.1.1. John Musker has served as Churchwarden for more than 6 years in a row; if he is to stand then we have to waive the rule limiting terms of service for Churchwardens. All present, were happy and unanimously approved for John to return as Churchwarden for 2020.

5. Election of Church Wardens

5.1. There were two nominations for Churchwarden for John Musker & Clare Innes. John and Clare were declared duly elected and thanked for doing the role for 2019 and continuing to do so in the coming year. Thanks was given for doing the role through 2019 and for long service, and for support for the Covid-19 lockdown period in particular.

6. Vestry Charities

6.1. The Ecclesiastical Charity of Sir Robert Brett

6.1.1. Nick Crutchfield gave an overview of the Ecclesiastical Charity of Sir Robert Brett. This Church charity was set up in 1620 by Sir Robert Brett with the purpose of paying for Brett sermons during Lent each year. For 2019, there has been an income of £114, with no expenditure at all. The balance stands at £800.

6.1.2. The Chairman reported that Lent was heavily disrupted by the lockdown, although carried on with worship online. As a result, it had not really been possible to offer Brett lectures this year.

6.1.3. No questions were raised.

6.2. Relief in Need

6.2.1. Isobel Macdonald reported that, in 2019, a variety of fundraising events had been held. The balance in the fund stands at just under £2000. We had also made a number of small grants during the year to individuals and families in need.

6.2.2. No questions were raised.

6.3. The Malling Memorial Institute

6.3.1. The Malling Memorial Institute was discussed. The congregation were reminded that this is not a Church charity but it has a Christian basis and the Vicar and Churchwardens are invited, but not required, to be trustees. At present the Vicar and both Churchwardens are trustees and David is the chairman.

6.3.2. Nick Crutchfield gave an update. £10,000 was given away in 2019. Income comes from renting out rooms at the Clout Institute building in the High Street. More money is available to give away. If there is anybody who would wish to apply, then Becky Clifford has the application forms.

6.3.3. Nick reported that about £10,000 of income was lost due to lockdown. Approximately £10,000 had been received from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council as a Covid-relief grant, which filled the gap.

6.3.4. The Chairman stated that in terms of what we can give grants to with MMI; it can be for grants for children such as school trips, scouting activities, Duke of Edinburgh, or the Cricket Club, camping gear. The congregation were asked if anyone hears of an organisation that works with children and young people that are looking to raise money, or an individual or young child for their physical, emotional or spiritual improvement that need a grant in the area, then applications are welcome.

6.3.5. No questions raised.

7. Any Other Business

7.1.1. There was no other business.

7.1.2. The meeting ended at 19:48

Signed (Chairman):

Date:

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH – WEST MALLING

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held on Wednesday 21 October 2020, 7:30pm

using Zoom conferencing

Action points are marked with a grey background.

PRESENT: Revd. David Green (Chairman), the PCC and parishioners were in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence

1.1. Apologies received from members of the congregation were acknowledged.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held 17 March 2019

2.1. Approval as a correct record

2.1.1. The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 March 2019 were proposed as a correct record by Yvonne Smyth, seconded by John Musker and unanimously approved.

2.2. Matters arising not covered by rest of the agenda

2.2.1. There were no matters raised.

3. Closing nomination for PCC

3.1. Rob Hancock and Jaki Musker were thanked for their representation for Deanery Synod over the last three years. Nominations for Deanery Synod were for John Musker and Jaki Musker. Proposed by Christie Ransom and Gemma Coupland for Jaki Musker and John Musker proposed by Gilly Dixon and Cherry Plummer. John and Jaki were duly elected.

3.2. Isobel Macdonald and Gail Crutchfield have served back-to-back terms and were thanked for their service on the PCC. There were two nominations for PCC, Yvonne Smyth to stand again, proposed by Isobel Macdonald and Linda Kemp and for Lesley Bays, proposed by Gail Crutchfield and Vicky Richardson.

3.3. It was noted that there were four vacancies on the PCC available. Yvonne Smyth and Lesley Bays were declared members of the PCC and welcomed and thanked for being willing to play a part in the life of the church in this way.

4. The Reports

4.1. Electoral Roll

4.1.1. The Electoral Roll was revised by the time the lockdown began. By year end there were 96 parishioners (risen by 2 since 2018) on the Ecclesiastical Electoral Roll. The average weekly attendance at St Mary's was 52 adults and 9 children (up slightly from the averages from 2018). All other statistics can be found in the annual report which can be picked up in church or on the website.

4.2 Financial Report

4.2.1 The Chairman reported on Finance in the absence of the Treasurer, John Denny. Headlines that in 2019, income was £83,788, which was almost identical to the 2018 figure of £83,546. The Chairman reported on St Gabriel's and St Mary's joint income of £111,745.

4.2.2 In terms of expenditure, the resources expended in total was £87,494, a small deficit on the year as a whole for St Mary's. For St Gabriel's, they were in the black for their

figures, so overall the Parish is in the black despite St Marys running at a slight deficit last year. PCC had been looking at this in the last year and had made decisions to revise our expenditure and reduce the amount we give the diocese for Parish offer. For 2020, those changes should mean we are projected to be in the black.

- 4.2.3 St Mary's voluntary income (which is the life blood of our financial church life) fell to £53, 517 in 2019. Down about £4,000 compared to 2018.
- 4.2.4 Alongside that, we did spend quite a lot on the Capital Project in architects fees, engineers, the total expenditure was £82,000. Necessary to get things in the right place. These figures are kept separate from the other expenditure running of the church and are not reflected in the figures already reported to APCM.
- 4.2.5 Lesley Bays commented that the Gift Aid is so much lower than previously. Lesley was of the view that the Gift Aid should be a lot higher than £4,170. The Chairman, suggested that subject to confirmation with the Treasurer, there was a lot of Gift Aid which rolled in 2018 and made 2019 higher. The Chairman stated that he will speak to the Treasurer to confirm.
- 4.2.6 Gemma Coupland thanked the PCC for the work has done with regards to renegotiating the Parish Share this year, and appreciates that everyone wants to pay the maximum. Gemma was conscious that there is a concern for the capital and operational expenditure of the Diocese. The Chairman stated that we would like to know we are getting value for money from the Diocese and had raised that point with them on a number of occasions.
- 4.2.7 Canon Alan Vousden commented that he believes that the Parish Offer should be paid but we have to be realistic in the age that we are living in. We will find that if the more parishes that are not paying their Parish Offer there may be a loss in ministry there. Viability of churches is now considered as a key factor in pastoral reorganisation.
- 4.2.8 *John Denny (Treasurer) joined at 8:06 pm.* The Chairman welcomed John Denny to PCC and asked to comment about our current situation for 2019.
- 4.2.9 The Treasurer stated that if we were trying to strip out what we would have spent on the capital project, it would pretty much be breakeven in terms of ins and outs on all other things. So in summary, not looking too bad, especially compared to where we have been from previous years. We have forecasted a surplus for this year. Even if that surplus is eroded for now, then we may be on course to be break-even in 2020.
- 4.2.10 In regard to Gift Aid, the Treasurer confirmed that the money from the Gift Aid is in but it arrived too late to be in the accounts, and so shows in our 2020 figures.
- 4.2.11 No further questions on the finances or Parish Share.
- 4.2.12 APCM were happy to unanimously agree the financial report for 2019.

4.3 Churchwardens Report

- 4.3.1 John Musker updated APCM for 2019. Stated that all in all it was a quiet year. The heating is not on at the moment. The boiler was maintained and a new contract in place. DSL are the contractors. There are a few things to report, the balcony electrics needed rewiring. The roof on the South and North sides was cleared and the debris removed. The drains are cleared so the rain can run away. John said that the battle against the swifts has been held at bay. The Chairman commented that we have had two years 'swift-free' inside the building.
- 4.3.2 The Chairman added that in 2019 the PCC agreed a new Churchyard Policy. A document that helps to govern the way in which the churchyard is run and decisions made in

regard to grave spaces, benches in the churchyard, rights of burial. A little bit easier for the parish if there is a consistent policy applied.

4.3.3 No questions were raised.

4.4 Deanery Synod Report (Presented by Jaki and Rob)

4.4.1 Jaki Musker briefed the congregation. Deanery Synod had three meetings in 2019 across the parishes in the deanery. Largely about the pastoral reorganisation and what we are seeing now is that stage coming to fruition. The Chairman stated that 2019 was the year that Wateringbury joined Mereworth and West Peckham in our cluster. Also Pat Dickin left in 2019 and St Mary's are sorry to see her leave and wish her well.

4.5 Diocesan Synod Report (Presented by David)

4.5.1 The Chairman did not have much to report other than the Parish Offer as recorded above. The Indicative Offer has been formalised and have given each parish what they think is a fair offer, this is currently benchmarked at about £66,000. The Chairman believes that there are a number of issues with that system in terms of how it is calculated. Ultimately, it is an *indicative* offer and whether we take their suggestion is entirely up to us.

4.5.2 Pauline Wilkinson asked what if we do not pay the full indicative offer? The Chairman stated that this will leave some big financial holes in the Diocese's accounts. In a way everybody pays eventually. For example, parishes that consistently don't pay what's expected are at risk of pastoral reorganisation, in which they may be grouped together with more parishes so that their one Vicar is covering more churches.

4.6 Churches Together in Malling

4.6.1 Isobel Macdonald presented to the congregation. All meetings have been on Zoom. There has not been a lot going on because everywhere is currently closed.

4.6.2 We also noted that, in 2019, Offham Methodist Church was closed. It was very sad and the Chairman noted how moving he had found it to be present at their final service to represent St Mary's and St Michael's. Through St Michael's Church we have invited our Methodist friends to join our congregation, which some have done. Others are attending Methodist churches further afield.

5 Elections and appointments

5.2 Election of PCC

5.2.1 As above

5.3 Appointment of independent examiner

5.3.1 The Chairman proposed that Alan Gibbins should continue to be appointed as independent examiner for 2020. APCM unanimously approved the appointment of independent examiner. Alan Gibbins was thanked for his support.

6 Questions and open discussion on matters relating to the life of the church

6.2.1 Gail Crutchfield asked if there were any more thoughts about opening the church in the week at the moment during the Pandemic. The Chairman responded that if the church is keen to leave the building open, we really need someone there to manage that, and we could establish a rota to have the church open. Gail Crutchfield was of the view that she was sure a rota could be created and a notice put up in the church for the times when they were going. The Chairman said he would very much support that.

6.2.2 Nick mentioned the Capital Project and asked for a brief update. The Chairman

responded to say that there has not been much progress since the lockdown. The Diocese furloughed most of their staff and so, even if we had produced plans and paperwork, there was no-one in their offices to receive it.

- 6.2.3 Members of the sub-committee were asked for any comments. Isobel Macdonald noted the Government VAT reclaim scheme is currently scheduled to stop at the end of this year. She also expressed concern over having to possibly close the church for a year for the capital project, when we have already been closed due to the pandemic.
- 6.2.4 The Chairman stated that it is difficult to plan when we don't know what the future will hold with Coronavirus. We are not sure if a vaccine is going to be available and if it is going to be effective. So in terms of looking at a worst-case scenario, we have to consider what our mission and ministry would look like going forward. The Chairman is cautious about spending lots of money on a building now until we know more confidently that we will be able to use it as intended
- 6.2.5 He also noted the demands on his time are different. The Chairman stated that it currently takes about four days out of his six days each week to prepare online worship and the phone line, as well as the services in church. Then if you factor in a funeral, or school duties, he often runs out of time each week for any capital project work.
- 6.2.6 The Chairman added that one aspect is that he is really conscious of at the moment is the children (and their parents). They cannot come to the Vicarage as not legally allowed due to the coronavirus restrictions. All-Age services could possibly restart again in December at the start of the Advent. But the urgency for the extension has gone up since that is the space in which we could accommodate the children of the parish.
- 6.2.7 Canon Alan Vousden was of the view that Coronavirus is going to be with us always, and we have got to move forward in faith. This is a worthwhile project and lots have put a lot of time and investment into it. Push forward on what could be sensible.
- 6.2.8 Lesley Bays - the school have solutions such as bubbles, so when the extension is built, it may work for the children. The Chairman noted that is true but that the school won't thank us if our bubble(s) do not align with their carefully organised bubbles for the school and thus risk cross-contamination of groups.
- 6.2.9 The Chairman would be happy to see this being pushed forward but it cannot be the Vicar that drives it unfortunately, as there is only so many hours in the day. The Project Group and wider congregation will need to play more of an active role.
- 6.2.10 No further comments raised.

7 Thank you!

- 7.2.1 The Chairman thanked all for their time and stated that the discussions raised tonight do not need to finish because the APCM has finished. These are important questions which should be further discussed.

8 Any Other Business

- 8.2.1 There was no other business.

9 Closing prayer

The meeting finished at 20.58

Signed (Chairman):

Date: