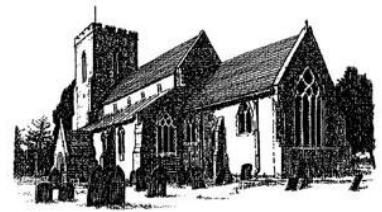


St. Mary's Church, Wavendon

Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting – Monday 28th March, 2022, at St. Mary's Church, at 7.30pm.



Present: Matt Trendall (Chair), Alise Trendall, Mike and Sheila Anderson, Ann Beaton, Colin & Pam Baxter, Christine and Brian Norwood, Roger Hancock, Elizabeth Prockter, Adrian Rowe, Jonathan Bailey, Trish Rosewell, Oscar & Cristina Amenos.

1. Opening devotions and welcome from the Chair

Matt welcomed everyone and said thank you for wearing masks tonight. He opened the meeting with prayers, reading Joshua 1: 6 – 9: be strong and courageous wherever you go. He spoke about the history of Joseph's family over hundreds of years with many years of oppression and many years wandering in the desert. Matt said this Easter would be our first in-person Easter services in three years and in some ways our experiences of the pandemic paralleled the experiences of the people of Israel. Our exit from the church in particular and hardship and changes we had to navigate. The Lord gave Joshua two very sensible pieces of advice;

1. Keep the Book of Laws always on your lips - be careful – obey the Word of God.
2. The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. This has been reinforced in the last two years: God has been with us: his presence and faithful assurance that He promises to be with us wherever we go.

Matt said we don't know what the shape of our church will look like – it will in some way be different: the last two years have changed all of us. We are not seeking to go back to normal whatever that looks like but the Lord promises to be with us wherever we go. Let us hold fast to these two promises. Matt then led the meeting in prayer.

2. Election of churchwardens (meeting of parishioners)

Matt said that the Church of England has one of our sponsoring oddities in that anyone in our community is able to vote on the election of the churchwardens.

Matt said he was delighted that Roger and Jonathan were willing to stand again and paid a personal tribute to them both. They are very capable and very practical people with a lot of expertise and were also servant hearted. Matt said they were a very great help to him.

Roger and Jonathan were proposed by Pam Baxter and seconded by Mike Anderson and elected unanimously.

3. Apologies for Absence: Susan and Robin Dynes, Melvyn Letts, Lisa Rowe, Lianne Tyers, Gemma Wilks

4. Minutes of the virtual Annual Church Meeting of 22nd March, 2021

These have been uploaded onto the church website. It was proposed by Roger Hancock, seconded by Jonathan Bailey and accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising:

a. Update on Walton LEP's registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation:

At last year's meeting it was noted that we were looking to register our LEP as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Church of England, Baptist, URC, Roman Catholic and Methodist denominations are involved. Some years ago we took legal advice on the Partnership and the lawyer questioned the basis for our existence and becoming a CIO is the best vehicle for registering as a charity and gives us the best protection. The process is in hand. The Governing Bodies of the denominations have agreed a new constitution. We had hoped to register our LEP by March last year but the pandemic made this impossible and the Charities Commission has extended the

deadline by ten years. However we are going ahead to register as soon as possible. The documents are ready. Watling Valley Partnership agreed to be the 'guinea pig' for registering and they put their application in about a month ago. We are taking advice on the TUPE transfer for Revd. Ruth Gookey's employment and the transfer of the Twinflower house which the LEP own. Neither of these should present any problem.

b. Dissolution of the Milton Keynes Mission Partnership

This organisation which looked after the LEP's in Milton Keynes is being wound up. The final resolution will be at 7.00pm tomorrow evening. There have been financial pressures on the denominations with a dramatic shortfall in funds. Two members of staff have been made redundant. The money in the Mission Partnership will be used to pay the redundancy payments and any left over will be given back to the LEP's. It is hoped to restart something representing all churches in MK: something created by the churches in MK for the churches in MK.

The closure of the Mission Partnership has been a painful process as both of the employees of the Mission Partnership worship in our churches.

c. Garden of Rest and new Container Shed

This has been delayed for two years because of the pandemic. There had been no news on the grant but Matt has just heard that this is because the Parish Council are hoping to give us more grant money to enable a better job to be made of strengthening the boundary between our neighbours and the church. Matt said that the work must be done this year because of space or we will have to do something else.

Matt gave a big THANK YOU to Roger for organising the new container shed which was delivered last week. Roger said the base is extremely heavy. He thought six people would be able to move it but he is now doubtful and we will need more men than this. The shed is easy to assemble once the base is in position. When the shed is erected Roger said we can then erect trellis to screen off the shed from the rest of the churchyard. We have invested in new tools and it will be good to have somewhere secure to store them plus articles that are stored in church at the moment.

6. Reports and Updates

Matt thanked Roger and Jonathan for their reports. The report says it all.

a. Fabric (upkeep of the church):

Roger said that damp had been identified in the latest Quinquennial Inspection and this has been monitored on a monthly basis: notes are taken of the readings and so far no increase in the level of damp has been noted. Roger said considering the age of the church one would expect some damp. Death watch beetle: this had also been mentioned in the QI. Roger had laid tissue paper down but there had been no movement from that.

Roger said that the mower is away having a new belt fitted. When it is back we will continue with our mowing scheme. Roger gave his thanks to Jonathan for all his assistance.

Matt said that we would be undertaking a major project with repair work on the bells. Trish is looking at this and we hoped to complete the work in the summer. We have weddings at the beginning and end of the year so need to keep our bells in good order!

Matt said that Adrian had begun streaming our services and he thanked him very much for doing this for us. He had done a successful pilot on the World Day of Prayer service and he is going to stream a wedding in two weeks time. The bridegroom is Kenyan and this will enable his relatives in Kenya to see his wedding in real time. Adrian has bought a camera and may need to buy another one. Adrian will cost this out. There is an increasing need to use technology in church and it is important to have it. Adrian said it was exciting but nerve racking! The wedding will be a private viewing and this will be his first streaming on this basis. Matt said the sound quality is excellent but the cabling is expensive.

b. Financial Position:

Mike reported that effectively we had managed quite well this year: we had £9,500 in the bank at the beginning of the year and £4,500 at the end. Our reserves gained about £6,000 and this wiped out our deficit .We didn't have to furlough Matt! Lots of things have gone down: fuel bills for instance have been smaller because the church hasn't been used but some things still have had to be paid such as insurance but we have done well and have a promising future.

Mike said during the last two years he would like to congratulate Matt and the members of the congregation for their giving.

Mike said he is handing over the Treasurer's role in a healthy situation. He apologised that there were no formal accounts. Mike's successor is doing this.

Matt gave a HUGE VOTE OF THANKS to Mike who is stepping down and Ann Marie Butler is taking over. Mike has been doing the job for over 15 years and it could be said to be a thankless task when things aren't too good! The last three or four years have been good but he still has to take cash to the bank! HUGE THANKS TO MIKE AND SHEILA.

Matt said that Ann Marie is going to take over as Treasurer and Jonty has kindly agreed to look after the accounts. We are looking for an independent examiner.

c. Changes to Church Membership

There has been a slight fall. We now have 71 full members and 17 Associate members (four adults and thirteen children). Matt said a lot of people were connecting with us and he thought there would be a quite noticeable increase in membership next year.

Anglican	54
Methodist	7
URC	0
Baptist	1
Roman Catholic	3
Ecumenical	1
Other: Salvation Army/Pentecostal/FIEC/Orthodox	4
<i>Non-Anglican</i>	16
Not stated	1
TOTAL	71

Our 'official' Electoral Roll is 58 – this is to avoid double counting members which we report to other denominations.

What's Happening Around MK

Matt reported that the churches in Milton Keynes set up a new charity to look after refugees: Welcome MK. It was formed after the Afghan crisis and is based in Newport Pagnell. It is now focussing on Ukraine. Anyone who lives in Milton Keynes can volunteer to help. Matt said there are still strong initiatives staffed by Christians, such as Winter Night Shelter and St. Mark's Meals, and we should give thanks although the reasons for the need for them are sad.

News around the Partnership: as a Partnership there was a slight surplus in funds and given the unique situation of the last two years we give thanks to God and to our congregations that we have been able to pay our shares in full. We have even pledged to donate an extra £4,500 to support some of the other parishes in Milton Keynes who are struggling financially due to the pandemic. We are fortunate for instance that we don't rely on renting out premises for income.

7. Elections and appointments: Treasurer, Secretary, Church Stewards, Responsible Adult, Deanery Synod Reps and WCP link posts:

Matt paid tribute and was grateful to our members for all the work they do:

Trish Rosewell for the huge amount of time she gives to St. Mary's Church School and as our Communications Steward and Tower Captain

Susan Dynes as our other school link and the Responsible Adult

Ann Beaton for taking the minutes and being mission steward.
Debbie Chaplin as our Health & Safety Officer
Anthony Tull and Jonathan Bailey as our Deanery Synod Reps

Looking around the meeting, everyone was involved in some way – often many ways!:

Colin as our organist and with Pam organising our Church Quizzes

Elizabeth for doing the flowers

Ann H. for looking after our pastoral care work

Chris and Brian for the coffee mornings

Oscar and Cristina for their outreach on the new estates

Sheila for supporting coffee mornings by baking cakes

We don't have an official property steward but we are in good hands with the expertise of our church wardens. Many of our congregation do several things and we give thanks to everyone for their work on behalf of our church.

Matt said he would like to add one or two further members to the Stewards so we had eight or nine members rather than seven. He doesn't need to invent job descriptions for that!

Appointment of Treasurer: Mike said a few words on how he had come to volunteer for the role and how he had enjoyed working with friends at our church. He was particularly pleased that he was retiring with the church in an excellent financial position. This had not always been the case as there were always ups and downs in church finances. Matt gave a personal thank you to Mike for everything he had done and the meeting gave him a VERY BIG THANK YOU for all the work he had undertaken on their behalf. Matt presented Mike with a small gift as a token of our sincere appreciation for all the work he had done for us.

Matt told the meeting that Ann-Marie Butler had volunteered to become our Treasurer.

It was proposed by Ann Hough, seconded by Elizabeth Prockter and carried unanimously that Trish, Susan, Ann and Ann-Marie be appointed as Stewards.

It was proposed by Roger Hancock, seconded by Christine Norwood, and carried unanimously that those people undertaking the wider representative roles be appointed.

8. **Safeguarding updates – including re-approval of Policy and Safeguarding Officer**

Matt said that Rachael Jenkins from Christ the King was our Safeguarding Officer representing the Partnership. She has performed the role for seven years and keeps us up-to-date with everything. Jo Yates looks after St. Mary's DBS checks, Susan Dynes is our Responsible Adult, and Matt thanked them all for the good work they do.

Matt said our policy would be reviewed and upgraded in eighteen months time. The full policy document is 60 pages long and is available on request.

It was proposed by Trish Rosewell, seconded by Brian Norwood and carried unanimously that our Safeguarding Policy be readopted and that Rachael be reappointed as our Safeguarding Officer and Susan as our Responsible Adult.

9. **Rector's Reflections (Annual Report):**

Matt presented a summary of his report, which is available separately on the church website. He gave thanks to everyone: it had been an incredibly hard two years for many of us with personal changes as well as practical ones. When we shut our doors two years ago we didn't know we would still be living with the pandemic but for all the changes so many good things have come out of it. Our on-line service is watched by many people and we have been blessed with new people joining our church in person. We have a new community to look after and whilst we were sorry that the appointment of a Pioneer Minister didn't materialise we now have Oscar and Cristina doing outreach work on the new estate and the momentum that we lost due to the pandemic is restarting. There is excitement about the coming year and what it holds. We give Glory to God and ask for His grace for this coming year. Matt said he would like to thank Alise for all she does for him and for the church – he couldn't do his job without her.

10. Q & A : Discussion and Feedback

Matt said that Indira's marvellous effort of walking to church from her home every day for one year until her 85th birthday had been a wonderful achievement and had raised more than £3,000 with gift aid. A platform for repairs had already been purchased with this money.

Matt said that we had purchased a new shed to house the outdoor equipment and also items in church which were not used on a regular basis. It was a fully secure building. The cost was £2,500. The sons of the late George and June Whitaker had very kindly donated £2,000 towards the cost and the remaining amount would come from the money raised by Indira.

We were also having significant work done on the bells this year. We are applying for grants but if we do not receive any money from these we will be able to use the remaining monies from Indira's fund for this. We hope that we will be able to ring in the Queen's Jubilee.

Matt said that plans were being made for the Jubilee weekend. This is a wonderful opportunity for the old and new communities to come together. We are hosting a cream tea in the Rectory garden on the Thursday from 2.30pm to 4.30pm and holding a special Civic Service at 3.00pm on the Sunday but there are also a number of events being planned over the weekend such as picnics, lighting of a Beacon on Thursday evening, sports on Saturday morning and a cake competition.

A question was raised about the Pioneer Minister for ten years for the new estate. Matt explained that we had applied for a grant in 2016 from the Diocese of Oxford but our application had been sent by them to the Strategic Development Fund at central Church of England in the first half of 2020. Over the course of the four years the financial input from us had changed on a regular basis and the Partnership voted unanimously to withdraw after the amount requested from the Partnership changed significantly once again. Matt said it was a painful decision but the right thing to do and was a unanimous decision of the Partnership Council. We had been liberated from a huge financial burden and we would have been chronically overstretched in many ways. We have a lot of great people in the parish. Matt said he prayed that God would be putting people in place and then Oscar and Cristina arrive.

In reply to a question about advertising our service times, Matt said that we would be putting the banner back up outside the church with our service times on it and having a general look at our notice boards. There was information about the school on one of the porch notice boards and the school had said that we could put our information on their notice board too.

Colin said that a lot of people had complimented him on his quiet organ playing during Communion. He said that he will put a notepad on the organ and if people would like to write a favourite hymn down he would be delighted to play it at this time.

On behalf of us all, Ann Hough thanked Matt very much for all his hard work on our behalf. He is a great blessing to us. Matt said our church was an exciting place to be and he was very grateful for the love and support from everyone, especially with the personal challenges he and Alise had faced. Matt said that most of our city was surrounded by green space and was looking beautiful. Roger Fennemore is trying to establish a linear park on the old golf course which would be amazing and is looking to make an offer to the developer as the Duke of Bedford estate may be putting in an application for 3,000 homes on the land past Cranfield Road.

Matt said that he was making people aware of the different ways to give. The credit card machine is definitely being used but donations via Good Box are hard to track.

Matt thanked everyone for coming and we finished by saying The Grace together. The meeting closed at 20.48.