

St. Mary's Church, Wavendon

Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting

Monday 31st March 2025 at 7.30pm, at St. Mary's Church

PRESENT: Matt Trendall (Chair), Philip Grace, Adrian & Lisa Rowe, Cristina & Oscar Barraza, Edwin Emery, Trish Rosewell, Ann Beaton, Elizabeth Proctor, Susan Tame, Ann Marie Butler, Lianne Tyers, Jonathan Bailey, Gill & Michael Ramsbotham, Roger & Braco Hancock, Melvyn Letts, Alison Drury, Colin & Pam Baxter, Alise Trendall, Stephen Holland, Cindy Ho.

APOLOGIES: Chris & Brian Norwood, Brenda Human, Birgitte Grace, Ann Hough, Susan & Robin Dynes, Karen Crossley, Christine Langford, Fay Grech-Marguerat, Julian Drury,

1. Opening devotions and welcome from the Chair

Matt welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer and short reflection on Psalm 84. In these challenging times, we take our faith out into the community, knowing that, equipped with friendship and love, we "go from strength to strength".

2. Election of churchwardens (meeting of parishioners)

Matt reminded the meeting that under Church of England rules anyone in our community is able to vote on the election of the churchwardens.

We were blessed to have Roger and Jonathan in the roles and the meeting gave them a huge vote of thanks for their unstinting work. Both were willing to stand for the coming year.

Roger and Jonathan were proposed by Elizabeth Prockter and seconded by Ann Beaton and elected unanimously.

3. Apologies for absence

See above.

4. Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting of 25 March 2024, and any matters arising not covered by the agenda

The minutes have been uploaded onto the church website. These were accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Alise Trendall. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey.

5. Reports and Updates

Reports are available on the church website: <https://www.stmaryswavendon.co.uk/annual-general-meeting/>

a) Churchwardens' report

Jonathan highlighted some main points.

- The remedial work on the coping stones which unexpectedly fell down, and the successful fundraising to cover the cost.
- The largely completed Garden of Rest which is now looking splendid.
- Other areas of the churchyard that need attention including deterioration of the wall facing the road, a review of the trees in the churchyard that have grown too big and are, or will shortly be, in a dangerous condition, some stones on the tower south side that have fallen away.
- His and Roger's sincere thanks to so many members of the congregation. Over 40 members help out in various essential roles. Many more offers of help have been received and these

are being worked through.

- A plea for some extra help with setting up communion which will ease the pressure during absences.

Matt thanked Jonathan and Roger for their devotion to duty and the meeting unanimously agreed to their continuing as church wardens.

Regarding his upcoming sabbatical, Matt said a new Stewards Council would be convened shortly.

b) Finance Report and 2024 Accounts

- Ann Marie reported that the finances had a slight surplus and were looking their healthiest in a long time.
- There had been increases in planned giving and in the weekly offerings.
- Our gas contract is now being reviewed annually as this is more advantageous than the previous two-year deals.
- Our World Vision donation is now sponsoring a three-year-old girl from Kenya.
- The report does not include the roof repairs, for which we are waiting for a £5k contribution from the Bucks Historic Churches Trust

Ann Marie was thanked for her great work producing the accounts. Roger proposed and Jonathan seconded accepting the unaudited accounts (subject to independent examination). Approved unanimously.

c) Electoral Roll renewal

Matt reported that this is likely to increase over the coming year. Details will be available at our Partnership AGM in April (which also functions as our Annual Parochial Church Meeting).

d) Around the Partnership

- There are four congregations in the Partnership. Ian is still in a temporary role at Christ the King but the church is going through the appointment process.
- Matt reported that we have good developing relations with our Catholic brethren.
- The new Area Dean for MK, Paul Oxley, is also doing a great job thus far.

6. Safeguarding updates

Matt reported that there no serious issues. The policy is working well but its emphasis and profile will increase as part of his responsibilities. We need to appoint a safeguarding lead at St Mary's to ease Matt's workload. A 'How to Respond' leaflet was being produced. There was also the need to appoint a 'Responsible Person' should a child or other vulnerable person need someone to talk to.

The meeting agreed that safeguarding was everyone's responsibility, and it was vital that any concern, however raised, should be dealt with promptly to avoid it becoming an issue later on.

Re-appointing our Partnership Safeguarding Officer Rachael Jenkins: Proposed by Lianne and seconded by Lisa. Agreed unanimously.

Approving the Partnership Safeguarding Policy was proposed by Jonathan and seconded by Lianne. Agreed unanimously. This can be viewed here: <https://www.wcpmk.co.uk/safeguarding/>

7. Elections and Appointments

Matt thanked everyone who volunteered their time and skills filling official roles. Trish received a round of applause for her school role.

Lisa, Birgitte, Edwin, Cindy, Cristina and Stephen had agreed to join the Stewards Council. All were welcomed. Melvyn Letts proposed and Alise Trendall seconded, confirming the new appointments. Agreed unanimously.

Four roles remained unfilled: Safeguarding lead.

Second school governor (a four-year role).

Third representative on the Deanery Synod.

A Health and Safety Officer to assist the churchwardens.

8. Rector's Reflection (Annual Report)

Matt highlighted the fact that the church is flourishing – glory to God. He drew attention to two main areas.

i) Church finances. These have significantly improved which led to a modest surplus in 2024 (our first since 2019). Reassuringly, this has been fuelled by consistent congregational giving, rather than unexpected windfalls, which allows us to have a financially stable forecast for the coming year. However, if we are to grow further, investment will be needed in people, technology and energy - our gas boiler will need replacing in the next 5-10 years.

ii) Skills audit. This generated a lot of responses and progress is being made on turning all the good offers of help into practical outcomes. Matt's longer-term vision is to build teams of people focusing on specific elements of church life – creative, practical, hospitality, mission, etc.

Average Sunday attendance grew over the year from 63 on 2023 to 72 in 2024, and has averaged 83 since the beginning of February. Growth is both a wonderful blessing and a humbling responsibility. Our simple model of active worship, a community of friends reaching out into the community will require constant maintenance. We must be prepared for change at all levels in our society and culture. Matt's focus will be on developing the practical components needed to enable our church to grow.

Matt thanked Colin for his musical contribution, Melvyn, Birgitte, Lisa, Lianne, Rev. Philip and Rev. Alison for leading services and everyone else who contributed so essentially to our weekly services – the flowers, the cleaning, welcoming attendees, children's church, preparing communion - as well as a personal thank you to Alise for her constant support.

9. Discussion

The meeting broke into groups to think about one highlight from the past year and one hope for the coming year.

10. Any other Business

There was no other business.

12. Closing Devotions

The meeting concluded with a prayer from Matt and everyone saying the grace together.