



ST NICHOLAS BATHAMPTON

MINUTES

of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens and of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at 5.00 pm in the Miller Room

Both meetings were chaired by the Rector, Jonty Frith (JF), who welcomed everyone and opened in prayer.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens (open to all resident in the parish or on the church Electoral Roll)

1. JF thanked Anna Young and Paul Bryant for their service and support as churchwardens, and he gave them each a token gift of appreciation.
2. **Election of churchwardens 2023-24.** There being no other nominations received, Anna and Paul were re-appointed unopposed.
3. **Recognition of stewards.** JF expressed his gratitude for the work of the stewards and to Jane Buckley for co-ordinating the rota. The stewards during 2022 were as follow: Jane Buckley, Tim and Anne-Marie Conn, Robin and Angela Donald, Tim and Penny Laver, Andy Lloyd-Williams, Sylvia Perry, Nigel Shepherd, Ian White, Ian and Jan Williams. There is need for additional volunteers; please contact Jane. [*Secretary's note: Tim and Anne-Marie Conn have withdrawn from the rota for 2023.*]
4. JF led a prayer for the churchwardens.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (all welcome, but voting open only to those on the church Electoral Roll; * denotes a non-voting attendee)

Present:

Paul Bryant	Pippa Dowsett*	Ian Lewis*	Nigel White
Jane Buckley	Hannah Findlay	Linda Lewis*	Helen Williams
Anne-Marie Conn	Becky Frith	Natalie Mills	Ian Williams
Tim Conn	Jonty Frith*	Mike Peddar	Jan Williams
Hilary Crellin*	Rachel Howlett*	Sylvia Perry	Anna Young
Angela Donald	Peter Hunt	Nigel Shepherd	
Robin Donald	Tim Laver	Annette White	

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from Molly and Phil Edge, Carl and Louise Fullaway, Andy and Peter Lloyd-Williams, Steve Magee, Julia Peddar, and Ian and Margaret White.

2. **Minutes of the 2022 APCM** were unanimously approved by all who had been present (proposed Angela Donald, seconded Jane Buckley).

As a matter arising, Sylvia Perry had enquired about the printed monthly newsheet that had been suggested (item 6) to improve church communications for the benefit of members who did not use email. JF responded that this had not happened because no one had volunteered to compile it from the weekly update emails; he reminded us of his previous suggestion that anyone who was aware of someone not receiving emails could print them out and pass a copy to that person. Natalie Mills commented that list of non-email-users was available.

3. **Reports:**

- a. **Electoral Roll:** the new Electoral Roll Officer (Natalie Mills) reported that there were 4 new members, 2 removed, and 3 who had died, giving a total of 93, of whom 66 were living in the parish and 28 outside; there are 36 men and 57 women.
- b. **Parish Review:** the booklet was taken as read.
- c. **Financial Statements 2022:** the Treasurer (Rita Warboys) was thanked for her work. In response to a question from Sylvia Perry, JF confirmed that the church continues to receive an annual grant of

£1000 from the Parish Council towards upkeep of the churchyard. He commented that, while the overall position was strong and that the Lord provides, our financial reserves would not suffice to cover increased staff expenditure commitments for very long unless there were increased giving.

- d. **Fabric** (see pages 23-24 of the Review): noted with thanks to Fabric Committee for their work.
- e. **Deanery Synod** (pages 9-10): noted.

4. **Elections:**

- a. **Appointment of independent examiner** for 2023 accounts: the meeting unanimously approved Andrew Morrison's reappointment (proposed Jane Buckley, seconded Anna Young).
- b. **Parochial Church Council:** in addition to *ex officio* members (*viz.* Rector, churchwardens, and representatives on deanery synod and diocesan synod), our size our allows us to have nine elected members of PCC, of whom normally one-third are elected each year for a 3-year term. This year three members had completed their terms and a further three were standing down early. Six nominations had been received for these six vacancies, with differing lengths of term (drawn by lots) being proposed to restore the normal pattern. The following people were elected (or re-elected) unopposed:
 - Sally Magee (1 year, to 2024; non-voting until October 2023)
 - Nigel Shepherd (2 years, to 2025)
 - Helen Williams (2 years, to 2025)
 - Ann-Marie Conn (3 years, to 2026)
 - Hannah Findlay (3 years, to 2026, 2nd election)
 - Peter Hunt (3 years, to 2026)
- c. **Deanery Synod:** each being willing to stand for the 2023-26 period, Tim Laver and Anna Young were re-elected unopposed.

5. **Rector's Comments**

- While emphasising that the Lord sees the part played by each person all the time in the life of the church, JF thanked Albie Beresford for his technical assistance as a DoE volunteer, Pippa Dowsett for her transitional administrative work, Ian Williams for his service as PCC Secretary, and Becky Frith for her long-standing work with Junior Church and Mini-Club.
- In view of perceived benefits arising from enforced relocation of services into the Miller Room due to the lack of heating in the church building, the possibility of doing this every January will be considered by PCC, and comments to JF from anyone are invited.
- While noting the danger of loving things - including our own church building - more than people, JF stressed the need for both determination and money to enable the church heating project to progress.
- The proposed church family camping weekend has been postponed until 2024.
- Jonty encouraged us all to welcome, as they are, each person who comes into our church as both uniquely made in God's image and sharing our common need as sinful people for God's grace and forgiveness through repentance and faith, so that we may help one another with the next step on the journey into Christ; Jesus loves us where we are now, but he loves us too much to leave us there.

6. **Any Other Business / Questions.**

- a. Sylvia Perry had requested clarification of the job descriptions and hours of the new staff members. Natalie Mills (Administrator) confirmed that her 10 hours/week consist of 9:30 – 17:30 Thursday in the church office plus two hours working from home to cover emails; this could increase from September with additional duties; arrangements for out-of-office phone contact are being resolved. In line with the responsibilities listed in the job advertisement, Rachel Howlett (Children's and Families' Minister) stated that, so far, she has been getting to know families and children, developing relations with the school and Mini-Club, and is aiming to start an after-school Story Club. Although Rachel is being encouraged to see her role as for the whole Benefice, St Mary's is not contributing to her salary at present. St Mary's does contribute to Natalie's salary

(along with office costs and the Rector's expenses) in proportion to the size of its worshipping community.

b. ***Blessings of same-sex marriages.***

- JF outlined his point of view that General Synod's approval of the bishops' proposed liturgy for blessings of same-sex marriages was a major departure from the Church of England's doctrine of marriage and from an understanding of the Bible as the unchanging Word of God, whereas the vast majority of the wider Anglican world was staying faithful to traditional biblical teaching.
- JF expressed his great desire to remain within the Church of England, and explained that his loyalty (and, he believes, our church's loyalty) to the Anglican Communion, and to the historic Anglican understanding of the faith, should be still greater than our loyalty to the institution of the Church of England, because he believes the former to represent our loyalty to the Lord Jesus who loved us and gave himself for us.
- JF will therefore insist on remaining within the Church of England without theological compromise, and he is part of a movement pressing the bishops for provision of a way for this to be possible even if General Synod goes ahead with welcoming their proposals.
- Tim Conn raised the question of the possibility of being forced out of the Church of England, and therefore whether it was worth investing in our parish church building and in particular its heating system. JF replied that he thought losing the building was an unlikely scenario, and that the responsible thing to do in our present situation was to continue our present commitment to the parish and good stewardship of the building entrusted to us.
- Sylvia Perry suggested that we are in a parallel situation to that of women priests a few years ago; JF responded that the same-sex-marriage issue was very different as it concerned the message of Jesus and salvation.
- Robin Donald commented that it would be helpful if JF's statement could be made available as a written document.

7. ***Date of next meeting:*** Sunday 14th April 2024.

8. JF led a ***closing prayer.*** The meeting ended at 18:30.