

PARISH OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, WOKINGHAM

WITH ST NICHOLAS'S, EMMBROOK

Minutes of the annual meeting of parishioners held in the Parish Rooms
on Sunday 28 April 2024 at 5pm.

Father Richard opened with words of welcome and a prayer.

Present

Father Richard Lamey in the Chair and forty five parishioners.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from John Albinson, Ann Battersby, Peter Baker, Sarah Baker, Jane Clark, Louise Cole, Liz Gallagher, Diana Quick, Becca Lamey, Cara Smart, John Sutton, Jean Vaughan.

Minutes of Meeting Held on 23 April 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2023 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

Election of Churchwardens

Fr Richard announced that there were two posts of Churchwarden and two nomination had been received for Peter Wells and David Ruddock. In the absence of any other nominations, he declared them duly elected as Churchwarden, to general applause, and he thanked Peter and David for their willingness to continue to serve in that role until the next APCM.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.10pm.

Lesley Ruddock

Chairman.....

Secretary

Date.....

PARISH OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, WOKINGHAM
WITH ST NICHOLAS'S, EMMBROOK
Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in the Parish Rooms
on 28 April 2024

Present:

Father Richard Lamey in the Chair and 45 parishioners.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from John Albinson, Ann Battersby, Peter Baker, Sarah Baker, Jane Clark, Louise Cole, Liz Gallagher, Diana Quick, Becca Lamey, Cara Smart, John Sutton, Jean Vaughan.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 April 2023 were accepted as an accurate record and signed.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Election of Pro-Wardens of St Nicholas

There were two nominations for Pro-Warden. Mrs Liz Gallagher and Mrs Fiona Albinson having been duly proposed and seconded, and there being no other nominations, Fr Richard declared them elected as Pro-Wardens, to general applause. Fr Richard thanked both for their willingness to serve again.

5. Appointment of Deputy Wardens

Fr Richard explained that Mary Cassidy and Pippa Sutton are both willing to continue in their roles as Deputy Wardens. Pippa Sutton will work with the Churchwardens across the whole range of their work, while Mary Cassidy will focus on mission, spirituality and community. The meeting agreed to continue with these appointments, which will be ratified by the PCC. The PCC will appoint both to Standing Committee and will co-opt Mary to PCC.

6. Changes in the Electoral Roll since the last meeting

Fr Richard thanked Mrs Teri Austen for her hard work in doing this important job. The new Roll now stands at 231 as against 227 on 26 March 2023. The names of those removed and added are detailed on p13 of the *Parish Reports*. Teri advised the meeting that a full review of the Electoral Roll will be necessary in 2025. This occurs every 6 years.

7. Election of Parochial Church Councillors

Fr Richard explained that 6 members of the PCC had come to the end of their term of office, and there were two existing vacancies. Andy Clark, Sue Davenport and Pippa Sutton were duly re-elected to serve for 3 years and Joanna Brown, Tony Eggleston and Richard Turner were also elected to serve for 3 years. There are still 2 vacancies.

8. Election of Deanery Synod Reps

Sally Dowling offered to fill the vacancy for Deanery Synod and she was duly elected.

9. Appointment of Sidespersons

Whilst the appointment of sidespeople is now the responsibility of the PCC, Fr Richard emphasised the importance of this role to make people feel safe and welcomed and he thanked the teams at St Paul's and St Nick's for all that they had done and continued to do.

At St Paul's these are Susanna Allen, Peter Baker, Sarah Baker, Chris Barker, Alice Buddin, Jane Creasy, Gilly Crew, Stuart Fairhead, Christine Field, Trish Gatland, Jo Gulliford, Alan Harrison, Rhoda Hart, Elizabeth Hunter, Chris Piper, Fiona Ross, Frances Self, Georgina Spencer, Nigel Traylor, Diana Tuck, Penny Wallace.

At St Nick's these are Fiona Albinson, Paul Armitage, Ann Battersby, Sally Dowling, Liz Gallagher, Lynne Judge, Susannah Riley and Jean Vaughan.

10. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Financial Statements for 2023

The Treasurer, Mr Llewellyn Austen, presented the statutory financial accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023, reminding all that the figures referred to both St Paul's and St Nicholas' churches. He then followed this up with an explanation of the various Funds, restricted and unrestricted, which are maintained by the church.

The presentation started with an overview of General Fund parish finances, specifically unrestricted income and expenditure which had resulted in a small surplus of £1,704, compared with the previous year's deficit of £418.

Various items of income were then illustrated using a pie chart, and this was supplemented with a detailed explanation of their key sources. Of particular interest was income from planned giving and gift aid which, together, accounted for 71% of general fund receipts. It was pleasing to note that fund-raising re-started during the year and also the increasing use being made of

contactless giving: the card reader and giving via text in particular.

A similar résumé of expenditure was then presented, the accompanying pie chart illustrating the various items of expense. As before, the largest payment was Parish Share which amounted to just over £80,700 or 48% of total expenditure; this was once again paid in full and on time. Lyn Austen then gave a concise report on the remaining items of expense, drawing particular attention to Diocesan fees, church running, parish administration, and service and ministry costs. He also highlighted the church's continuing commitment to support our mission partners - USPG, Homestart and Soulscape – as well as payments made during the year to the Red Cross for relief in Turkey, Syria, Morocco, Libya, Israel and Gaza.

The various Restricted Funds were then reviewed and a more detailed analysis given relating to Lighting, Restoration and Churchyard Funds with an emphasis of the costs encountered in removing the ancient oak tree. In particular he summarised the cash available for overall restoration which amounted to £151,652 at the end of the year, including a residual balance of £5,500 in the Lucky Numbers Fund which is also available for church restoration.

Turning to 2024, the Treasurer noted that his General Fund budget was constantly under review, reflecting the regular changes in the domestic economy. He was pleased to report that the introduction of the Parish Giving Scheme has gone well and that over 70% of regular givers have now adopted this modern and popular method of giving to their church. Nevertheless, known costs increases including gas, parish share and other items indicated that the likely outcome would be a deficit of around £12,000 in the year. However, he was pleased to confirm that, following his appeal to the parish, he has received a number of pledges of increased income as well as some quite substantial donations which suggest that the forecast deficit might be reduced by the year end.

Finally Lyn Austen extended thanks once again to Reg Morton for managing the Parish Fees account, to the sidespeople who have assisted in recording the Sunday morning collections at each church, to Stuart Fairhead for running the Stewardship process and claiming our monthly gift aid, to Tony Roberts and Liz Gallagher for looking after the St Nicholas' finances and banking their weekly collections, to Louise and Vanessa in the parish office for their continuing support, and finally to Jason Searancke for his very thorough and detailed examination of the accounts.

All those in attendance accepted the accounts as presented, and the Treasurer was thanked for his work in preparing them.

11. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Lyn Austen stated that Jason Searancke has agreed to continue to be the examiner for 2024. Jason was formally proposed by Lyn Austen, seconded by Rhoda Hart ALL IN FAVOUR, no abstentions, and no votes against.

Lyn Austen has already thanked him for his work on this year's accounts.

12. Deanery Synod Report

Fr Richard encouraged people to read this report on p17 of the *Parish Reports*. There were no questions.

13. Churchwardens' Report on Fabric and Inventory 2023

Fr Richard referred everyone to p6 of the *Parish Reports*. David Ruddock highlighted the appointment of Peter Preston as our architect. David has been impressed by Peter Preston's love of our church building, which is a building of great importance, although expensive to maintain, and we should be proud of it. Peter Preston has proposed a phased programme of work including a feasibility study for making the church a more attractive and useable space. The Churchwardens' Report was accepted and there were no further questions or comments.

14. Parish Rooms Trust

The 2023 accounts for the Parish Rooms Trust were included in the APCM documents. There were no questions on the accounts.

Rhoda Hart wished to record formally her thanks to Jason Searancke for examining these accounts, for his willingness to continue in 2024 and to Vanessa Hemmi for all her hard work in the office.

Rhoda also explained that the Trust has funds available to support people in the community up to the age of 25 but that applications for grants were not readily forthcoming. After paying the running costs of the Parish Rooms, half the surplus is retained to cover improvements to the building and half goes into the grants fund. The Trust is keen to make more grants but a lot of what we used to cover is now covered by government funding.

Rhoda was thanked for her leadership and oversight of the Parish Rooms Trust.

15. Rector's Report

Fr Richard opened by saying that 2023 was a memorable and successful year, particularly for the quality of worship and the social events. He asked those present to think of particular things in the life of our Parish that we are thankful for which gave rise to the following list:

- Holy Week with the ordinands and shoe cleaning.
- Quiet days
- Choir events where the support is much appreciated
- Choir – the strength of talent
- Our children
- Our Churchwardens and their knowledge
- Walking Group
- Coffee & Chat

- Social Committee and all their hard work
- Choral Evensongs and the Sermon Series
- Livestream
- Work in school and care homes
- St Nicholas
- Tithings Groups

Fr Richard said that God keeps calling us on and inspiring us – not many churches have grown as we have since Covid. We should all have a quiet confidence in what we are doing.

St Paul’s Parish has a strong clergy and lay team which is appreciated by the Archdeacon who will continue to support us through what we think, and hope, will be a shortish vacancy.

Fr Richard was thanked wholeheartedly for his leadership in bringing us to where we are now.

16. Any Other Business

Alan Harrison proposed that in future the Parish Reports should include a report from Social Committee. This was agreed.

Andy Clark announced to the meeting that he is setting up further lectures in the Parish Rooms covering aspects of Climate Change – the first two will be Chris Merchant on 6th June and Ruth Gibbs of Oxfam on 18th July.

At 6.25pm the meeting ended with prayer and the Grace.

Lesley Ruddock
Secretary

Chairman.....
Date.....