

Christ Church with St. Marys, Old Town, Swindon

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church meeting held on Sunday 30th April 2023 at 11.30am in Christ Church.

1. Opening Prayer and Worship

Simon led prayers, including for those preparing for confirmation, and welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Attendance and apologies

Apologies were noted for Andrew Yeoward, Ian Farr, Anthony and Moira Slack. 31 people were noted on the attendance sheet which is attached to the file copy of the minutes.

Annual Vestry Meeting

3. To elect two Church Wardens

Jim D'Avila and Nitin Shinde were nominated. There were no further nominations. Simon led the meeting in prayer for them both.

Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Jim D'Avila	Janet French	Simon Giles
Nitin Shinde	Norma McKemey	Ailsa Palmer

Resolved: The congregation elects the two persons named above to serve as Church Wardens. All Assented.

Simon Stevenette advised the meeting that Nitin is offering himself to be a self-supporting minister within the Church of England, and we expect him to begin training in September 2023. If this happens then he will need to step down from his role as Church Warden.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

4. To approve the minutes of the APCM held on the 24th April 2022. Resolution was proposed by Sue Clack and seconded by Margaret Williams.

Resolved: The congregation approves the minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2022.

5. Matters arising from the 2022 APCM – none not already actioned.

6. To approve the report of the Electoral Roll officer.

Alison Harris has stood down as Electoral Roll Officer with effect from this APCM.

It was reported that there are 169 names on the roll. This is an increase of 15 on last year. Since the 2022 APCM, one person has asked to be removed from the roll due to relocating; 4 members of the roll have died, and 20 new people have joined the roll.

Simon said that the increase in the number of names on the roll is encouraging; however, there are people in the congregation who are not yet on the roll, or who have not been at church

recently, so the staff team will look out for them pastorally. We would hope by next year to have 200 people on the roll.

7. **To notify other items not covered on the agenda below – none.**

8. **To elect:**

a) **Up to 3 members of Deanery Synod.**

The Deanery Synod report was handed out at the meeting.

Anne Grainger is willing to continue on Deanery Synod and both she and Anthony Slack have been nominated. Anne was proposed by Ailsa Palmer and seconded by Norma McKemey; Anthony was proposed by Margaret Williams and seconded by Ursula Hudd. Simon advised that Anthony will be also the new Foundation Governor at King William Street School, working alongside Helen Hartnell in the first instance. There were no further nominations.

Simon Stevenette advised that the appointment of Anne and Anthony still leaves one vacancy for Christ Church on Deanery Synod, and he would like us to be fully represented. Simon would like to invite Rose Earle to also serve on Deanery Synod and asked the meeting for consent to approach her. All assented

The meeting approved the election of Anne & Anthony. Simon prayed for them and for the Deanery.

b) **Up to 8 PCC members**

Vacancies arise because members of the PCC have stepped down or because they have reached the end of their 3 years' term. This year Sean Bolger, Rose Earle and Mike Frost Foster have reached the end of their three-year term; Kevin Penfold and Hannah Feeny have stepped down one year ahead of their term finishing. Anne Macmillan has stepped down as LLM representative. They were all warmly thanked for their hard work and for their years of service on the PCC.

Simon then gave a brief summary of those who have been nominated to PCC.

Resolved: The congregation elects those named below to serve as members for the PCC. All assented.

Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
James Davies-Spratt	Janet French	Daniel Pitt
Ian Farr	Ailsa Palmer	Stephen Cox
Behbood Mozaffari	Daniel Pitt	Stephen Grosvenor
Paul Ng	Janet French	Daniel Pitt
Ailsa Palmer	Norma McKemey	Daphne Hardwick

Frances Poel	Rosemary Williams	Marian Smith
Alison Tremlett	Ailsa Palmer	Michael Palmer
Genny Williams (LLM representative)	Norma McKemey	Ailsa Palmer
Andrew Yeoward	Anne Grainger	Daphne Hardwick

The 2023/2024 PCC now consists of:

Ex-Officio: Revd. Simon Stevenette, Revd. Norma McKemey, Genny Williams (Lay Minister representative), Nitin Shinde (Church Warden), Jim D’Avila (Church Warden), Anne Grainger (Deanery Synod representative), Anthony Slack (Deanery Synod representative), Paul Ng (*Hon. Treasurer proposed for election at the PCC meeting following the APCM*), Anne Farrow (Chair of the Partnership of Churches).

Ex-officio but non-voting members: Carol Simmons (Parish Administrator/Clerk and PCC Secretary); Chris Smith (CCSOM); Alex Davies-Spratt (Verger).

Elected members serving:

Till APCM 2024: Sue Clack

Till APCM 2025: Simon Giles

Till APCM 2026: James Davies-Spratt, Ian Farr, Behbood Mozaffari, Paul Ng, Ailsa Palmer, Frances Poel, Alison Tremlett, Genny Williams, Andrew Yeoward.

Secretary’s note: at the PCC meeting following this APCM, Paul Ng was elected to serve as Hon. Treasurer.

9. a) To endorse the appointment of sidespeople:

Daniel Pitt continues to coordinate the Welcomers/Side People’s rota, alongside the Churchwardens. We have six sidespeople:

Simon Giles
 Anne Grainger
 Helen Hartnell
 Jenny Selwood
 Daniel Pitt
 Angela Wirdnam

The meeting endorsed the above people, and they were thanked for their work.

a) Independent Examiners for 2023/24

Resolved: The congregation affirmed the appointment of Monahan’s as Independent Examiners for the 2023 accounts – this was proposed by Daphne Hardwick and seconded by Anne Grainger. All assented.

10. To receive and approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2022

Simon Stevenette said he hopes we are all encouraged by what is happening here at Christ Church with St Mary's and introduced the first five pages of the Annual Report – 'how we have met our goals in 2022. He said we have many links with children and young people through schools and Messy Church, but we feel pain at how few children attend church on Sundays.

No questions were raised on this part of the report.

Daniel Pitt then presented the Annual Accounts on behalf of Andrew Yeoward who was away. Daniel is co-chair of the Finance and Governance Group which is one of 6 groups that report to the PCC – the 7th being the ECO group which is chaired by Anne Grainger.

On behalf of PCC, Daniel thanked Andrew for all his work as our treasurer for the past 5 years, and for his PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Daniel also thanked Stephen Grosvenor, our gift aid secretary who looks after our giving schemes. Most of our regular giving is now via the Parish Giving Scheme. Daniel also thanked the congregation for their continued generosity. The cashless giving station at the west end of Christ Church has had an impact on donations.

Andrew's presentation covers 4 areas:

- Income in 2022
- Expenditure in 2022
- Total Assets (balance sheet)
- Underlying situation in 2023

Income in 2022

Daniel explained that finances at Christ Church with St Mary's and the Community Centre @ Christ Church are **necessarily fairly** complicated. He made the below points:

- At the end of 2022 we had seven employees; with the appointment of Steve Cox on 1st March as our Communications Officer we now have 8 employees.
- 2021 was a year of recovery from the pandemic. In 2021 our surplus was £ 57,000 and this was mostly due to the job retention scheme grant we received from the Government (which we had not assumed or included in the budget) and the increase in value of our stocks and shares by £ 27,000 in 2021.
- In 2022 – our income was £307,000. There was no job retentions scheme grant from the Government. A **significant** increase in letting fees also brought our income up to slightly more than in 2021.
- Actual income from the church was slightly down on budget. Daniel feels a stewardship campaign would be beneficial.
- Income from the Community Centre was significantly more than our budget; this is largely due to the excellent leadership skills of Chris Smith and Jenny Hatter in building up bookings, for which Daniel expressed thanks. The annual Beer Festival and Jazz and Soul festival, though expensive to hold, generate a significant amount of money.

Expenditure in 2022

In 2022, expenditure was £ 355,954. On a like for like comparison with 2021 (i.e., including stock market gains/losses) whereas there was a surplus of £57,010 for 2021, the net loss for 2022 was £ 67,000. The net loss in 2022 was for the following reasons:

- (i) Stock market assets lost £ 19,000 in value,**
- (ii) We had an Operations budget deficit of £18,000 (includes additional maintenance spend on buildings including Nos 31 and 32 Cricklade Street, and energy cost increases),**
- (iii) We spent £15,000 on Development & Renewal projects (such as a new humidifier for the Christ Church organ, refurbishment of St Mary's Church and safety upgrades to the electrical systems in both churches and the Community Centre),**
- (iv) Depreciation of the value of the Community Centre, at 2% per annum, equates to £ 15,000.**

Daniel extended grateful thanks to all who have given and hopefully will in the future. He reassured the meeting that financial controls are subject to careful scrutiny by the Finance and Governance Group and the PCC.

Pie Charts

Daniel then showed our income and expenditure in pie charts. Daniel highlighted the below points:

Income

- Income from giving was £95,330.
- We received £84,248 from Community Centre bookings.
- Income from fundraising amounted to £45,944. However, the net profit from fundraising was much less than this, being close to a very significant £11,000, this being after subtracting the £ 35,098 costs of fundraising, as shown in the expenditure pie chart. The costs of fundraising were largely but not exclusively for the Beer & Jazz festivals. Whilst these events involve large costs, and take a lot of organising, but they also provide very significant returns, so are worth it.
- Income from our properties was £32,019 – this includes our 2/3 share of the income from 121 Victoria Road which we own together with the Parish of Swindon New Town, and the two Cricklade Street cottages.
- Income from car parking amounted to £15,800, which is significant. Daniel thanked Angela Ruck for her work in the management of the selling of the car park permits.
- We receive £12,800 per annum from the Community Centre booking service – this system was designed by Paul Grosvenor and is now in use at around 18 other community centres. Training other centres' staff to use the system generated income for us.
- Fees income from weddings and funerals was £ 9,931.
- We received £4k from renewable energy generated by the solar panels on the roof – we are technically advanced building.

Expenditure

We gave £105,000 to the Bristol Diocese in 2022 as our Parish Share and are giving the same amount in 2023.

The second largest item of expenditure was on salaries, £95,878.

The third largest item was Church and Community Centre costs, £45,480.

Other items as shown on the pie chart.

Balance sheet

- Our net assets (fixed and current) have decreased from £1,126,210, to £1,058,278 as at 31 December 2022. We are more fortunate than many churches. This reduction corresponds to the excess of expenditure over income, as discussed earlier.
- Cash in bank amounts to £136k but this is not all readily available cash.
- Reserves are healthy: the Church has £62K – consistent with our reserves policy. The community centre has £39939 versus a policy of £40,000, again healthy.

Underlying situation in 2023

- 2023 will continue to be a challenging year, with high running costs and lower giving set to remain in place. We are encouraging the parish giving scheme.
- The Community Centre has been a great support to us over the years and its activities including hall & church lettings and fundraising events such as the Beer Festival and Jazz Festival consistently delivers a surplus, even though in recent years this has not been relied upon in the budget setting.
- For that reason, the PCC decided to invest further in these activities by reorganizing the management of the site. This includes making the parish administrator full-time and recruiting a part-time development/communications officer. This means we have set a negative budget for 2023, but fully expect to receive financial benefits from this in the coming months and years, so that our church community can continue to pursue our mission and serve the whole Old Town community. We are giving the diocese 105k as parish share and hope to budget favourably for this in 2024.
- We are very grateful to our givers but also to our volunteers, without whom the site would not function.

Simon Stevenette mentioned that there was very little legacy income in 2022 and encouraged people to consider Christ Church with St Mary's in their will, and to encourage others to do the same. He then thanked Daniel for his excellent report and asked if there were any questions. Pat Tomlinson asked if we know which companies our stock and shares are invested in, and if they are 'green' companies. Daniel confirmed that we do.

There were no further questions. Acceptance of the 2022 accounts was proposed by Ailsa Palmer and seconded by Janet French. All assented. **Resolved.**

11. To receive & note the Parish Safeguarding Report

The report was distributed and duly noted. Simon Stevenette thanked the Safeguarding Team for their important work.

12. To receive questions from the floor

There were no questions raised.

13. Vicar's report: Future plans, priorities and strategy

- Simon began his report by saying that over a 12-month period he had conducted 4 weddings – those of his own 3 sons and Bethany Simmons (Carol's daughter) to Calum Wells – Bethany has grown up in Christ Church – and one funeral – that of his dearly loved father. This has been a poignant year for him.
- Simon would characterise the Church of England in three words – 'busy, anxious, divided'. Last week we hosted a Bristol Diocese seminar which brought out the equation: 'difference + tension = conflict'. Simon asked the meeting 'if you were asked to characterise this community, what would you come up with?'
- In April, Christ Church hosted the SALOS production of 'Godspell', a series of 6 excellent Lent Talks and the Jazz and Soul Festival which featured an excellent Gospel Choir. Simon commented that for the latter, people were dancing in the church aisles and there was much joy in the church.
- In May we have a busy weekend to celebrate the Coronation and then the 10th Beer & Cider Festival the following weekend. On 21st May we will take 9 or 10 candidates to the Swindon Deanery Confirmation Service in St Mary's Purton; those confirmed, along with people confirmed at Bath Road Methodist Church on the same day, will be welcomed into membership of the Old Town Partnership on 28th May at a special Messy Church celebration for the Partnership Birthday. Canon John Cunningham from Holy Rood Roman Catholic Church will preach in Christ Church at Choral Evenson on 21st May – he is moving on from Holy Rood Church soon.
- Simon asked, 'are you proud to be part of this Christian community?' 'Are you proud of what God is doing here?'
- Simon then spoke of the paper produced by Liz Day on 'What is the DNA of Christ Church'. The paper was distributed. This had previously been presented to both the Staff Team and PCC, both of whom are very excited about it. Simon stressed that no one in the Church of England is really happy with the current situation; however, DNA is not what we do, but who we are. He asked, 'what do we aspire to be?' and offered that in a world where there is so much anxiety and division, we should strive not to be a busy church, but one where people can thrive and become their full selves. He reminded us of Phil Mansfield's question that we have been challenged with over the past five or six years 'how then shall I live?'
- Simon asked the meeting if we are willing to affirm this call to faith. He would want Christ Church with St Mary's to be known not as 'busy; but as **calm, peaceful, hopeful, ecumenical, bridge-building, contemplative, joyful and energising**. He stressed that we need to be careful in how we communicate with one another. We need to have more silence/stillness in worship and to be a place where people thrive. He asked us to be quiet and to contemplate Liz's paper, and asked if the congregation would affirm this as the DNA we can aspire to be.
- Simon then asked:
 - Are you proud to be part of the Ecumenical partnership of Old Town?
 - What is the Spirit saying to you as we consider this?
 - What does the Lord require of you to ask justly, love mercy and walk humbly?

The DNA journey was affirmed with one abstention. Simon thanked Liz for her work on this.

Simon ended by asking the congregation to be his critical friend as we make this journey together, and to be his 'critical friends'.

14. To set a provisional date for the next APCM (must be held no later than 31st May 2024)

- A provisional date for the next APCM was set for Sunday 28th April 2024.

15. Any other business: none

16. The meeting closed with prayer at 12.41pm