



Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on
Monday 22nd April 2024 at 7.30pm in Fleet Parish Community Centre

1. Opening Prayers

The Revd. Mark Hayton opened the meeting with prayers. He welcomed everyone to the annual meeting.

2. Present

Revd. Mark Hayton (Chairman), Nick Doran (PCC Secretary).

Jane Allen, Paul Allen, Andrea Barley, Mike Benham, Brian Biffin, Joan Blower, Tricia Brooker, Sheila Buller, Richard Buller, Sue Butterfield, Jean Carr, Jan Cole, Linda Dart, Kate Dashwood, Richard Dexter, Mike Ford, Rosemary Goodrich, Mary Goodson, Sally Hastings, Jean Hawkins, Tina Hayton, Claire Holt, Mike Huddie, Sue Huddie, Antony Jones, Jane Jones, Jeremy Keep, Judy Keep, Diane Kitts, Graham Kitts, Barbara Lyons, Barbara Main, Kerensa Pearson, Anna Saunders, Mary Simpson, Anne Smith, Robert Smith, Brian Tant, Barry Taylor, Susan Taylor, Jenny Thorne, Angela Turnbull, Chris Waller, Elizabeth Waller, Ruth Waller, Dawn Ward, Richard Wigram, Anne Williamson, Elly Wilson, Roger Woodcock and Juliet Worthington.

2. Apologies

Joan Bell, Sue Benham, Anne Biffin, Amy Canham, Dick Fawn, Carolyn Ford, Joan Hall, Lynda Hix, Rosemary Jones, Karen Kite, Anne Richardson, Erica Taylor, Peter Ward, Bill Wickenden, Kate Wickenden, Geoff Wickes, Rod Williamson and Yvonne Wyatt.

3. Minutes of the last Vestry Meeting

The Annual Vestry Meeting Minutes of Monday 24th April 2023 were approved by the meeting. Proposed by Jean Carr, seconded by Mike Ford, agreed by all present.

4. Matters arising therefrom

None

5. Election of Church Wardens

Revd. Mark Hayton thanked Jenny Thorne for her amazingly dedicated service over the past year as the only Churchwarden in the Parish. He also thanked Paul Allen and Antony Jones for their work at P&J in the absence of a Warden.

Two nominations had been received for Churchwarden:

Jennifer Thorne – proposed by Rod Williamson, seconded by Anne Williamson
Robert Smith – proposed by Mike Ford, seconded by Kerensa Pearson

There being no other nominations, the Vicar declared Jennifer Thorne and Robert Smith to be duly elected as Churchwardens of the Parish of Fleet.

The Churchwarden’s Meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed.....



Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on
Monday 22nd April 2024 at 7.40pm in Fleet Parish Community Centre

1. Present and Apologies

As Vestry meeting.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

*The APCM Minutes of Monday 24th April 2023 were approved by the meeting.
Proposed by Jenny Thorne, seconded by Mike Ford, agreed by all present.*

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Election of PCC Representatives

The Vicar thanked all PCC members for their service over the past year. Under the 'three year rule' two members are stepping down (Mike Benham and Linda Dart) and one had left during the year (Sarah Leedham).

One nomination had been received:

	Proposed	Seconded
Claire Holt	Jane Jones	Mary Goodson

There being no further nominations, the Vicar declared that Claire Holt was duly elected to the PCC.

The new list of Elected PCC Members is as follows:

PCC Member	Remaining Term of Office
Claire Holt	3 years
Amy Canham	2 years
Jean Carr	2 years
Jan Cole	2 years
Nick Doran	2 years
Jean Hawkins	2 years
Dawn Ward	1 year
Peter Ward	1 year

5. Financial Report

The treasurer (Mike Ford) gave the following report to the meeting:

Over the past 10 years or so I have presented the accounts using a series of PowerPoint slides, starting with a version 'taken over' from my predecessor. Over the years I have both enhanced the presentation and, more recently, considerably reduced the length of the presentation.

This year will again be different – my presentation will be shorter, will not include a full presentation of the accounts, and will not include a single power point screen.

The current status of the 2023 accounts is that they have been prepared in draft but not yet independently examined. Part of the independent examination includes discussion with the examiner on several topics which can affect the way in which the final figures are allocated and presented – particularly this year on capitalisation and depreciation of certain items of expenditure and the allocation of funds over the different headings of Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated and the difference between, for example, All Saints Fund and General fund. I don't want to (and won't) present these quite complicated accounts (as opinionated by one of the potential independent examiners) in draft form.

Before this can happen we have to appoint a new independent examiner, which is an appointment of the APCM. We (more specifically Richard) have/has gone through a lengthy process of seeking a suitable person/company to do this and believe that we have found an extremely competent and affordable candidate. More on this later this evening, but the selected and preferred candidate has been approved by the Standing Committee and already has the accounts to look at in anticipation of being approved this evening.

When the accounts are ready there will be a special meeting called so that they may be properly presented to the parish.

I can say, however, that there is nothing coming up from this that will be a surprise to us! The accounts will show that, as usual, we have a general fund deficit that will be met from our reserves and that we have healthy income streams and controlled expenditure.

On first glance some of the gross deficit figures will look scary, but in this year when the insurance money state for All Saints was looking challenged and we were paying large sums out to Buxton and using money from AS Fund for "new works – eg enhanced heating and AV equipment, the new West End entrance) with still no definitive view from the insurers as to the final payout there were (quite) a few sleepless nights in the finance team!

I will finish with two points, firstly by reiterating that when we have an approved Independent Examiner and the accounts are finalised they will be presented to the Parish.

Point no 2 – planned giving – I can't leave this post without making a final plea for people to support the 'Planned Giving by direct debit' scheme. There is no secret that one of the reasons that I'm stepping back from this role is the dramatic increase in work required (esp since Covid), which is why you will have seen elsewhere that we are looking to get back to the good old days when we had a team of around 20 people or so doing various bits of the finance work to make it manageable for people

who are, after all, volunteers who give of their time and talents very generously. The direct debit scheme is a classic example of where efficiencies and time savings can be made. If you're not in it yet and want more details about this have a chat with Jean Carr or me and we will point you in the right direction.

Over and out!

The Vicar then invited questions from the meeting:

- Robert Smith asked (with reference to the APCM 2023 minutes) whether the parish finances had now recovered from the impact of Covid. The answer was 'yes' in terms of church/hall bookings and our income stream from these sources, but 'no' when measuring the numbers of volunteers involved in Finance work.
- Jenny Thorne commented that Elizabeth Waller and Lynda Hix have now volunteered to count cash.
- The Vicar paid tribute to Tim Kite, who had for many years been our Independent Examiner and gave his services free. He will be much missed in the Finance team.
- Mark also explained that both Mike Ford (Treasurer) and Richard Buller (Chair of Finance) gave notice a year ago that they intended to stand down at this APCM. Mark thanked both of them for their dedicated service over many years and made a presentation to them. Despite much effort it has not yet been possible to find replacements for them, so both have agreed to carry on in their positions on an interim basis, until new people can be found.

6. Vicar's Report

The Vicar started his report by reflecting on all the positive signs of growth in the Parish and in the wider Church of England. He quoted former Archbishop Rowan Williams "Find out what God is up to and join in".

The Ministry Team has lost key members, with Cally Burch moving on and Mary Goodson stepping back. However the team has been strengthened with Claire and Dick joining and taking on more activities. Mark explained the mechanism whereby parishes bid for new curates, and that we would not be applying for one this year. His focus will be on training Jane Jones, who will be ordained Deacon in July this year – she will become a non-stipendiary minister, and not a replacement for Cally. The Parish has had Associate Ministers in the past, but these are expensive and unaffordable with the current state of Parish finances. Mark has also explored the possibility of getting a 'House for Duty' priest, who would occupy 38 Oasthouse Drive and, in return, be available to take Sunday services and assist in other ways. He has permission to do this from the Archdeacon, Bishop and Church Commissioners (who own the property), but the house will be let commercially on a short-term basis for the time being.

Mark repeated his special thanks to Jenny Thorne for all her hard work over the past year as the sole Churchwarden. He made a presentation to her.

He also made special mention of Mary Goodson's role as a Licensed Lay Minister and thanked her for her many years of service. He made a presentation to her. He also thanked Robert Smith for his work in sorting out the Parish Website and ChurchSuite rota system and (with Anne Smith) leading the revival of music in Parish Worship.

Mark then talked about the new Worship pattern in the Parish, which sees the Sunday 10am Parish Eucharist alternating between All Saints and Ss Philip and James churches, with an additional non-eucharistic service at each church once per month. This is all that can realistically be managed while he is the only ordained priest available, but it seems to be working well so far.

7. Review of Annual Reports

The Vicar guided the meeting through the Annual Report, commenting on the activities of each group. Specific comments from him and from the floor included:

- Jane Jones pointed out a small error in the Ministry Team report, this will be corrected.
- Under Parish Office and Halls, thanks were extended to Rebecca, Sandie and Sam for all that they do to aid the smooth running of the Parish.
- ChurchSuite Rotas and Bookings – Robert Smith stated his ambition to remove all paper-based rotas as soon as that is practicable for everyone.
- All Saints Fundraising Committee – Mark stressed the importance of this continuing work and his commitment to Phase 2 of the rebuilding project. However he believes that this will need a new team of people to take it forward.
- Parish Magazine – Mark expressed his thanks to the team and commented on the very high quality of the magazine.
- Parish Website – much good work done by Robert Smith to get the website up to date. Cally Burch needs to be removed from it.
- Safeguarding – this remains an important backdrop to all Parish activities.
- All Saints Churchwarden – Jenny Thorne thanked all the volunteers who continue to help her, and mentioned Mike Ford in particular.
- P&J Churchwarden – in the absence of a warden this year, Paul Allen had prepared the report. He extended particular thanks to the gardening team.
- Richard Dexter had a question about the practice of one Churchwarden being designated as the 'Vicar's Warden' and one as the 'People's Warden'. Mark explained that this used the case for historical reasons, but is rarely practised nowadays.
- Social Committee – the committee has been in abeyance in recent weeks, but Mark committed to arrange a meeting shortly.
- Children & Families – small numbers attending Sunday services, but this is not really a fair measure of outreach:
 - Mark regularly reaching 500+ children at All Saints School assemblies
 - FACCTS have taken over 'Open the Book' which now happens regularly in most local schools
 - Baby Saints is thriving, Dribbles & Giggles also doing well.

- Family Services are getting increased support.
- Thought being given to the formation of a junior choir.
- Deanery Synod – there will be a vacancy here after Jane Jones is ordained.
- Baptism Team – more interest and enthusiasm from families, and some young people coming forward for baptism on their own initiative.
- Tuesday Prayer Group – now meeting in FPCC Prayer Room. They would like to encourage others to add prayers for the group to focus on, a mechanism for this is to be considered.
- Coffee Bar – Ruth Waller added special thanks to all the cake makers. A question was raised - would the coffee bar team consider acquiring an espresso machine? Answer was no, due to lack of space and risk of users burning themselves. Mark commented that the coffee bar is a very important means of outreach, and that it would be good to get back to 6 days/week operation if new volunteers can be found.
- Worship & Music – Mark feels that the Parish is in a good place and that much progress has been made since the Covid days. Richard Dexter commented, with respect to the new use of AV for services in AS church (it has been used in P&J for 12 years), that some people do not like to look up to pray. There was discussion that the Powerpoint slides for the service could be made available for download to individual devices, perhaps via a QR code.
- Parish Music – Robert thanked everyone involved and all those who support parish music by attending concerts etc. Two new mass settings have been introduced, plus possible reintroduction of the old P&J setting on an occasional basis.
- Christian Aid Plant and Cake sale will be in P&J car park on 18th May.

8. Electoral Roll Report

Tina Hayton (new Electoral Roll Officer) advised the meeting that 3 new people had joined the Electoral Roll, and 3 had left, with 3 changes of address being recorded.

The total on the roll at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024 is 160, representing 125 households.

9. Engagement of Independent Examiner

Richard Buller addressed the meeting on this subject:

- Richard started by paying tribute to Tim Kite, recognising all his time freely given to the role of Independent Examiner over many years.
- He also paid tribute to Mike Ford for all the skill and time he has devoted to the work of Treasurer – again over many years.
- The Finance Team is attempting to split the Treasurer's role into a number of smaller parts that can be undertaken by different volunteers. Much of the work could be done by a bookkeeper, and some new volunteers are trialling this at the moment, but there will still need to be a formal Treasurer in place to oversee this work and the parish finances overall.
- Richard has been looking at a number of candidates for the role of Independent Examiner – this has to be done by a currently qualified person.

The shortlist was discussed by the Finance and Administration committee and a selection made. This choice was then approved by the Standing Committee so that work could start quickly. The APCM now needs to formally approve this appointment.

A motion to confirm the engagement of SEEBYS Consultancy as Independent Examiner of the Parish Accounts was raised. Proposed by Richard Buller, seconded by Antony Jones and approved by all present.

10. Questions and Discussion

- Mary Goodson made a moving statement to the meeting – explaining her reasons for standing down as an LLM after 20 years, and thanking everyone for their support. She recognises that she is at a turning point in her life, but is happy in the knowledge that this is where God wants her to be.
- Barbara Lyons thanked Nancy Dawson for all her work in organising the Afternoon Teas.
- Richard Dexter thanked Mark for organising such a welcoming meeting and for all the work he does for the Parish.
- Graham Kitts thanked all the AV Operators in both churches who help to keep services running so well.
- There was a question about more use of the bells at All Saints – Mark explained that operation of the electronic control system for the bells had so far proved too challenging for everyone involved, but greater effort would be made to resolve this.

The Vicar concluded by thanking everyone for attending the meeting, and for the great atmosphere in which it had been held.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed

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