

Minutes of Parishioners' Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 28 April 2024 at 11.20 am.

All Saints' Church, Croxley Green

Parishioners' Meeting

Revd Miriam welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

Attendees

Revd Canon Miriam Mugan (Vicar), Revd Paul Palmer, Revd Anne Shaw and the following parishioners attended:

Anne Oke and Lyndon Palmer (Churchwardens), Jane Bates, Sr Mary Bittles, Rae Bowyer, Alick Burge, Rosemary Daines, John Galloway, Philip Hobbs, Sam Jones, Val Kendle, Sue McKeague, Gillian Main, Janet Martin, Janice Mills, Sheila Newman, Andrew Nobbs, Chris Oke, Ann Palmer, Wendy Shafe, Marjorie Stevenson, Thomas Stevenson and Chris Fagan (Secretary).

Revd Miriam opened the meeting with a prayer.

Apologies for absence were received from Sam Beard, Gill Barrett, Fran Bennett, Nik Bennett and Shirley Ford

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on 23 April 2023 were confirmed and signed.

Items Raised by Parishioners

No items were raised.

Election of Churchwardens

Two nominations were received:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Anne Oke	Sue McKeague	Jane Bates
Lyndon Palmer	Sam Jones	Janet Martin

No other nominations were made.

As there were no other nominations, Revd Miriam declared that Lyndon Palmer and Anne Oke had been elected to serve for 2024/25. The meeting signified its assent to the election. She congratulated Anne and Lyndon on their re-election and thanked them for their service as Churchwardens during the previous 12 months, ably supported by Ann Palmer the Assistant Churchwarden.

There being no questions or other business, Revd Miriam declared the meeting ended at 11.25am.

Vicar

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

The meeting opened at 11.25am.

The meeting received the minutes of the 2023 APCM, the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023, the report on the Accounts by the Independent Examiner and a leaflet summarizing the activities run during 2023 produced by Nik Bennett with photographs selected by Lyndon Palmer. These documents had been published electronically in advance of the meeting, with paper copies for those without access to a computer.

REvd Miriam observed that reports of the principal officers, committees and the organizers of parish groups were contained in the Annual Report and reports made would therefore be summaries of key points. Questions on the reports would be invited from those present.

Minutes of the Previous APCM held on 23 April 2023

Copies of the minutes had been distributed in advance of the meeting. Miriam asked whether the minutes could be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

It was proposed by Gill Main and seconded by Janet Martin that the minutes be accepted as a true record and upon a vote being taken the motion was declared carried *nem con*. The minutes were duly signed by Miriam as Chair.

Elections to the Parochial Church Council

The meeting was advised that nominations were required for three lay members to serve for the next three years. Three nominations were received, proposed and seconded as follows:

Jane Bates, proposed by Mary Bittles and seconded by Pamela Evans;
Sam Jones, proposed by Anne Oke and seconded by Wendy Shafe; and
Wendy Shafe, proposed by Chris Fagan and seconded by Janet Martin.

There being no other nominations, Revd Miriam declared that Sam, Gillian and Ann were elected to serve until 2027.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

A motion to re-appoint Dorothea Marianne Anna Reynolds as the Independent Examiner of the PCC's accounts for 2024/25 was proposed by Andrew Nobbs and seconded by Marjorie Stevenson. When voted on the motion was declared carried *nem con*.

Electoral Roll Officer's Report

Chris Fagan reported that following the 2024 revision the Electoral Roll had 99 names, a net increase of 7 over the 2023 total. Sadly Sheila Hiscock had died, while Chaz Ridley had moved away from the parish. However, nine people, Chima Agha, Winston Agha, Gillian Barrett, Lisa Coughlan, Rosemary Daines, Geordee George, Adam Keene, Cecily Naliyath and Bob Sheminant had been enrolled and were welcomed. There had been a net increase of 15 enrolments since 2020.

Annual Report 2023

Revd Miriam introduced the Annual Report, which provided a full and comprehensive record of the parish's work during the year. The lively accounts of the various activities and events, combined with well-chosen photographs, made it an excellent read, while the four-page summary leaflet highlighting key themes was brilliant. Both were available to read on the parish website. She thanked everyone who had contributed articles for the Annual Report and Nik Bennett for writing the summary, and Lyndon Palmer for selecting the photographs..

PCC officers reported to the meeting on the key matters in the Report.

Secretary's report

Chris Fagan said that All Saints' Parish was part of the Diocese of St Albans and the Parochial Church Council was also a charity registered with the Charity Commission. Every member of the PCC was a trustee of this charity. The PCC Report on pages 1-9 was a summary of the PCC's work during the previous year. As the PCC was a registered charity the Secretary's report would be submitted to the Charity Commission with the Annual Accounts and the report of the Independent Examiner to show how the PCC had performed as an ecclesiastical charity, following a template agreed between the Charity Commission and the Church of England. The full Annual Report, together with the Annual Accounts and the Independent Examiner's report would be submitted to the St Albans Diocese.

There were no questions on the report. Miriam thanked Chris for his work as PCC Secretary.

Churchwardens' report

Lyndon Palmer said that the churchwardens' report was on pages 10-11. The churchwardens were responsible for the fabric of the church and the hall which entailed their structure and management. A Quinquennial Inspection every five years, most recently in 2022, gave an overview of the condition of the church to assist in making decisions about maintenance, repairs and management of the building which were then managed by the Buildings Committee. Anne Oke and himself as the churchwardens were assisted in this work by the assistant churchwarden Ann Palmer.

The church inventory of moveable items and property was unchanged for 2023. One faculty was granted by the Diocese for works to install an auto-wind mechanism for the church clock. A generous donation funded most of the costs of the work. All statutory safety checks were conducted, i.e. fire extinguishers, electrical/gas appliances, the alarm system and the lightning conductor.

The churchwardens thanked everyone who had helped them, including the Clergy Team of Revds Miriam, Paul and Anne for their leadership and constant support and the Hall Committee for planning, organizing and overseeing the refurbishment and redecoration of the hall, which everyone including hall users greatly appreciated.

The Annual Inspection carried out on behalf of the Archdeacon of St Albans was reported on pages 11-12 of the Report.

There were no questions on the report. Revd Miriam thanked Anne and Lyndon and also Ann Palmer, for all the work they did. The parish could not function without their most valuable contribution. We were most fortunate to have two very active churchwardens supplemented by an assistant churchwarden, unlike some other parishes who struggled to recruit to these posts.

Treasurer's report

Andrew Nobbs spoke to his report on the 2023 Annual Accounts, on pages 12-14 of the Annual Report. The Accounts had been inspected by the Independent Examiner who had found no cause for concern. An anticipated deficit of £11,286 had been transformed into a surplus of nearly £800, a most satisfactory result. The main factors for this were a rise in offertory income and receipts from the Christmas Market and the Beer Festival. Rising energy prices and general inflation impacted running costs, but nevertheless the parish was able to secure the refurbishment and redecoration of the hall at a total cost of £38,123 by a combination of PCC money set aside for it, general fundraising and generous donations from the wider community. Particular donations were received for automating the church clock winding mechanism and for a new sanctuary carpet.

Andrew stated that in addition to maintaining financial reserves equivalent to three months' income, the PCC had agreed to retain a larger amount to provide for future increased expenditures. He warned that the existing rental income from the mobile telephone mast in the spire might well be reduced from 2026 when the existing rental contract expired.

Andrew thanked Dorothy Reynolds the Independent Examiner, Janet Martin who counted and banked cash collections and everyone whose efforts had contributed to the excellent fundraising performance.

There were no questions on the report. Revd Miriam thanked Andrew for all his work in managing the accounts and producing clear and comprehensive reports on the parish finances to PCC meetings.

Deanery Synod report

Revd Miriam reported on the Deanery Synod, on page 14 of the Report. One meeting received a talk on vocations which included the idea that every church member has a vocation and 80% of ministry is carried out by lay people. She urged people to consider how they might carry out this vocation, including talking to friends and contacts and taking part in parish activities. For example, they might offer to assist in serving refreshments to the congregation after the Sunday morning service. Anyone who wished to explore further was welcome to talk to her.

There were no questions on the report. Revd Miriam thanked Fran Bennett and Andrew Nobbs, the elected lay representatives and Revd Paul Palmer for representing the parish on the Deanery Synod.

Safeguarding report

Anne Oke, the Parish Safeguarding Officer, said that All Saints' sought to give safeguarding of children young people and vulnerable adults a high priority and sharing this with the wider community, particularly users of church premises. In this work the parish followed closely the Church of England's guidance. Awareness was raised by holding a Safeguarding Sunday service, and by displaying posters in the church porch and the hall with contact details of Safeguarding officers and the Church of England's Safe Spaces initiatives and producing a child-friendly safeguarding poster. Parish clergy continued safeguarding training under the Diocese, the Parish Safeguarding Officer renewed her training during the Autumn and the Assistant Safeguarding Officer and PCC members started or updated their training profiles. Three-year DBS renewals were successful for those who required them.

During the year the Safeguarding Policy, the Serious Incident Policy and the Policy for Safe Use of images were reviewed; a Safeguarding Agreement for Hall Users which required more than one adult to be present at all times, Guidelines for Lone Working were adopted and Youth Leaders' Role Descriptions were amended; an annual approval of church-related activities was agreed and relevant risk assessments were reviewed. The Parish had made good progress against the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard requirements for Level Three.

Anne urged everyone to listen out for any expression of concerns about safeguarding and to encourage reporting of these concerns to Vicar Revd Miriam, herself or Sam Jones the Assistant Safeguarding Officer.

Revd Anne Shaw expressed firm support for the stress on reporting and discussion of any concerns, especially in the context of major recent misconduct at another local church.

Chris Oke observed that All Saints' was an open church, with people able to come and go freely. He asked whether there was a policy for people working alone in the church. It was acknowledged that there was such a policy and that those who had a role which entailed them being in church on their own, such as the sacristan and flower arrangers, would be provided with a copy. Alick Burge said he also encountered people when working alone in the garden.

Anne replied that there was not a straightforward solution to secure safe lone working, although the Lone Working Policy provided some guidelines, such as working in pairs or groups. CCTV was operating in the office which enabled the monitoring and recording of people entering the church and a copy of the Lone Working Policy was held in the parish office.

Revd Miriam thanked them for raising this point. It was considered very important to retain access for anyone who felt a need to seek a quiet place for prayer or contemplation, but she would welcome any thoughts or comments people wished to express to her, Anne or Sam.. She asked Lyndon to place a copy of the Lone Working Policy at the rear of the church.

Revd Miriam thanked Anne and Sam for their tremendous work through the year, which had enabled All Saints' to achieve an advanced position in applying the Church of England's safeguarding requirements, especially compared with many other churches. The meeting gave the Safeguarding Team a round of applause.

Vicar's report

Revd Miriam said she was continually amazed by what was being done at All Saints'. We were currently taking time to wait for God to show us the way forward and the events of 2023 showed us growing as a community and as a church family. The Friday Cafés and the Beer Festival enabled us to show ourselves as we are to local people and encouraged people outside the church to feel part of All Saints'. Some had involved themselves in our social and fundraising work for the hall refurbishment, including organising and running events such as tea dances and a band concert. The Monday Toddlers Group continued to be very popular with parents, grandparents and carers. Our Youth Group was growing as youngsters invited their friends to come to sessions. All Saints' was in the process of, in the words of former Archbishop Rowan Williams "journeying where God is". She also asked people to consider whether they might be able to join or increase their involvement in some of the activities at All Saints, if they had the time.

Revd Miriam thanked everyone who was contributing in so many different ways to making All Saints' what it had become, including her clergy colleagues, PCC members and the whole worshipping parish community, which as the Annual Report was continuously showing, found love and joy in serving God and welcoming our neighbours. She also thanked individuals who were providing real service to the church, instancing our visiting organists David Heath and Simon Dunn.

John Galloway referred to many external professional people whose skills had greatly benefited the church, who also deserved our thanks.

Revd Anne Shaw expressed the warmest thanks to Revd Miriam for the love and dedicated service she had given to the whole church community. The meeting gave Revd Miriam a warm round of applause.

In response Revd Miriam said it was a great joy and a privilege to serve All Saints' as Vicar

It was proposed by Wendy Shafe and seconded by Sue McKeague:

"That the Annual Report be adopted."

The motion was declared carried unanimously.

There being no other business Revd Miriam concluded the meeting with the Grace at 12.26 pm.

Date of Next Annual Meeting - Sunday 27 April 2025.

Vicar