

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 4th May 2022 in the Church Hall

Present

Revd Will Hunter Smart (Rector and Chairman), Revd Joy Mawdesley (Associate Rector), Revd Jackie Fountain (Curate), Rick Coward and Tania Wolak (Church Wardens), James Lancaster (PCC Treasurer), Phil Davis (Lay Vice Chair), Chris Philip (PCC Secretary) and forty-two other members of the Church family.

Welcome

Will thanked everyone for attending and for their commitment. We had much to be grateful for in what had been an eventful year. He read some verses from Luke's Gospel Chapter 17. Out of ten lepers healed only one (a Samaritan) returned to Jesus to give thanks. An APCM is, in part, an opportunity to give thanks to God for his provision for our church. Following the singing of two hymns, the meeting began.

PART A: The Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Two Churchwardens

Will thanked Tania Wolak and Richard Coward for their support and wisdom over the past year. As both had been renominated, proposed, and seconded and as there were no other nominations, they were duly elected. Will invited Chris Philip to pray for them both as they began a further year of service.

PART B: The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Juliet and Bertram Lake, Joyce Zealey, Hazel Johnston, Rosemary Freeman, John Philip, and Pamela Webster.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the APCM held on 25 May 2021

These had been posted on the Church website and made available to the congregation.

Will proposed from the chair that they be accepted as a true record. All present were in favour.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None were raised.

4. Annual Reports to the APCM

- a) **PCC Annual Report** This report had been detailed in the first half of the document entitled Annual Report and Accounts. The report contained a summary of the proceedings of the PCC as well as other significant events in the life of the Parish.

Will invited questions from the floor. None were raised.

- b) **Electoral Roll Report** This was presented by Mandy Maskell – the electoral roll officer. There are now 294 members on the electoral Roll. 15 people have left during the last 12 months; some had moved away; 7 had died, 12 new members have joined the roll this year. Mandy reported that she would continue to encourage newcomers to the Church to join the roll. Will thanked Mandy for her report.

Prayers of thanksgiving were given for members of the church family who had died over the last year.

c) Finance

The Treasurer's Report James began by confirming that since the last APCM the accounts showed that the finances of St Nic's had continued to recover very well from the mid-pandemic position that the church faced in the autumn of 2020. He pointed out that when setting the budget for 2022, we were in a position that was as financially healthy as it was in 2016 before we started financing some major repairs in the church.

He thanked the church family for their dedicated and sacrificial giving without which such a financial recovery could not have happened. He was especially relieved at not having to ask the congregation to uplift their giving this year.

He went on to thank the finance team who work to oversee the church finances all of whom have put in a considerable amount of work this last year.

Vanessa Hutton (Finance Committee Secretary)
Tania Wolak and Rick Coward (Churchwardens)
Will, Joy, Phil Davis, and Chris Philip (Standing Committee)
Shalini Philip (Stewardship Secretary)
Sheila Moore (Financial Controller)

He affirmed that without every single member of the church family we would not be the St Nic's that we are today (1 Cor 12:12 *There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ*). He thanked everyone for being good news and bringing good news to Newbury.

Review of 2021 accounts (page 15 of the financial statements)

James continued to the accounts for 2021 noting the "NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS".

We had recorded an unrestricted surplus in 2021 of c. £33k compared to a budgeted deficit of c. £23k. We had been £56k favourable to budget due to income being £26k more than budgeted and our costs being £30k less. This was due to giving (including one-off donations and Gift Aid) which came in £21k above budget. He added:

- Lettings income recovered very well, providing £8k above budget
- Staff costs were lower than expected by £15k due to the departure of our youth minister in September 2021
- The furlough scheme continuing into 2021
- It took longer to recruit into other vacant posts than had been budgeted for
- Repairs and maintenance expenditure had been c. £9k lower than budget, mainly due to resourcing

He commented that aside from the one-off cost reductions that contributed to this financial position, outperforming our budget had been something to be thankful for.

Our restricted fund activity in 2021 showed a deficit of c. £4,500 which was largely due to:

- residual funds of £9k from the 2021 grant from the NCAAC for the upkeep of our church building

- offset by depreciation of about £13k on assets purchased by restricted funds
- net expenditure of £500 from other restricted fund activity including the Town Team, Women's Events, CAP Blessings fund and Bell Ringers.

He added that total funds of £948k (page 16) include fixed assets such as our buildings and equipment i.e. it is not all cash!

Review of 2022 budget

James commented that the budget at an unrestricted level is showing a deficit of £7,100. This did not seem to line up with the positive outlook for 2022 previously mentioned. The positive financial outlook and the budget refer to the health of our cash reserves, so it was necessary to remove depreciation of £13,800 as this is a non-cash item. In addition, £4,000 of works on St Nic's House that have been delayed for a number of years have funds already set aside. Finally, adding in the cash requirement for our capital projects (£29,850 as seen on the last page of the budget), gives a budgeted cash outflow in 2022 of just over £19,000.

Due to the ongoing commitment from the church family, the reserves at the end of 2021 were sufficient to not only cover a net cash outflow of £19,000 in 2022, but to also have some further "free" reserves left (those over and above what we must hold at all times per our reserves policy). This is a very blessed position to be in, but one that requires the church to "keep going" while at the same time not getting complacent.

Since the budget was set, there have been reductions in cost forecasts and more significantly in income forecasts, specifically on giving. The message from the budget however is still the same, namely that our day-to-day costs in 2022 are just about covered by current levels of giving. As he had pointed out in his updates in March, some one-off cost reductions in 2022 will not repeat in future years (Parish Share, staff costs), so it was important not to feel complacent.

He was aware that not many church treasurers would have been able to report to their APCM's such a strong result in 2021 and such a promising budget for 2022. He felt grateful that God had been at work in our midst over this difficult and uncertain time. He urged everyone to continue to pray for the finances of our church given the threat of inflation and very high energy prices facing us all.

Will thanked James for his assiduous care of the Church finances and for the hard work put into preparing the accounts and the budget so meticulously.

- d) Report of Parish Activities** Libby Lake had collected and collated reports from all the groups working voluntarily within the church. It showed enormous diversity and was very encouraging to know that so many people participated in outreach and ministry in so many ways. Will commended the booklet to all and thanked Libby for all the work involved.

Will invited everyone to get in groups of 4 to pray and give thanks for the positive messages we had heard so far.

5. Election of Members to the PCC

Three members were due for re-election this time.

Becky Bird, Jon South, Nigel Freeman had all served for the last 3 years. In addition, Dawn Aldridge had decided to resign from the PCC.

Nominations had been received for Nigel Freeman, Jon South and Christopher Ortiz.

Becky (our Safeguarding Officer) had agreed to continue to serve the Parish in this capacity and would there be co-opted to serve in this way at the next meeting of the PCC.

As there were 3 nominations and 3 vacancies Will declared that Jon South, Nigel Freeman, and Chris Ortiz had been duly elected to serve for a period of 3 years.

6. Appointment of the Independent Examiners of the Church Accounts

James Lancaster acknowledged the excellent service the church had received from the firm of James Cowper Kreston, including a face to face meeting this year.

James proposed that the firm of James Cowper Kreston be appointed independent examiners for a further year. This motion was seconded by Sheila Moore. All present were in favour.

7. Any Other Business

None.

8. Closing Remarks and Prayer

Will thanked the Staff Team, the Church Wardens, and the PCC members who have all served the church community in their different leadership roles. The Staff team would be going out tomorrow for a celebratory post-APCM breakfast at Cote Brasserie! Will asked people to pray particularly for the imminent interviews for a new Youth Minister: an important staff position that we need to fill.

Will commented that the Church is in a very *healthy* place – there is a sense of unity and for that we must give thanks to God. In addition to being healthy, St Nic’s seems to be *hungry*: there is a growing hunger for more of God, for greater growth in discipleship, for more effective service, and an ambition to be bold in outreach.

Will spoke about the PCC’s renewed commitment to our vision, and the four priority goals of welcome, prayer, worship and our church building project. These were four areas we were looking to make significant progress in over the next year. The recent vision breakfasts for worship and building had been very encouraging.

Will used words from Paul’s Second Letter to the Thessalonians Ch1 v11-12 as a closing prayer:

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Following the singing of a hymn, the meeting ended at 9:30pm.

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Chair

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Date