

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, WEST WICKHAM ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Rev Hazel O'Sullivan, was in the chair and 21 people attended in person and 8 people joined by Zoom and both meetings began with prayer.

A meeting of Parishioners was held on Sunday 9 May 2021 at 11.30am in the church and on Zoom for the purpose of electing Churchwardens.

Minutes of the previous meeting: were agreed and signed.

Election of Churchwardens: The Rev Hazel O'Sullivan thanked Barry Burford and Kate Dyer for all the work they had done over the past six months since the 2020 APCM in September. Barry Burford and Kate Dyer had agreed to stand again in 2021 as Churchwarden and both had been nominated to stand. Both Barry Burford and Kate Dyer having been duly nominated and seconded were unanimously elected to serve as Churchwardens.

Signed.Date.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting followed immediately and began with a prayer.

Apologies: Daphne Hurlstone

Minutes of 20.9.20: Minutes agreed as presented to the APCM and signed by Rev Hazel O'Sullivan.

Presentation of Accounts: David Wada presented the accounts that had been examined by Keith Earthrowl and approved by the PCC on 23 March 2021. Copies of the full set of accounts (8 pages) are available from David on request. Due to Covid-19, David reported that the accounts for 2020 show very little hall income. There were no questions raised.

Annual Report: The Annual Report had been adopted by the PCC on 23 March 2021 and circulated in advance of the meeting. The Annual Report included a report on the fabric of the building and the hall report. It was highlighted that mission for both St Francis and St Mary's was combined and working together. There were no questions raised.

Electoral Roll: Report presented by Rowena Griffiths. There are currently 102 people on the Roll. Since the last APCM we have lost seven people (three have died, two have moved out of the area with a third person moving in the near future and one other person had requested to be removed from the Roll). A list of names only is available to view at the back of the church and members may ask to see and check their own personal entry on the Roll by contacting the Electoral Roll Officer.

Safeguarding report: Report presented by Kim Teare.

Safeguarding is a very important matter within the church community and is now an agenda item at all PCC meetings. I have had no reports of any safeguarding issues received. The Diocese of Southwark 'A Safe Church' is displayed in our church, on the cupboard, by the entrance of the building. – This can of course, still be accessed by this link should the need arise:

<http://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-and-procedures>

All necessary DBS checks are up to date but may I point out that the criteria for requiring one has changed quite dramatically and therefore a check will be done prior to the request to ensure one is actually required. Primarily all children's activities will still require a check and anyone that is providing transport to adults will also be required to complete one. The initial requirement can be checked through The Safe Church link as follows:

<https://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/safer-recruitment-dbs/> this will then lead you to the

APCS online eligibility tool. To confirm, all new certificates are being retained by the named person and when I am able, I will release the expired ones from the safe within the church.

I work alongside Kay Mussard, PSO at St Mary's, and we have tried to ensure that our two churches share policies and practise in a way that is beneficial to us all. It has been most welcoming to have somebody to discuss any queries we may have. Our policies have all been reviewed, signed and updated in the church files. I will undertake to ensure that these are checked and accepted each forthcoming year.

I would ask anyone who has any concerns however minor to contact either myself or Hazel by email or direct contact in complete confidence, so that we can decide what action should be taken.

Election to PCC:

We had three members retiring from the PCC in 2020 – Julie Bailey, Valerie Hamilton and Annie Norris. Hazel thanked them for their support and work on the PCC.

There had been two new nominations to the PCC. Roger Dyer had been nominated and had also taken on the Chairmanship of the Hall Committee and will be looking at how to promote the Hall going forward which is an important area of our contact with our community. Kim Teare had been nominated. Kim is the St Francis Safeguarding Office and will help with safeguarding issues as they arise and also help the PCC and the congregation show how important safeguarding is.

Roger Dyer was nominated to join the PCC for 3 years from 2021.

Proposer: Barry Burford; Seconder: Nichola Nightingale

Nomination approved by the APCM

Kim Teare was nominated to join the PCC for 3 years from 2021.

Proposer: Kate Dyer; Seconder: Barbara Goodchild

Nomination approved by the APCM

Appointment of Deputy Churchwarden:

It was noted that the role of Deputy Churchwarden was a helpful and important role and that in 2020 Helen Freeman had done a great job. Helen had agreed to continue in this role and as this role is not a member of the PCC it was not necessary to seek nominations.

Appointment of Independent Examiner:

David thanked Keith Earthrohl for examining and signing off the accounts for 2020 and Keith had confirmed that he would be happy to continue to be St Francis' Independent Examiner in 2021. The appointment was approved unanimously.

Deanery Synod Report: Presented by Brian Griffiths

In 2020 two new Deanery Synod Representatives had been elected to the PCC (Brian Griffiths and Sheila Hawkins) and although had not been meeting in person, two meetings since September 2020 had been held on Zoom.

In October following the business meeting there was a presentation by Moira Astin, Archdeacon of Reigate, entitled 'How Christianity Came to Britain'.

In February following the business meeting there was a very thought provoking and insightful presentation by Jay Colwill, Canon Missioner and Diocesan Director of Mission. This was entitled 'Missional Ways of working during and after Covid 19'. In his presentation, Canon Colwill suggested that there are four questions we need to ask when thinking about the way forward for our churches now that we are emerging from the pandemic:

- **What do we need to let go** – what did we stop doing pre-covid and now need to permanently stop
- **What do we need to restart** – things we stopped because of the pandemic but now need to start again

- **What did we start during the pandemic but now need to end** – things that were good during the lockdown but we need to stop now
- **What do we need to develop and amplify** – what did we start doing during the pandemic and now need to retain and build on

He suggested that ‘when the doors are unlocked’ we need to concentrate on four important aspects:

- **Children and Young People**
- **Food insecurity and unemployment**
- **Social Justice**
- **Climate Crisis**
- **Reaching out to people looking for hope**

In news from the other parishes in the Deanery we heard of how the ‘Food Stop’ service at St Francis, Monks Hill is flourishing and becoming a real hub for the community on the estate and how most parishes in the Deanery have been worshipping online and investing in new technology for this to happen. In the last few weeks, St John’s Selsdon have chosen a new Rector to replace Jenny Rowley who is now Archdeacon of Portsdown in Portsmouth Diocese – their new Rector is Rev Younis Francis who is currently vicar of St Philip, Norbury.

Vicar’s Remarks – Hazel O’Sullivan:

We had our last APCM in September and I recognised then that the past few months had been especially tough. I didn’t expect even tougher times, but they came. We have managed to come through the second wave of the virus with a strong sense of community, thanks especially to those who have kept in touch with others by phone, email, distributing pew sheets and by Zoom meetings, including the weekly coffee and chat which has been an essential part of life for some. We are now starting pastoral visits – do let me or Rowena know of anyone who would benefit from a home visit.

We cannot go back to what we were doing before, as we need to continue servicing our on-line congregation. The last service that was held at St Francis’ was attended by 40 people, but 53 watched it on-line. We now have five congregations in the united benefice:

- 8am
- 10am at St Francis’ (normally meeting at 10.45am)
- 10am at St Mary’s (normally meeting at 9.15am)
- An on-line congregation
- Messy Church

Services have been more challenging than pre-Covid, but we have known God with us throughout this process. In many ways, we’ve done more as a result of the pandemic, in particular:

- The Inclusive Church agenda, including a very topical meeting last Thursday on mental health;
- Distributing Christmas hampers and collecting donations for the Foodbank;
- Bereavement support bags
- More prayer for and by a wider group of people - a real privilege; and
- Messy Church at Home has strengthened links with some families.

All of these additional or increased efforts have been done together with St Mary’s – it wouldn’t have been possible on our own. There has been a greater focus on Christ and serving our community better. We do have lots to give thanks for. I want to give personal thanks to Kate and Barry as Churchwardens, to all members of the PCC for persevering with Zoom meetings and to those on the ministry team and those who have kept in touch with others.

Last week I outlined the vision for our two churches under four headings:

- **Compassion**, which could extend to include telephone befriending, money management and helping people to get on-line.
- Cultivating the **culture** of West Wickham by keeping in touch with other organisations.

- Making the most of our **commercial** opportunities with the great location of our hall.
- Keeping the **congregation** connected with Jesus, through the services outlined (we will look at reverting to a 10.45am service in the autumn), as well as other resources, such as the prayer journal available today.

We need time to develop these and see what works well. What's clear is that we cannot go back to how it was before the pandemic, but we need to adapt and build on that, as well as on our experience of the past year.

Archbishop Justin Welby published a book recently and I've adapted a quote from that, which I thought was relevant to the local church community:

We must learn together or suffer in our differences. Our current opportunity needs church-wide leadership (it's not about one small group doing everything). The necessary change will come through a shift in mood or culture. This type of change cannot be forced, but it must be seized or it will be missed.

Vote of Thanks – given by Joan Burford:

On behalf of myself and the congregation and friends of St Francis, I would like to thank Hazel for her hard work, in which may have been the most difficult year in her working life. As usual Hazel and the Ministry team have come together to provide us all with means to see a service each week.

Thank you to those of you who walk the streets delivering pew sheets to those unable to print them. Thank you to Rowena and Brian for the hours spent recording services and providing us with the information of all that is going on. Thank you to the PCC for meeting throughout the last few months. We thank David for being our Treasurer and keeping our accounts up to date. Nicky certainly deserves our thanks for taking down the minutes of each meeting and providing a copy to each of us. Also I believe that Nicky is the one to go to if having problems with Zoom.

We mustn't forget Kate and Barry, our Church Wardens, who haven't been allowed into the Church for a good part of the year. Despite that, they carried on doing what they were able to do. We have wonderful gardeners who work hard to keep the front and side of the Church looking good, thank you to them.

Lastly, thank you to our "Welcomers" who help on a Sunday morning, and to the volunteers who open and close the Church each Wednesday for Quiet Hour and to Geoff who comes and plays the organ for us.

I know that I have probably forgotten lots of you who work hard behind the screens, but a sincere thanks to you all.

AOB:

A question was asked about the 'next generation' which was mentioned on the Giving page of the St Francis website and where were they. It was noted that we do have the next generation – 7th West Wickham Scouts and young adults were keen to restart the Youth Club and although not sitting in church there are contacts continuing and new ones being made. We do have a community coming through – links with Messy Church and need to building on these and are aware that it is a long term vision.

Hazel ended with a prayer

Signed.. Date