

PARISH OF WETHERBY WITH LINTON
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING – 19 November 2020
Via Zoom

The Rev Canon Brendan Giblin chaired the meeting.

Present:

37 parishioners included on the Electoral Roll (51 were present in 2019)

Emma Beddoe, David Bewell, Janet Cox, Peter Cox, Alan Dowlman, Meryl Eaves, Shirley Fawcett, Liz Foxwell, Darryl Foxwell, Suzannah Giblin, Robert Greene, Alan Grimes, Elaine Hainsworth, Robert Haskins, Carolyn Haskins, Jean Heaton, Jeff King, Ann King, Val Lumsden, Sheila Mirczuk, Tracy Parker, Michael Payne, Carolyn Peuleve, Martin Peuleve, Rosie Rooke, Nic Sheppard, Jennifer Siswick, Alan Smith, Marilyn Smith, Lorna Taylor, Derek Taylor, Steve Taylor, Sue Taylor, Gina Voller, Kathryn Wenn, , David York, Sandra York

1. **Apologies** were received from: Greta Coles-Johnson; Sheila Guest
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting** held on 19th April 2019 were agreed unanimously as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes of the 2019 Annual Parochial Church Meeting:** There were no matters arising.
4. **PCC Reports:**
 - a. **Electoral Roll:** The Electoral Roll Officer's report was read by Bob Greene. We have 234 on the Electoral Roll. 13 have left the Parish or have passed away since 2019. No additions have been made. 16 persons reside outside the Parish.
 - b. **PCC Report:** The Chairman introduced the Parish Annual Report. The PCC report was a written report within it.
 - c. **Financial Report:** The Chairman of Finance Committee (Bob Greene) gave the following verbal report: In normal times I would be reporting on the previous year but in this case that is now history with the 2019 accounts examined and approved and now available on the Charity Commission web site.

2020 started OK with the opening months largely following budget but then came Lockdown Mark 1 with our last normal service on 15 March. Since then comparisons against budget have become increasingly irrelevant and balancing the books the name of the game.

Voluntary Giving by Standing Order has held up well, in fact is one area is one area where comparison against budget is valid and is one course to exceed 2019 as there is some evidence of switching from envelope giving. Obviously with the disruption of the normal service pattern plate giving, cash & envelopes, has been hit hard dropping by some £22,000, 48% with a consequent reduction in Gift Aid. However, this is partially offset by a significant increase in voluntary donations, some of which may be money which would normally come in envelopes, but it is difficult to be certain.

Other negatives are fees from funerals and weddings etc. with positive from a significant legacy, Covid related grants and investment income.

To summarise, we are projecting a shortfall of just over £11,250 against 2019 and £21,000 against budget.

On the expenditure side we made savings due to the church being closed but of the reduction in outgoing of £27,300 being forecast against 2019 and as a consequence we are now forecasting a surplus of income over expenditure of around £18,000 it must be noted that £23,350 of the £27,000 relates to underpayment of Parish Share.

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It is worth taking a moment to consider how this has come about. When we set the budget, we set Share payments at £107,152 against a request for £113,642 and paid at this rate for the first 3 months of the year. As the pandemic bit we looked at our situation and reduced our monthly payment by £2,900 and then further reduced by £1,000 after three months in anticipation that furloughing support would decrease by 10% in September, a further 10% in October and stop completely at the end of October. In the event it will continue now to the end of March. When we made the reductions in payment of Share we also committed to reviewing as the year progressed and paying a lump sum if this was possible.

We have a few additional non-budgeted expenses (BF and Live streaming) to consider but we will be making a proposition on the amount to be paid at the PCC meeting PCC next week.

In conclusion I would like to thank all the Finance Committee, especially Tracy Parker our Treasurer and Lynn Rose won whose shoulders the main burden of keeping us on track through the twists and turns of this most difficult of years.

And finally, thanks to all those who have supported us so generously throughout the year.

The Chairman thanked Bob for the report and the work of the finance committee across the last year, and to everyone who supported the Church financially.

There were no questions from the floor.

- d. **Fabric Report:** this was a written report within the Parish Annual Report.
 - e. **Diocesan Synod Report:** this was a written report within the Parish Annual Report.
 - f. **Deanery Synod Report:** this was written report within the Parish Annual Report.
5. **Election of five lay members of the Deanery Synod (to serve for three years):**
Elaine Hainsworth, Robert Haskin, Val Lumsden were all willing to re-stand and were unanimously elected. Brendan thanked them for their service. There are still two vacancies.
 6. **Election of five lay members of the PCC to serve for three years:**
Nominations were received from Gina Voller, Marilyn Smith and Jackie Taylor. These nominations were supported. Brendan thanked them for their service. There are two more vacancies.
 7. **Election of four deputy Church Wardens (to serve for one year)**
There were four eligible candidates for these annually elected positions. Emma Beddoe, David Bewell, Elaine Hainsworth and Sue Taylor were duly elected unanimously. Brendan thanked them for standing.
 8. **Confirmation of Appointment of Readers:** One Lay Reader licensed to the parish - David York was appointed to serve on the PCC for the coming year.
 9. **Appointment of Sidespersons :**
Meryl Eaves has decided to stand down. Brendan thanked her for service of many years. All those on the list of Sidespersons were duly appointed for the forthcoming year.
 10. **Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Accounts:** John Cuthbertson was willing to continue for a further year. Brendan shared how grateful we are for his time and guidance this year. John was reappointed for the period up to the 2021 APCM, proposed Bob Greene, seconded by Jean Heaton. All in favour.

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11. **Reports of Church Groups and Activities:** the following reports included in the Annual Report for 2019/20 were received. The Chairman said this shows a lot of what we do at St James' and how we reach out into the community. Reports were:

- A. Young People's Work
- B. Sunday Club
- C. Choir Bible Study
- D. 11am Squad
- E. Time for Tots
- F. Choir Report
- G. Worship Group
- H. Music Group at Family Service
- I. Bellringing
- J. Church on the Corner
- K. Pastoral Care and Worship in the Community
- L. Mothers Union
- M. Men's Curry Night
- N. Happiness Lab
- O. Novel Conversations
- I. Wetherby St James Church Centre Trust
- J. Wetherby Methodist and St James' Covenant Group
- K. Churches Together in Wetherby, Linton and Collingham
- L. St James Scout and Guide Groups

Comment from the floor: Nic Sheppard drew attention to the fact that there was a vacancy for a representative to join the Churches Together in Wetherby and offered a wonderful opportunity to share with the other churches and to share in the furtherance of mission in Wetherby. If anyone was interested they should speak to Brendan, Nic Sheppard or Val Lumsden.

12. **Church Warden's Report (verbal) Jean Heaton gave the following report:**

This is a strange year to be reporting on as it covers the 19 months since our last Annual meeting. Our meeting scheduled for 23rd April was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 11 months up to March 2020 were as vibrant and busy as ever and if our meeting had taken place I would have reported on all the amazing services, events and activities that had taken place in the year. Events such as the Church Family Weekend Away; Experience Days with St James Primary School; Riding Lights; Summer and Christmas Fairs; Confirmation Service; and yarn bombing the town with doves and butterflies for Ascension Day to name just a few. Two Alpha courses were also held and a new course 'Head, Heart and Hands'.

We also said goodbye to both Stroma McDermott, our Curate and Eileen Spencer-Witcomb our Parish Administrator in October 2019 and welcomed our new Parish Office Manager, Alison Wrigglesworth in January this year. Unfortunately we were unable to say a proper farewell to Sarah Sharp our Youth and Community Leader in March but made up for it in October.

In March the whole world seemed to stop. The Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic hit, the country went into lockdown, we held our last act of worship on 15th March, the doors of church were locked and all events cancelled for the foreseeable future. Hope was that it would not be for long but alas this was not the case.

One of the many responsibilities of Churchwardens is property and throughout lockdown Bob Greene and I kept a watchful eye on the church buildings whilst they were not being used.

After 2 months when lockdown started to ease and places of worship were allowed to reopen initially for prayer, this was welcome news but a lot of work had to be done so this could be done safely. Guidance was published by the government and Church of England (which seemed to change daily). Working through the risk assessments and setting the church out to be Covid secure took many hours. As restrictions continued to ease, allowing worship to take place in church, these were relooked at many times! Brendan, Bob and I would like to thank our Health & Safety Officer, Steve Taylor for giving us his time and expertise throughout this time and through all the changes in restrictions.

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Sadly we are back in lockdown and unable to worship in church but let us hope and pray that we will be able to do so again soon.

Throughout the pandemic worship has continued but virtually online and let us be thankful for modern technology. Let us also be thankful that we have a great team of youthful experts, especially Ed Taylor, who are helping us with the live streaming despite the restrictions of outdated equipment. We thank Brendan for his spiritual guidance, dedication and support through these difficult times. It is not easy to hold worship virtually when you cannot see your congregation and cannot give pastoral care in person.

Mentioning pastoral care let us thank our Pastoral Care team and all who have been phoning, shopping and visiting (when restrictions allowed) those in our community who are alone or unable to get out. This is vital and important work ensuring people do not feel alone or forgotten.

We thank everyone who does voluntary work at St James', the church could not run without you. We are especially grateful to the small team of ladies who volunteered to be welcomers when we were allowed to open for private prayer and we thank them for continuing to do this and I know it appreciated by those who are visiting the church.

We thank our Deputy churchwardens, David Bewell, Sue Taylor, Emma Beddoe and Elaine Hainsworth for their support and dedication to the church. Also the PCC and its sub-committees for all the work they do throughout the year.

On behalf of Bob and all us I would like to thank our staff especially through these strange times: Alison and Debra Wolstenholme in the Parish Office, Alex Tetlow our verger, Cliff Tetlow our caretaker and Michael Payne our organist and choir master. It is not easy being furloughed and away from your job when you are used to working but let us hope we get back to normal soon.

These are challenging times and we do not know when we will be able to worship in church again or hold social or community events but with faith and friendship we will all get through this.

Brendan thanked Jean for her report.

13. PCC Chairman's Report (verbal) Brendan gave the following report:

Isn't modern technology wonderful. One of the things it means is that I won't be keeping you for so long this evening. There is only so much Zooming one can do in an evening. At this extraordinary time I would, however, like to use this time to express my gratitude to so many, who by what they do, mean that we are the church of God here in Wetherby.

Firstly I thank Jean Heaton and Bob Greene, our churchwardens. Never ones to shy away from what needs to be done, I thank them for all their work, support and wisdom, and the way they have risen to the challenges of the pandemic. I thank all those who have served on the PCC, especially those who are stepping down this year, Susan Armstrong, David Bewell and Jean Kettlewell. Our thanks are also due to Karen Tatham, Kathryn Wenn and Gina Voller who have all helped as secretary this year, thank you.

Of course we need to thank our finance team, especially Tracy Parker our treasurer and Lynn Rose, our bookkeeper. The efficient and effective way we are financially organised is down to you. Your work gives us the confidence that we can securely and safely do the work we are called to do. Thank you for looking after our finances.

Speaking of things to look after, I thank Alan Grimes for his chairmanship of the Property Committee - with buildings like ours there is always something to attend to, and they are always attended to.

I also thank all those whose work, certainly doesn't go unnoticed, but perhaps is not always seen. Michael Hare in his work as Sacristan, Carol Farrar as Laundress, and Shirley Fawcett and the Flower Ladies, as each in their own ways work to make the church more beautiful. I also would like to thank Steve Taylor, our Health and Safety Officer, whom, as you will imagine has been extremely active over this period. This time has required much thought, the reading of multiple ever changing documents and great wisdom. Thank you Steve for steering us safely through these tricky times.

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During this time of pandemic our staff have been amazing. I thank Alison Wrigglesworth, our Parish Office Manager, Debra Wolstenholme our Parish Administrator, Cliff Tetlow our Caretaker, and Alex Tetlow our Verger, and Michael Payne our Director of Music. I wish I had time to say more, suffice to say that all have been wonderful and have responded to the stresses of this uniquely difficult time remarkably. Always ready and willing to do what is required and more. Thank you.

Last October we said farewell to Stroma McDermott as Stroma and her family moved to Knaresborough. It will come as no surprise that the reports I hear from Knaresborough confirm that Stroma is having the same kind of impact there as she has here. I thank Stroma for her most generous ministry. In November we said goodbye to Eileen Spencer-Witcomb, I would like to record my thanks to Eileen for her many years of tireless work for St James'. In March, unfortunate timing, we said goodbye to Sarah Sharp, our Youth and Community Outreach worker. I thank Sarah for her vital work with young people. We miss Sarah, her family and her work very much.

Communications are vital to our life as a church, and our mission as a church, I'll say something about digital communications later, but now thanks to all involved the traditional communications, in particular Sheila Mirczuk, Nic Shepherd and the magazine team for their excellent work. There haven't been many magazines this year, but we quite understand and have appreciated that it is quality rather than quantity that counts.

Worship is at the heart of what we do, and more importantly who we are. I thank all those who share with me in the joy of leading worship in St James', our retired clergy, the Reverends Janet Cox, Uell Kennedy, Jeff King, Colin Spivey and Derek Taylor, our readers Lorna Johnson, Val Lumsden, Marilyn Smith and David York, together with Elaine Hainsworth who has recently begun training. Thank you for your support and the rich variety of input your ministries bring. Also a great many thanks to all our singers and musicians, and Michael again for leading them in leading our worship, our children and youth workers, readers and intercessors, AV team, refreshment providers, sides-people and welcomers.

The pandemic has changed almost everything we do, especially so our worship. The church is the gathered community of God, and at this time we are not able to gather in our usual ways, and we miss it. For me these days have brought home just how central gathering together is to who we are, and how we experience our identity as God's people. Nevertheless, withstanding all the difficulties we have continued to worship together each Sunday. For many months in the first lock down this was wholly on-line, then we were able to broadcast our worship from church, now we are in the surreal situation of broadcasting worship from an almost empty church.

What we have experienced and learned is that through Facebook and Youtube the world has a window into the church. It is now possible for the curious to poke their heads around the door, peer in and go away or stay and engage. It is a reach, and outreach, that would make the apostles and evangelists of previous generations green with envy.

Whilst I appreciate that not all can access worship on-line (and I long for the day when we can all come back together) even in normal times not every person can come and worship in our building. Those who are ill or housebound, families with very young children, may well be able to participate more fully in worship that comes to them. Yes, it is not a substitute, for gathering, but it is a way in, for the housebound and the frazzled, and also the curious and seeking.

A big thank-you goes to all who have helped St James' to set up our on-line worship and to develop it: Josh and Ed Taylor in particular deserve huge thanks for their brilliant and careful work. Thank you Josh and Ed.

When the pandemic is over, we will rejoice, but we still want to broadcast our services, to reach into people's homes, and we will want to do this in as best a way as we can. This is why we have just launched an appeal to raise £7,500 to sustain and improve our digital mission. This is vital work now, and vital for the future. I hope you will be able to support it.

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Finally, I thank everyone who participates in whatever way in the life of St James. You are wonderful, and have, in so many ways risen to the challenge of caring for each other and our community at these times.

The Pandemic may mean we fear a long winter. In the land of Narnia the author CS Lewis asks us to imagine a world held captive by the wicked witch. It is a world where “it is always winter but never Christmas”. Fortunately for Narnia, and for us, Christmas does come. The coming of Jesus, the hope of the nations, breaks through. This is the hope that in this long winter we wait for, the hope that will not disappoint. Thank you for all you do as we wait in the hope of Christ.

Brendan Giblin

14. **Date of next year’s meeting:** This was confirmed as Thursday April 29th, 2021, to begin at 7.30pm, to be held in the Town Hall.

15. **Any Other Business:**
Shirley Fawcett recorded her thanks to everyone for their hard work. Steve Taylor recorded his thanks in particular to Jean Heaton and Bob Greene for the amount of time they have given in these difficult times. Jeff King proposed a vote of thanks to Brendan for showing steadfastness and faith during this time and being so supportive to everyone within the congregation. This was unanimously endorsed.

Brendan thanked everyone for coming and being part of the life of St James’. He closed the meeting by saying The Grace together

The meeting closed at 8:22pm.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____