

St Giles Church Northampton

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens held 25th April 2021 in church and online

1. The meeting began at 11.00am with a reading from Psalm 127 followed by prayer.
2. Steve Kelly, the Chair, explained the purpose of the vestry meeting. David Lidbetter and Alison Steele had confirmed they were willing to continue as churchwardens for another year. There being no other nominations, David and Alison were declared our new Church Wardens. Steve thanked them both and, thanking God for them, prayed God's blessing over them.
3. There was no other vestry business.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 25th April in church and online

1. Apologies were received from Duncan and Carol Halliday and Paul West.
2. **Electoral Roll**
The electoral roll stands at 222 of whom 9 are resident in the parish.
3. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting 28th April, 2019**
It was proposed by Rocky Coles that the minutes, as previously made available in the church and on the website, be accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Steve Pentland and the minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.
4. **Thanks**
Steve thanked David Smart, who is standing down as a Deputy Warden. He also thanked all those who will continue in the role.
5. **Elections**
Nomination of PCC Representatives

7 people were nominated for 5 vacancies, 5 for three years and 2 for 2 years. (see results below)

Mike Cope, Jen Cope, Karolin Richards, Neil Richards, Jacqueline Wienkamp, Chris Davison, Craig MacPherson

Each nominee had previously provided a brief paragraph about themselves. Steve thanked each one for putting their name forward and emphasised that PCC members are the congregation's representatives and that they want to get to know each member of the congregation and be known by them and hear their views in the year ahead.

Nomination of Deanery Synod Reps

There being only 1 person (Keith Davidson) nominated for 2 vacancies, Steve enquired if anyone else wished to be nominated. There being no further nominations, Keith's nomination was accepted with thanks and he was appointed for a period of two years.

Proposed by: Paul Cooper; Seconded by: Renee Dixon

6. Annual Financial Accounts for 2020 and Budget for 2021

Treasurer Anne Jackson gave a slide presentation covering the years 2018 to 2020. (see attached). In 2018 and 2019 we had deficit budgets and, likewise for 2020, PCC approved a deficit budget. However in 2020 (the year of the pandemic) our income was a little higher than in the two previous years (greatly helped by the gift of a legacy of £67,000), and our expenditure was a little lower because we were not able to pursue all our ministries as planned. We ended 2020 with a surplus of £27,000. This means that we start 2021 in a good position. (The meeting paused to give thanks to God for His provision).

Steve emphasised that a huge amount has been achieved in the last 3 years and showed a slide of the projects undertaken over the period. They included the new heating system, roofing repairs to the church, the refurbishment of the Parish Centre, the offices and the Hughes Hall and a new church dais. This he explained is why we have had deficit budgets. He said that we are all the more grateful for our members giving and to God’s provision.

Our budget for 2021 is a little lower on both income and expenditure because we have not yet emerged fully from the pandemic. On the expenditure side, Steve emphasised that whilst there had been careful reduction of several areas of expenditure in this budget, our mission giving to our partners at home and overseas and our Parish Share have not been reduced. The projected deficit was budgeted at £43,000. The Together 21 funding initiative which all have been invited to contribute ideas to, seeks to address this. This initiative is however about so much more than finance. It is about bringing us back together, exploring the use of our gifts, mission and outreach to our community and more.

It was proposed by Chris Davison that DNG Dove Naish accountants be reappointed as auditors. This was seconded by Tim Dixon and agreed unanimously.

7. Vicars Comments

Steve thanked everyone for their sacrificial giving, he thanked God for the benefit of Anne’s gifts to St Giles and expressed his gratitude to Anne and to Serena for undertaking a challenging job.

He provided an update on T21: The finance team looked at all the ideas garnered from the church members and have collated and distilled them. These have been divided into 5 groups. The T21 team are in the process of forming teams and will be writing to those who put ideas forward. There will be a further all church meeting again the end of May to take this forward. Steve thanked Steve Pentland, Jess Newlove, Ali Steele and Dave Lidbetter for their work.

8. Questions on church matters

- **How is the Parish Share allocation calculated during lockdown?**

Historically this was based on our recorded attendance and the number of clergy. The 2021 parish share has been calculated on the basis of attendance in 2019 and is therefore unchanged.

- **Louise Whaites asked for an update on how Safeguarding had changed in the last year.**

Steve reminded the meeting that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and that it is a serious responsibility particularly in respect of any adult who may be deemed vulnerable or in respect of a child. If anyone notices something or has a concern they must speak to either Louise or to him. In the past year there has been huge pressure on families and on the isolated. Nevertheless at St Giles there have not been significant changes or incidents but every comment has been taken up by the Safeguarding Committee and advice is always sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. Louise, Steve and the members of the Ministry team have provided pastoral care to those about whom concerns have been expressed. The Safeguarding Committee keeps PCC updated, though no detail is shared, safeguarding training is monitored and proper checks are carried out on staff and volunteers through the DBS process as required. It has also become a requirement that the Committee keeps the church updated at the APCM.

- **Ali Wagner asked how we as a church get the balance right between being organised and remembering that we are Christ's body on earth?**

Steve replied that often churches are very fixated on finances and bogged down in business, distracted by the detail. Whilst good governance is important, the pandemic reminded us that we should “seek first the kingdom of God ...” and when we do that all we need will be added. Faith is at the heart of it. We are not a business but are building the kingdom of God and we are his temple, the body of Christ. Our first priority is to worship. In the coming year we will streamline operations and simplify communication so our focus is on extending the kingdom of God, led by the Holy Spirit and not by worldly values. We do not seek glory for ourselves or for our accomplishments. We just want to exalt Jesus, our wonderful Lord.

- In response to a question about the Seniors Ministry, Steve acknowledged that older people, especially the most vulnerable, have been significantly impacted by the pandemic and assured them that they have not been forgotten. They will probably be the last group to return to in-person events, when many have had both their vaccinations. Our services are Covid-secure and will continue to be so. Steve acknowledged that it has been the faithful prayers, giving, serving and sacrifice of many of our older people that has stood us in good stead. Addressing them directly, he said they have done an amazing job through exceptional circumstances.

Steve invited the congregation to send any further questions to him via Renee.

9. Update on Children and Young People's Ministry

Jo and I (Beth) did a full review of our Youth and Children's work in 2019, and in September of that year we started to make some changes to our discipleship groups, while increasing our outreach to children and families in our parish. Sadly, in March 2020 that all had to stop.

Over the last year we have continued to be committed to reaching out to and discipling children, young people and their families. We have continued to provide resources for families, children and young people every week, while meeting online during term time.

In March 2020 we moved Just Girls online, and began a new group on a Thursday, initially to run a youth Alpha course. Jo and I began sending out resources for families to use together on a Sunday alongside the Sunday services. Those resources have been going out every week since the first lockdown began.

Over the summer holidays we took part in New Wine as a youth group, and ran a virtual holiday club for primary school children.

Since September 2020 we have also restarted our termly parties, again on Zoom. These involved crafts, games and food, just like they would in person. We also began running a group for children on a Monday evening.

In January we began a number of new groups. Toddle In began meeting every Tuesday morning on Zoom. Since January we started two new children's groups on a Sunday afternoon, and changed our Thursday evening group into a boys youth group similar to Just Girls. All of these groups are focussed on having fun and learning from the bible together.

Since Easter Toddle in has restarted in person, outside for up to 15 people on a Tuesday morning, with a focus on ministering to parents. The Zoom Toddle In session has moved to a Friday morning.

We are really looking forward to being able to do more in person over the next few months. We are starting with a scavenger hunt this afternoon, and have other socials planned over the next few months

This last year has been a real challenge, with lockdowns, home schooling and working from home, life has been really different for our children, young people and families, and Jo and I have really missed seeing you in person for our groups, socials and parties. We are looking forward to September, when we are hoping to be able to restart our Sunday morning groups in the church centre. We will be sharing more information about that over the next few months. In the meantime, we would love to see you at the groups on zoom and the socials we have coming up!

10. Vicar’s message and prayer for the year ahead

As a church we are about love, said Steve. The three great loves, God, my neighbour and the world. This sets us apart from every other body. The Finance Team is helping us to come together as a church. Also, since January, he has been meeting with a Community Team and thinking about how, as we emerge from the pandemic, we can love our neighbours and respond to the needs in our community. In the coming year we’re not going to have plans and projects dreamed up by the vicar, PCC etc. We all need to be listening and discerning the needs. Several of the group (Julie Parsons, David Smart, Steve Summers, Alan Whites etc. have a track record of engaging with our communities and they say that we can all be involved. What do we notice? What are we sensing in conversations with our neighbours etc? Steve encouraged everyone to listen in our communities, to tune in as we emerge from the pandemic. As we really listen to people, God will put things in our hearts and he will lead us and show us how to reach out and minister to the people around us. At the heart of our faith is the fact that Jesus came from heaven to show us how God loves us. We are called to show this love to others and to do so we need to be listening. We need to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Steve thanked all those who had volunteered their gifts and service during the year, especially those who had served in the Children’s Ministry.

11. Any Other Business

- PCC Election Results

As there were 7 nominees for 7 vacancies there was no need for a vote. However, as a decision was required about who would serve for 3 years and who for 2 years, the C of E Church Rules handbook was followed (M9, Section 8) and names were selected by lot from a basket by a member of the congregation.

The following were chosen to serve for 3 years: Neil Richards, Jen Cope, Mike Cope, Karolin Richards, Chris Davison

The following were chosen to serve for 2 years: Jacqueline Wienkamp and Craig MacPherson

- Postal Ballots

As we planned the APCM, we wondered about using postal ballots for our elections but found that we had no authority to do this. However, in case we should ever need to use them in future, we want today to obtain your permission to do so.

Proposal: that we as a church are able in future to use postal ballots in the Annual Vestry Meeting and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting should the need arise.

Proposed: Alison Steele; Seconded: Diane Hanley-York. Proposal carried by a majority.

- Thanks

Alison Steele thanked Steve and Maggie for leading us through a year unlike any other. They have been through the mill and we are very grateful for all they have done for the church.

12. Ali Wagner read Psalm 130 and closed the meeting with prayer.