

**DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER - ARCHDEACONRY OF CHELTENHAM  
NORTH COTSWOLD DEANERY**

**UNITED BENEFICE OF STOW-ON-THE-WOLD, CONDICOTE AND  
THE SWELLS**

**ANNUAL VESTRY AND PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS  
WEDNESDAY 30th APRIL 2019 AT 19.00 HOURS**

**ST EDWARD'S CHURCH, STOW-ON-THE-WOLD**

**Present:** Christine Babbedge, Jennifer Barbour, Walter Barbour, Clive Beckett, Susan Brattin, Cath Brown, Peter Dixon, Ben Eddolls, Marjorie Fennessy, Hazel Halfpenny, Stephen Hills, Mary Honess, Jeannie Kennell, John Kennell, Dougie King, Barbara Lee, Susan Liphorpe, Bernice Magson, Derek Magson, Dudley Mills, Sandra Morris, Dilys Neill, Vera Norwood, Chris Robinson, Janet Robinson, Chris Reeve, Trish Short, Barbara Simmons, Anne Taylor, Tony Whitaker. Helen Smith?

**Annual Vestry Meeting**

1. The Revd. Martin Short opened the meeting with prayers.
2. **Apologies for absence:** John Kennell
3. **Minutes of the previous Annual Vestry and Parochial Meeting** of 25th April 2018 were accepted as a true record, proposed by Barbara Lee, seconded by Susan Brattin.
4. **Selection of Churchwardens:**  
Stephen Hills was happy to continue to serve as churchwarden, proposed by Helen Smith, seconded by Christine Babbedge. No other nominations were received.

The Rector duly closed the Annual Vestry Meeting at 7.12pm.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)**

1. **Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting** on 25th April 2018 were accepted as a true record, proposed by Helen Smith, seconded by Christine Babbedge.
2. **Report on the Electoral Roll:** The Electoral Roll Officer, Derek

Magson, explained that the Electoral Roll had been completely revised in 2019. Last year the list had consisted of 106 members, but following the revision of names, people moving away and deaths, there were now 89 names on the list, of which 6 were new members. This follows the usual pattern of a decline in numbers following a revision and gradually this number increases again.

**3. Parochial Church Council:** Members elected for the year 2018/2019 were:-

Revd. M Short, Rector - Ex officio

Dr. D Neill, Lay Reader- Ex officio

Stephen Hills – Churchwarden

Owing to the death of Keith Cox and Brian Honess there were vacancies on the PCC. Susan Lipthorpe was re-elected, nominated by Helen Smith, seconded by Trish Short. One vacancy still remains. It is open to anyone who can be co-opted onto the PCC and then elected next year.

**4. North Cotswold Deanery Synod:** Christine Babbedge remains a Deanery Synod Representative and thanks were given for the work done in that same role by the late Brian Honess. Helen Smith volunteered to take on his role and was elected, (proposed by Susan Lipthorpe and seconded by Trish Short). Both Deanery Synod representatives are ex-officio PCC members in their roles, with one DS vacancy still open.

**5. Annual Report and Accounts for year ending 31 December 2018:**

Following the death of Keith Cox, there was no annual report of detailed accounts for 2018. The Rector explained how very fortunate we were that Roger Formby, Treasurer of Condicote PCC, had very kindly – with the help of Keith and Ruth's son Martin – uploaded all the accounts to the Vestry PC. In fact that computer will shortly be replaced as it is 10 years old and no longer fit for purpose.

The Rector also thanked Dougie King and Christine Babbedge for their work as cashiers and Christine for holding the chequebook. We are carrying on day to day as normally as we can. Accounts will be presented in the fullness of time. An additional APCM will be required once accounts are available to be reviewed.

There were no questions and everyone understood why we are in the current situation following the sad death of Keith.

**6. Appointment of an Independent Examiner of Accounts:** Roger is working with William Hinton Ltd, the Chartered Accountants, acting as Independent Examiner of the Annual Report and Accounts. It was not sensible to consider reviewing accountants this year. This was unanimously agreed.

**7. Appointment of Sidespeople:** Sidespeople were re-elected en bloc for another year as follows: Susan Brattin, Graham Golby, Dougie King, Susan Liphthorpe, Chris Robinson, Janet Robinson, Christine Babbedge, Stephen Hills, Anne Varnish, John Kennell, Jeannie Kennell, Trish Short, Bernice Magson, Derek Magson, (for morning services) and Hazel James, Gillian James, Cath Brown and Dougie King (for evening services). A couple of the above people are not on the rota but happy to stand in if needed. Sadly the late Martin Brown's name is no longer on the list and Jennifer Thorne is unable to continue for health reasons. The Rector requested that if anyone else is willing to become a sidesperson they should contact him.

**8. The PCC Annual Report 2018/2019:** The PCC were thanked for meeting so regularly in the last year, including in the PCC groups. The report was printed in the meeting papers, and stated dates and issues covered by the PCC. There were no questions relating to the activities of the PCC. Jennie Barbour asked what the PCC were doing to get people in to church. Bernice Magson stated that 18 visits had been paid to the school, and many people attended the walks but that does not necessarily lead to people coming to church. The Rector stated that over 100 people came along to the various Wednesday evening activities throughout the year with a varied programme of activities, designed to appeal to different interests and groupings beyond the church community as well as within it.

He also stated that the Music at Stow community were glad to come to church and to appreciate the surroundings. Closely Knit includes some people who do not attend church. The MU group is also growing. There were no other questions.

**9. Building Management Fabric Report and Reordering Process Presentation:** The BMG had had a less busy year. The heating was working well. The subcommittee had taken on some non-reordering tasks e.g. new trees which will be red leaved in autumn, and getting costings for railings prior to applying for a faculty, required as it is so visible. It was proposed to take it from the right hand side of the top step, and then crossing to the left hand side, running all the way to the south door. Clive Beckett thought that the last five yards should be foldable to prevent

crowds obscuring the exit. The Rector was not sure whether that would be practical but would discuss it with Clive Beckett in due course.

The clock was working well. Rob Brown has been involved in gaining an understanding of how it works. Peter Dixon has also visited. It is now possible to do some of the work without an engineer and we recently saved £300.

Regarding the roof alarm, the Alexander charity have indicated a willingness to fund this item and it will be added to the faculty with the railing.

The old cleaning rota was not working well. It was suggested that a monthly cleaning session be set up, once it had been publicised.

Brigadier Clive Beckett mentioned that he has some experience of tree planting and that he felt the new trees had been planted 6 weeks too late. They will need watering every day. All were asked to bear this in mind and water them as we had opportunity to do so.

John Kennell had sent some notes for information as well as his apologies for the meeting. A soft copy of these would be available on request. John had taken over the running of this group. We were also fortunate to have the services of Brian Craig as project manager. Time had been taken to ensure provision was made for all occasions, e.g. combining work tasks with work needed on the heating, with discipline planning for both present and future requirements. The work may appear to be slow but it is very cost-effective to work in this way.

Walter Barbour asked if there will be another consultation session and when. MS said that it is coming together and when it is ready people will be told. A meeting would be helpful and Brian Craig would be able to explain the proposals and timescales. Until we identify exactly what is needed we cannot get costings. Peter Dixon pointed out that a broad outline of what would happen is in the final paragraph and was very much along the lines discussed at the meetings in 2016.

Clive Beckett asked whether the Alexander Trust are likely to help. MS stated that he could ask but they are more interested in the long term maintenance of the building and not re-ordering.

## **10. Report on the proceedings of the North Cotswold Deanery Synod**

The report was attached to the agenda. Christine Babbedge stressed how large an area the Deanery covers and reiterated how good it would be to have a third person representing our parish.

## 11. Rector's Report

This report was included in the meeting papers. The Rector thanked everyone for their many contributions, especially those leading our worship Tony Whitaker, Jane Gardner, Dilys Neill and John Stanley. Sadly John Stanley is not as fit as he would like to be and has had to step back from the preaching ministry that we all so much appreciated.

He mentioned people who are less able to be with us for various reasons: Pat Angell and Ann Beckett, Frances Clapham, Ruth Fitzgerald, Brian Halfpenny, David and Sandra Morris, Janet Page, Don Parton, Anne Taylor and Jennifer Thorne.

In addition he mentioned the seven saints who have completed their journey back to the Father, namely Marjorie Nutter, Mary Sharpe, Betty Bayliss, Anita Skjold, Malcolm Brown, Brian Honess and Keith Cox. During the winter Martin had officiated at 20 funerals here as well as that of his mother and his former Rector. The reality is we are currently quite short of people to contribute in the many ways that help keep the church and choir going.

It seems that our Deanery is not quite on the same hymn-sheet as the Diocesan Board of Finance who are asking for more parish share contributions from decreasing congregations. The current model is no longer sustainable. Radical thinking is needed about how we can re-shape what ministry we offer and how it is done.

Regarding challenges here, we have been hugely fortunate in having another Benefice treasurer, Roger Formby, stepping into Keith's shoes on a temporary basis. We are very grateful to Roger, Christine Babbedge and Dougie King who are all keeping money flowing as it needs to.

We are also very grateful to Stephen Hills who does a tremendous amount for us as our only churchwarden. Northleach do not currently have any wardens. We are also much indebted to former wardens John Kennell and Barbara Lee who happily fill in when they can and are training stewards.

In the benefice we gather on Wednesday evenings, including studying Luke's Gospel during Lent, and will soon be offering our Summer Programme of Walking and Talking. Martin continues to support both local schools, the Rugby Club and Cricket Club, two alms house charities and a number of other community groups. As a church we have a resurgent

Mother's Union Group, Closely Knit, and we are still capable of doing activity mornings for children like the one before Mothering Sunday at the hub.

Our reflective life continues with Evening Reflection, and turning Prayer Breakfast into Listening to God. We are all looking forward to being closer to God in heaven and these times can be ways of enjoying something more of heaven in the here and now.

Martin ended by asking whether what this age needs is for those of us who enjoy the gift of faith just to be a little more visible?

If people aren't worshipping with us, how can we help them to know that, by the grace of God, we feel very blessed? And that this blessing might be theirs as well?

He left these questions with us and looks forward to our thoughts.

## **12. Review of safeguarding policy**

The safeguarding policy had been reviewed and the PCC agreed it was robust and thus did not need changing. It is however a process and will be reviewed annually.

## **13. AOB**

Christine Babbedge wondered whether church members could be at the Town Council's Annual reporting meeting at the end of May. The Rector will request whether he would be allowed to speak at the meeting.

## **14. Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with prayers, at 8.10 pm.