

Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 2020 - St. Peter's Draycott

Agenda

14th October 2020 at 7:30 p.m. Draycott church.

Agenda

Item	Report	Presented by
1. Introductory remarks- changes to the APCM in the time of Covid		<i>Stuart Burns</i>
2. Attendance and apologies		
3. Minutes from meeting on 31 st March 2019 (confirmation of accuracy)		<i>Chris Green</i>
4. Vestry Meeting – to confirm the re-election of existing church wardens		
5. Statutory Reports		
Electoral Roll	A	<i>Chris Green</i>
Report on PCC proceedings	B	<i>Chris Green</i>
The financial report and accounts	C	<i>David Cheetham</i>
The churchwarden's fabric report	D	<i>John English/ Chris Green</i>
Deanery Synod Report	E	<i>Thea Oliver</i>
6. Re-appointment of Laity to the Parochial Church Council		
7. Re-appointment of sides men and women		
8. Appointment of independent financial examiner		
9. Remarks from the rector		<i>Stuart Burns</i>
10. Any other matters of important to the Parish		

Reports

A. Electoral Roll

Chris Green (standing in for electoral roll officer Richard Dingley)

At the previous APCM there were 36 on the electoral roll. Since then, Audrey Tungate has died, and so there are now 35.

B. Report on PCC proceedings

Chris Green (PCC Secretary)

At the last APCM we had nine members: Stuart Burns (rector); David Cheetham (Treasurer); Richard Dingley (electoral roll officer); Gill Dury, John English (churchwarden, covenant secretary); Chris Green (churchwarden, secretary); Tricia Lumley (Deanery representative); Pat Mullay; Thea Oliver (lay chair, Deanery representative).

Richard Dingley sadly suffered a stroke at Christmas, and has recently stepped down from all duties – in addition to his roles on the PCC, he had previously resumed active duty as a Reader, and represented the PCC on the Card Trust. He has had a very long and distinguished career of service to the church in many capacities, and we have been blessed by his many years at St Peter's (he was my own predecessor as secretary, and has supported and encouraged me in my own ministry as Reader). He will be greatly missed by the PCC, and our gratitude and very best wishes for the future go to him in this latest chapter in his life.

The PCC met five times before face-to-face meetings were put on hold by the Covid-19 pandemic. After lockdown, business was conducted by e-mail and using the ZOOM video conferencing software (we met in this way to decide on church reopening, and also on the restarting of face-to-face services). Finally we met face-to-face once more early in September, at a socially distanced gathering in the church.

It has been a difficult seven months for us all, individually and as a PCC, but I feel that the church and PCC have weathered the storm reasonably well. We have been able to respond to the challenges of managing the church under lockdown, and reopening it with appropriate safeguards as soon as we were allowed to.

C. The financial report and accounts

David Cheetham (Treasurer)

(Please see [separate report](#))

D. The churchwarden's fabric report

Chris Green, John English (Churchwardens)

1. The church overall is in generally sound condition, with the newly restored organ working well and electrics, heating, roof and churchyard not in need of any major works as far as we can tell (NB. we will be due another quinquennial survey before the end of 2021).
2. Damp problems
 - a. Our major structural issue has been penetrating damp, which has caused damage to the interior of the north nave and adjoining transept wall. This was caused by a blocked downpipe (which had somehow escaped detection by Dawsons Steeplejacks, who inspect rainwater goods annually).
 - b. We have taken advice from a specialist church restorer, Corbel Conservation Ltd., as to the measures required. As well as the blockage, other causes of the damp were a

- malfunctioning hopper and damaged pointing. All these issues have now been rectified by local builder Rob Millard. Some scraping of the damaged interior paintwork has been done, which has shown that the lime plaster underneath is in reasonable condition. However the wall must now be left to dry out before it can be repainted. This will not be possible until next year.
- c. Other areas of damp remain in the church, but none seem serious causes of concern. Previous damp in the south nave is now dried, and the paintwork can be repaired.
3. Various issues raised by our health and safety officer, Richard Oliver, have been addressed (see previous APCM report). An outstanding issue is the condition of trees in the old graveyard. Unfortunately due to circumstances this work was not able to go ahead this year, so this issue is still outstanding, although some emergency work has been carried out where a branch was resting on a power line. We wish to thank Roy Dury for installing the 'stepping stones' across the north side of the graveyard for us.
 4. We complied with the government order to lock churches in April 2020. When churches could once more open for individual visits in June, we conducted the necessary risk assessment and re-opened the church in a Covid-secure way. We likewise enabled the re-starting of regular services in church when this was permitted in July. We would like to thank Richard Oliver for conducting assessments and carrying out many of the interior rearrangements required for these developments.
 5. Last year the school requested permission to set up and leave displays from time to time in church. The PCC were very happy for this to go ahead, with some conditions. We have since enjoyed a number of interesting and colourful tableaux from them.
 6. The church is trying to engage actively with environmental concerns. As a starting point we have been separating 'green' waste from landfill, and taking it to a recycling centre (previously all waste was going to landfill). We have also replaced the halogen lights in the nave of the church with more energy-efficient LED ones.

E. Deanery Synod Report

Thea Oliver, Tricia Lumley (Deanery representatives)

Deanery Synod brings together the churches' life in the Axbridge Deanery. It is where we hear what is happening in the other parishes and they hear from us. We receive information from Diocesan and General Synod and discuss common problems. We generally hold three meetings a year.

Our first meeting of 2019 was hosted by St Peters, Draycott. We made everyone very welcome with tea and biscuits, a social time is an important part of building communication in the Deanery. The main focus of the evening was a presentation by the Diocesan 'Go Team' on working with young people and children. We looked at how to get young people into church and how we can engage more effectively with families. We are more afraid of change than of losing young people.

In October we again hosted Deanery Synod in Draycott. We are becoming a popular venue. Again we focussed on youth work and heard of resources available within the Diocese.

Blackford was the venue for the January meeting. We heard news from the parishes and gave thanks for the work of Rev Paula Hollingsworth who has now moved to St Paul's. There was a discussion of the Deanery Mission Plan, which focussed on the need to improve communications between Deanery, Diocese, parish and people.

In 2020 we are due to elect new Deanery and General Synod members; in 2021 we will elect new Diocesan representatives.

F. Rector's Report

Rector's report for the Annual Parochial Church Meetings held in October 2020 - reflecting on the pandemic. Stuart Burns

Though the APCM's reflect on the year ending 31/12/19, we are holding them in October 2020, and it seems more appropriate to reflect on the year which is nearly at its end.

The pandemic threw our churches into completely unprecedented challenge, and I think that, together, we responded to the very best of our creative ability.

Financially, all three of our churches have been seriously impaired by church closure, in that we have lost income from service collections, lack of weddings and funerals, and inability to hold fund-raising events. We (by "we" I mean "our churches") have been able to remain with our bank accounts in the black through the year, mainly through reserves and also our members' extra generosity, but 2021 poses a major financial worry, unless things return to normal.

Finances needed commenting on.

However, it is our shared life, as church family, that matters most.

Through the availability of Zoom online worship, we have been able to offer worship and prayer, not only every Sunday since the pandemic began in March, but also every other day of the week, through weekday Evening Prayer and Saturday Morning Prayer. We have been able to maintain this through our people's support and remarkable willingness to take on the technological challenge, through the hard work of our Ministry Team, and through the kind help of our organists and soloists who recorded so many hymns so well. We are grateful indeed to all these, and also to Ben Buse who started us off with zoom and taught us to use it. Zoom worship has not been bad! In fact, I think we do it quite well, and I know it has been an utter life-line to those in our fellowship who have been the most isolated. The chat before and after services has been as important and necessary as the service itself, and has had the excellent spin-off of growing our knowledge of one another between different churches in the benefice. Another great benefit of zoom daily prayer is that we have a whole lot of people who are now confident to read in church who did not do so before, and also many who have learned to pray together, aloud and spontaneously - this has eased our ability to express simple needs in prayer in the safety of the zoom fellowship.

However, there are of course, some who have not been able to connect through zoom, and have been therefore more isolated than most. We have tried to support these through letters and prayer resources sent in the post, and through good telephone support between many church-members. In all three churches, we set up a network for this telephone support.

Our church magazines have been provided, and to a very high standard, through the pandemic, and we are grateful to their editors. These helped us to keep in touch.

Another growth-point through the pandemic has been a greater diversity in our means of communication. A weekly email to everyone in the benefice (except the few without email) has been a new development brought on by the pandemic. Therefore the pandemic has brought innovation which I hope will continue even beyond this time: in particular greater electronic communication within the benefice, and also regular weekday online prayer. So, we shall have learned and improved because of Covid-19.

Our churches have though, of course, suffered great loss through the pandemic.

We have lost all socialising at events in and around the church, including the loss of coffee and chat after services. At St Andrew's we have lost Messy Church, Toddlers' group, Breakfast Services, Holiday Club, SALT lunch, Mothers' Unions meetings, and fellowship group meetings. We have lost SOSP Coffee Mornings, other coffee mornings and suppers in

all three churches, and many FOSL activities. I fear that these losses have been at high cost, and have increased people's sense of being alone, and have made some feel out-of-touch with church. These losses have all-but broken our ability to reach out to the non-churched communities in which we live. We have lost our ministry to children and effective contact with young families, especially those outside the churched community. This is very serious, as a fundamental reason for our being is to be able to reach out and evangelise and offer welcome and friendship to everyone, churched or not. I believe there is a sense of mourning the family-life we shared as church-fellowships - this is a bereavement, keenly felt in particular by those who live alone and for whom church was an essential family.

The church family is still intact, but has been through a very tough time (as have so many groups of people in every walk of life).

It will take a long time, I think, to rebuild what we have lost.

Many leaders of church activities and events are vulnerable because of the age-group in which they fall, and their return to leading will be a very big step, if it can be made. Many relationships with people outside of the churched community have lapsed simply because we have not seen people at the events we would have invited them to. School children at Draycott and Rodney Stoke School and the Kings of Wessex Academy have lost the familiarity they had with coming into our churches and feeling at home.

We had so much.

We pray and long for the time to come when we can restart and rebuild.

However, we do not have an end in sight yet of this fallow, lean time, or drought time (using the seasonal images so common in the Bible). I have to confess that I worry about this - the longer we have to wait and endure the restrictions of the pandemic, the greater will be the challenge to rebuild.

This is truly a time to "wait on the Lord", and trust and pray, that he can see the end, and has all the resources with which to equip us, so that our churches can rebuild and flourish again, as we follow God into the unknown future.

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"

(a psalm of David, 27:14)

I conclude my report by saying that I am very grateful indeed, and I thank God, for the many, many people - far too many to name here and now - who give to, work for, and share in the leading of our three churches all the time, through good times and bad, and who will be vital to the recovery of St Andrew's, St Leonard's and St Peter's.