

Annual Meetings Wednesday April 9th 2025

Annual Meeting of the Parishioners

The meeting was preceded with drinks and nibbles.

Present: The Revd. Claire Towns, Judy Penhaligon, Chris Jenkins, Charlie Sutton, Maggie Sutton, Gill Tucker, John Simarpi, Lavinia Morrison, Ann Edmonds, Lizzie Fox, David Kennett, Celia Kennett, Pauline Pickford, Christina Baron, Joanna Birkett, Katie Steadman-Towns, Michaela Cross, Stacey Camfield. David Grover, Ian Ames-White, Ruth Ames-White, Iona Baker, Mike Tolley, Alan Butt Philip, Caroline Riley, Rob Riley, Clifford Fountaine, Lella Fountaine, Jane Mackenzie, Phoebe King, Caroline Maycock, Linda Lapington, Jane Flinders, Roy Orme, Kathy Orme, Val Breen, Alan Thomas, Anna Dmochowski, Rosemary Evans, Gabrielle Camfield. (41)

Apologies: Kate Gleave, Jenny Maidment, June Wilcock, Valerie Forrester, Lynn Rendell, David Humphrys, Christine Humphrys, Sheila Baker, Amanda Russell, Cilla Grain, Gill Kelly, Debbie Cochrane, Julia Harris, Mike Harris, Jean Hague, Kathy Wilson, Lizzie Jeanes, Sue Winstone, Kathryn Tolley, Jan Hodge, Gill Palmer, Penny Farrell, Daphne Shillingford, Hazel Sharp, Rachel Thomas, Kathleen Davidson, Barbara and Michael Calverley. (28)

Claire thanked those members of the PCC who had provided the refreshments and to Chris Jenkins who was taking the minutes in the absence of a PCC Secretary.

1. Claire then opened the meeting with prayer.
2. The apologies as entered on the list were accepted.
3. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting of the Parishioners on Wednesday March 20th 2024 were agreed. Proposed Clifford Fountaine, Seconded Lavinia Morrison.
4. Election of Churchwardens: Judy Penhaligon had been proposed by Gill Tucker and Seconded by Charlie Sutton; and Chris Jenkins had been proposed by Joanna Birkett and seconded by Judy Penhaligon. There being no other names Judy and Chris were duly elected.
Claire thanked Judy and Chris, both of them different but with hugely complementary talents, gifts and qualities.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the APCM held on March 20th 2024 were agreed. Proposed by Ann Edmonds, Seconded by Joanna Birkett.

2. Reports.

2.1 Electoral Roll. Ann Edmonds reported that there were 119 names on the new Roll. There had been 121 but since the Roll had been updated Ron Davey and Megan Hewson had died.

From the old list 3 people had died, Jenny Boocock, Janet Wickett, and Irene Foyle. 12 others had moved or otherwise asked for their names to be removed. 36 had not responded and there were 7 new members. Claire thanked Ann and Caroline Maycock for the electoral roll details, especially as this was a year when we had to complete a new Roll, not just update the old one.

Charlie Sutton asked whether the drop in numbers would affect our Parish Share? The answer is no, as the share is calculated on average attendance, not the Roll.

2.2. Annual Report of the PCC

This is in the published booklet.

Joanna commented that ABC2 was flourishing, and Crafty Church was doing well with many thanks to Judy and Claire.

Claire commented on the Safeguarding team of Joanna, Mike and Michaela thanking them and all the work that put is in.

2.3. Financial Statements.

Ian presented a set of independently examined reports which showed that although we had plenty of money in the bank, we were still spending around £2500 per month more than we were getting in.

Although was being offset at the moment by the amount of interest we were getting from the legacy.

The telephone bill seems to be very high and Chris is looking into that, and the Gas and Electric bill is high but there is not much we can do about that.

For the legacy money we will be looking at smaller projects.

Claire thanked the Finance Team of Ian, Charlie and Barbara, as well as Fiona.

2.4. Fabric Report

This is in the published booklet.

Alan Butt Philip asked about the money which Pamela Pye had given for the North Porch and the Clock repairs. The porch was finished but the clock has not been touched.

Chris as chair of the Fabric Committee invited our architect Alan Thomas to reply. The answer was that the proposal was to refurbish the clock face only, but a faculty was refused as it was felt that the whole clock needed to be attended to not just the face. We are now in a position to look at this as a separate project.

Summary of Church Hall use.

2.5. Report on the Shepton Mallet Deanery Synod.

As per the report in the booklet.

3. Elections to PCC and Deanery Synod.

Claire thanked Debbie, Linda and Iona who were all standing down. (Megan Hewson had resigned due to ill health)

Nominations had been received for David Kennet, Michaela Cross, Ian Ames-White and Rachel Thomas.

As we had four vacancies these four were duly elected.

There were no nominations for the vacancy for Deanery Synod.

4. To appoint an external examiner for the financial statements of the PCC.

This year we have had to do the accounts in a different way because we have had a very high income.

It was agreed that unless we get another big legacy this year, next year we will revert to the independent Examiner that we used last year.

Proposed Joanna Birkett, seconded Alan Butt Philip.

5. Comments or questions about the 2024 report.

There were no comments or questions.

6. Chair's closing remarks.

Firstly, I want to say that I'm glad it's not this time last year!! I'm so thankful to God – and to you – for helping me get through what was a very difficult few months back then. I am, and we are now in a much better place, so Thank you!! Whilst saying thank you, I want to say that it's each and every person that makes life what it is at Sy Thomas, whether that be in exercising 'Up front' ministry, playing or singing, or reading or praying in services. Or in helping to keep the building and grounds in good shape; or keeping everything running smoothly, sidespeople, servers, welcomers, coffee makers and clearer uppers. Thanks to those who keep us safe, the PSO team, the Wardens. Thanks to those with front facing roles, whether at ABC2, Coffee Stop, and Crafty Church, or helping out at concerts. Thanks to those who do virtual 'Behind the scenes' roles, such as washing the linens and tea towels, cleaning, counting money etc. SO MANY people, SO MANY roles.

Thanks to Caroline for all she does, precious and invaluable part of our life here.

We have to remember those who have been very much part of life here but have recently died; Ron Davey, Michael Belham and Megan Hewson. As for the Legacy, We still have a vision and dreams for something big, but now is not the time as we need people to lead and drive it forward. Neither myself or the Churchwardens have the capacity to take on that amount of work at this time. Claire then highlighted some of the smaller projects that we were looking at. Lighting in the church. The possibility of having a fixed projector and a screen that can be easily put into position. A new shed. A new noticeboard. Tidy up and rearrange the choir vestry with shelves etc to make it a much more user friendly space instead of just an untidy corridor. Revamp the community room with a sofa and easy chair.

Claire outlined the idea of having a Premises/Facilities manager. The job description was done and we had someone who was interested. The plan is to invite them to apply without putting out a formal advert. This was quite within the rules and if it didn't work out then we would advertise as normal. Interviews were planned for the week commencing 19th May.

There was a question about how much the proposed Premises/Facilities manager would be paid. Claire said that the hours were 25 hours a week, annualised, but that she didn't want to announce the actual rate of pay, except to say that it was above the minimum living wage.

Claire then invited thoughts or suggestions for what we could be doing.

The following came from the meeting.

- Horrington burial ground fencing.
- Clock.
- Repairs to the main gates at the bottom of the church steps.
- Signage within the buildings eg. Pointing to the community room etc.
- Encourage families to use the choir vestry during services because of the noise generated at the back of church. This is something that might merit further debate because opposing views were expressed in the meeting
- Revamp the hall kitchen and toilets if there is going to be a delay in doing something else with the hall.
- Like Trio Paradis concerts, there is scope for similar daytime events.
- Improve the welcoming appearance of the front doors of the church.
- Get a key case for the hall for the hall users to use. (Already exists)
- Get rid of the heavy tables in the hall and move to all GoPack tables.
- Get rid of the piano in the hall.
- More vacuum flasks for coffee in church.

Thanks were expressed to Geoff Penhaligon for all he does around the church, mowing, cleaning, sorting rubbish, tidying the carpark etc.

Chris then thanked Claire for all she had done for St Thomas' throughout the year. He said that he had recently met a former Archdeacon of Wells who had commented very favourably on the vicar we had, especially taking services and preaching. But Chris also commented and thanked Claire for all that goes on behind the scenes, visiting, rotas, planning services and so much more.

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