

MINUTES – 21st March 2021
ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Attendance: The meeting was held online via Zoom with 62 people in attendance, including the Vicar and the PCC.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. **Welcome:** Andrew thanked those attending.
2. **Election of Churchwardens:** 2 nominations: Susan Holmes (proposed by Stella Williams, seconded by Elizabeth Benson) and Richard Bell (proposed by Nigel Jones, seconded by Paul Cobb). Since they were the only nominations and none were permitted to be taken from the floor, they were duly elected. The Vicar thanked them for all they do for us and looked forward to another 12 months of duty.

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Note that as the meeting was held online most reports were not made verbally but were included in the Annual Report, circulated to all congregation members prior to the Annual Meetings and questions were requested to be submitted before the meeting.

1. **Welcome:** The Vicar Revd Andrew Cinnamon opened with a prayer.
2. **Apologies:** none had been proffered.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting, 18th October 2020:** The minutes were accepted and signed.
4. **Electoral Roll:** this currently consists of 152 members; three have been removed from the 2020 roll and three added.
5. **Church Representation:** There were no elections this year.
6. **Safeguarding:** See Annual Report. No questions. The vicar thanked Pat Scott for her work as Parish Safeguarding Officer and acknowledged that this is her last APCM as PSO.
7. **Report on Deanery Synod:** See Annual Report. No questions.
8. **Report on PCC Proceedings:** See Annual Report. No questions.
9. **Churchwardens' Report:** See Annual Report. No questions.
10. **PCC Finance Report:** See Annual Report.
 - 10.1. **Question from Paul Larsen:** The PCC Accountability Guide on the Church of England's website states that it is recommended that fund accounts should be presented (and I quote) "to enable the reader to see that the PCC is spending its funds on the purposes for which they have been given." Therefore, the purpose of each fund should be described in notes to the accounts, including any restrictions/exclusions/conditions etc. such as those relating to the house in Perrinsfield. This needs to be accompanied by all the financial figures for each fund. There should be complete transparency for PCC members, those on the Electoral Roll and the wider public, especially given that the PCC receives public funds (Gift Aid tax). All such information was presented in the 2018 accounts. Will the PCC follow the recommended good practice of the Church of England?
 - 10.2. **Question from Keith Salway:** In one key respect I believe the accounts do not conform to best practice and charity commission requirements and need to be amended. There are a multiplicity of reserves and these are, so far as I can see (provided that there are no sale impediments on the Rosie Bell bequest of the Perrinsfield house), correctly characterised as restricted, designated and unrestricted. The problem is that no detail is then given as to

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what each restriction constitutes. The fabric fund (= "Restoration Appeal") is the historic fund for holding the old building together – stones and mortar; when we learned a legal view that this did not include eg electrical wiring and heating, the appeal committee set up the broader "Restoration and Maintenance Fund", and this continues in being; later the "Reordering Fund" was established with I believe one especially large gift. Those who gave over the years to the restoration appeal (and in legacies arriving later) understood the money to be for fabric work alone, typically identified in the Quinquennilas[sic]. It is of paramount importance that the PCC and the whole church understands the difference between these funds and that they cannot be co-mingled. Hence the need to set this out for a true and fair view in the accounts. Clearly that setting out cannot now be done as the accounts have been published but I do believe it should be explained and clearly minuted in the APCM as it may bear significantly on the ability to fund your still confidential plans.

10.3. Response to the above questions from PCC Treasurer:

I also pointed out that this is the third occasion that Paul has raised the same question and received the same answer – surely this must now come to an end. We have also had the same points raised by Keith Salway and for ease I am quoting my response to him on the points that have been raised:

The Accounts have been prepared under the Church of England Rules for Accounts (which no longer specify the information that is required to be disclosed), the Charity SORP, and The P.C.C. Accountability Guide to the Church of England and in particular paying attention to the requirement to "Avoid too much detail" and to "Summarise where possible".

The accounts comply in all respect to the requirements to show separately the funds of differing nature and the movement during the year in those funds.

The purpose of the Accounts and Notes to the Accounts is to aid the reader of the accounts (which at the APCM are the individuals on the electoral roll), to understand the principles under which the accounts have been prepared, to give the information to comprehend the surplus or deficiency on the general fund and the various funds through the year on which the accounts report and to give a clear position of the assets, liabilities and fund balances at the balance sheet date.

The purpose of the accounts is not to train the P.C.C. to understand the purpose of the funds, although the P.C.C and the Restoration Committee are fully aware of their responsibilities with regards the use of funds.

The P.C.C have already considered the points which you have raised since they have been previously raised by Paul Larsen on two occasions and are confident that the accounts comply with the relevant regulations and have approved them to be presented to the APCM. It is not considered necessary to add any further comments to the annual report being presented at the APCM.

PCC Treasurer also drew attention to the note on page 21 of the Annual Report and for clarity read it out.

10.4. Question from Dacre Watson: I see that the house in Perrinsfield left to the Church by Rosie Bell is valued at £270,000. I understand that this house was gifted to the Church. Was this gift unrestricted (and therefore could it be sold if the PCC wished to do so) and where exactly would the funds raised go to? Who makes that decision? Has any legal opinion been sought as to what must be done with such funds, as opposed to CAN be done with the funds?

10.5. Response to Dacre Watson from PCC Treasurer: Perrinsfield has always been included in the general fund. It is valued at £225000 in the accounts not £270000. Hypothetically If the property were to be sold the proceeds would go into the general funds and would be

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under the control of the PCC. We did have a legal opinion on this after the long term tenant left.

10.6. The vicar thanked David Williams for his sterling work as PCC Treasurer.

11. Vicar's Report: See Annual Report.

11.1. *Questions and comment from Rachel Chamberlain:* What was the rationale for not surveying the congregation of St. Lawrence before significantly altering the pattern of worship at church? How are the PCC monitoring attendance following the changes to the pattern of worship at St. Lawrence? What is the rationale for only having only one communion service each month which is accessible to families? How do the PCC plan to respond to the needs of those members of the congregation for whom the recent changes to services have been detrimental?

I would also like to put forward how much work Rachel Bath has put into the weekly Zoom chorister training sessions. Her enthusiasm and dedication have ensured that our younger choir members have been able to flourish during lockdown and she is doing a brilliant job in nurturing these young singers ready for when they are able to return to choral singing in church. This has required significant work on Rachel's behalf, in devising a wealth of activities for the choristers to complete during these training sessions. Her tenacity is commendable.

11.2. *Question and comment from Paul Jones:* I have nearly reached retirement age yet most of the congregation of St Lawrence Church is older than me or of a similar age. This means if St Lawrence Church stays as it is, when we get to the next generation, most of the congregation of St Lawrence will be dead and our Church will be dead as there is no generation after my age group. Over the years, many of our regular weekly services attract only tiny numbers of elderly people and our regular weekly principal services attract larger numbers of elderly people. It is a fact that Bible based Church's (even in the rural Cotswolds) that offer a lively family friendly service with a music group EVERY Sunday attract large numbers of young families. In our Church, we have a critical need for young families and singles in their 20's, 30's, 40's and 50's. Why are we continuing not to offer a lively family friendly service EVERY Sunday when we have all the gifts in our Church to offer that? Perhaps also an alternative "traditional" service EVERY Sunday which would most likely appeal to elderly people and some children learning how to sing in the Choir. Keeping the services the same for the few people who want nothing to change and offering traditions which mean little to most people in and around Lechlade below retirement age, goes against the teaching of Jesus which is to preach the gospel to all nations. The Christian faith is not all about Sunday, but if we have love for our community, we need to offer regular services which are accessible for our community.

11.3. Response to both above questions from the Vicar:

AC responded that he would answer both Rachel Chamberlain and Paul Jones' questions together.

The pattern of worship and the style of music will always be controversial in a parish church, which hopes to cater to all tastes within a local community. The church offers a variety of services and styles, but this will always and inevitably disappoint some people. The PCC is responsible, together with the vicar, for the pattern of worship and the PCC is representative of the whole congregation. The PCC does review attendance and worship on a regular basis and notes that the pattern across three distinct services (8am, 10am, 5pm) every Sunday offers variety and choice. It is noted that the 10am service is seen as the 'main' service and that is where differing opinions may arise.



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AC said that the whole church needs to think about mission- not just what does the existing congregation want, but what is best in terms of reaching out to the majority of the town, who have no links with church. It is not just about maintaining traditional forms of worship, but ensuring we have accessible and relevant worship in a format and language that people can understand. We also have to bear in mind that we cannot simply multiply additional services, as each service needs a separate rota of committed people to act as sidesmen, do readings and prayers etc. Only much larger churches with greater resources can offer additional 'main' services each Sunday.

It is fair to say that the vast majority churches in the local area have very few younger people who attend worship regularly. The vicar and PCC are very much aware of the need to attract younger people and families. This is not just to do with Sunday services, but also to do with mid-week events, such as 'Little Lights' for pre-school children, 'Explorers' after-school club, 'The Grid' for youth on Sundays and 'Quench' on Tuesdays. The vicar said that Sundays are a 'shop window' for the church family, but do not represent everything that is happening.

Church members expressed additional views, and a question regarding confirmations was raised from the floor. The vicar noted the view that confirmation is often thought a pre-requisite to taking communion, but that he felt that the number of communion services held is not a barrier to people being confirmed.

12. Other Reports: No questions.

13. Financial Presentation: No further questions or comments.

14. Appointment of Sidesmen: The vicar read the following list of Sidesmen/Sidespeople:

8am – Melanie Pitts, Neal Cotton, Sue Cotton, Helen Jones, Nigel Jones.

10am – Richard & Shirley Bell, Susan Holmes, Paul Cobb, Brian Rudge, Sue Rudge, David Williams, Michael Yorke, Dora Gurnett, Mary Williams, Lesley Uzzell.

6pm – Barbara McNaught, Dacre Watson, Peter Magill. These names were agreed.

15. Notification of Authorised Communion Distributors: Gillian Kirke, Christine Vagnolini, Paul Cobb, Lynda Larsen, Denver Keegan, Elizabeth Vaughan, Jan Taylor, Sandra Hoaksey, Mary Colley. All were accepted.

16. Appointment of Independent Examiner. David White was thanked and agreed to continue next year.

17. Any Other Business:

17.1. Susan Holmes, on behalf of those present and the church family, thanked Andrew and Kate and their family for their work and encouragement particularly over the past difficult year.

17.2. Andrew introduced Gareth Griffith, our new curate, and his family, who will be joining us in a few months' time.

18. The meeting closed at 12.30 with the Grace.