

ST PAUL'S CHURCH LETCHWORTH

Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners to elect Churchwardens held in St Paul's Church
on Sunday 28th April 2024 at 11.35am.

The Revd Jeni McQuaid chaired this meeting and opened with a reading from Psalm 22 v25-31. This was followed by a time of silent reflection as three candles were lit. Nick Smith lit a candle in memory of the faithful church members who had died, Archdeacon Charles for current church members and Jess Batten for members yet to be welcomed.

There were two individuals standing for Churchwarden. John Cliff (proposed by Ben Grierson-Hill and seconded by Keith Blundell) & Andrew Spendlove (proposed by Hazel Barrett and seconded by Nigel Woodbridge). Andrew sent his apologies as he was unable to attend due to a prior engagement.

Jeni expressed her gratitude as their professional experience will bring relevant skills and strength to St Paul's.

John and Andrew were duly elected as churchwardens with a reminder to continue to pray for them and support them.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH LETCHWORTH

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in St Paul's Church
on Sunday 28th April 2024 at 11.40am.

Present: Revd Jeni McQuaid in the chair, with approximately 60 church members in attendance.

Apologies: Jane Holmes, Jonathan & Laura Hughes, Finn McQuaid, Carol Rose,
Andrew & Ruth Spendlove and Judy & Clyde Watson.

2024/01	Approval of the minutes of the APCM held on 23rd April 2023 The adoption of the minutes (proposed by Judith Nash and seconded by Sam Brazier) were accepted by a show of hands and the minutes were signed by the chair.
2024/02	Matters arising from the minutes. There were no matters arising.
2024/03	Notification of any other business. No additional business was raised.
2024/04	Election of PCC Members. In accordance with Rule M15, no reader stood for election to the PCC. Jeni thanked Paul Thomson for his service on the PCC. There were 5 places on the PCC for a period of 3 years and 4 nominations had been received: Irene Adam, proposed by Louise Hoy and seconded by Phil Schofield. Emma Hitchin-Reeves, proposed by Emma Vernon and seconded by Emma Millichamp. Nigel Picket, proposed by Christopher Read and seconded by Julia Read. Keith Blundell, proposed by Andrew Gillard and seconded by Martin Hannon. All nominees were endorsed by a show of hands.

	<p>Philippa Dowson (proposed by Suzanne Gillard and seconded by Judith Nash) intends to stand for the open casual vacancy and the PCC will be asked to endorse her nomination at their next meeting.</p> <p>There are 3 open Deanery Synod places until 2026 and no candidates were nominated. Judith Nash continues to represent St Paul's and anyone wishing to know more about the role should speak with Judith or Jeni.</p>
2024/05	<p>PCC Annual Report.</p> <p>The PCC Annual Report and Accounts (unaudited) were agreed by the PCC and made available prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The written report was authored by Jeni, and the following highlights noted:</p> <p>Although the hope is in the risen Jesus and not in numbers, by His grace the numbers are growing. In 2018 regular attendance for worship was around 155, which grew to 235 prior to the pandemic. Although emerging from COVID and keeping in touch with each other was hard, current attendance at Sunday services is over 200. With many away for Easter, at one Sunday during the school holidays around 244 individuals attended services across the day.</p> <p>The Emerge Group for young adults that started 2 years ago with 4 members now has 27.</p> <p>Easter Sunday saw around 300 individuals attending, 68 of those being young people. Church and non-church families have engaged with "Prayers with Bears" and an After School Club. Young people are engaged with the SIX:30 service following the introduction of Alert and After Hours. Emma and Claire were thanked for their work with children & families and the youth.</p> <p>Thirteen candidates were either baptised or confirmed last year and Bishop Jane will be attending a similar planned event this summer.</p> <p>Home Groups and Connect Groups continue to grow.</p> <p>Nick led a retreat and over 100 people attended New Wine.</p> <p>Jess and James Batten have made a difference to St Paul's since they joined in the summer.</p> <p>Thanks were expressed to Vicky Cameron who as Administrator underpins St Paul's Ministry.</p> <p>Finally, the repair of the church roof is coming to an end and the generosity of the church family was acknowledged. Jess and Lisa Brooker were thanked for their work in preparing grant applications that raised funds for additional work that was needed and the church family for their time, money, energy, and talent.</p> <p>Accounts.</p> <p>Chris Dingwall highlighted the following points:</p> <p>The financial accounts circulated prior to the meeting are unaudited. Remaining costs for the roof repairs were estimated so it was deemed prudent to wait until the final invoices are received before issuing the final audited accounts for 2023.</p> <p>The estimated costs for the roof repair this time last year was around £220,00 with a 15% contingency for any unknown costs. The discovery of the concrete deck and the costs of its removal resulted in a shortfall of around £50,000. With the estimated cost being less than anticipated this difference was covered by grant funding.</p>

	<p>The general fund remains healthy, and noted his gratitude that regular giving remains stable, despite the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Energy costs have had a negative impact on finances being twice the historic costs. The use of energy continues to be monitored which has resulted in several thousands of pounds savings. The tariff is to be renewed in summer and it is hoped that a new contract will be cheaper.</p> <p>Thanks were expressed for donations which have enabled St Paul's to do amazing things.</p> <p>Jeni thanked Chris for overseeing the accounts, acknowledged by the meetings applause.</p>
2024/07	<p>Church Membership Fund.</p> <p>The report was available prior to the meeting. There was a small increase in the annual covenanted giving in 2023 despite a drop in the number of individuals providing regular contributions.</p> <p>£32,534.99 (excluding amounts in connection with the roof and other restricted fund) was claimed as Gift Aid in 2023.</p> <p>Carol Mynott was thanked for her work in collating the information in the report.</p>
2024/08	<p>Appointment of Independent Examiner.</p> <p>MTM Accountants who were appointed at the 2023 APCM to audit 2023 accounts informed the treasurer that they were no longer carrying out audits. Miller & Co were identified as a replacement and the PCC agreed for them to audit the 2023 accounts.</p> <p>The meeting unanimously agreed to appoint Miller & Co Accountants as auditors for the 2024 accounts. Morag Broadbent proposed, and Chris Dingwall seconded.</p>
2024/09	<p>Churchwardens Fabric report.</p> <p>In the absence of a Churchwarden, Rob Thornley produced a maintenance report that was available prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Jeni thanked Rob for creating the report and for his work with Paul Owen in maintaining the building in the absence of a Churchwarden.</p>
2024/10	<p>Deanery Synod Report.</p> <p>An annual report was available prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Judith Nash commented that the Deanery Synod was a useful forum for learning from other churches with representatives discussing activities and challenges. There are 6 meetings each year and Judith was thanked for representing St Paul's and for agreeing to remain on the Deanery Synod.</p>
2024/11	<p>Safeguarding Report.</p> <p>The annual report was available prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Anne Hignell was thanked for covering safeguarding which occurs behind the scenes due to confidentiality.</p> <p>Anne should be informed of any concerns regarding safeguarding.</p>
2024/12	<p>Mission Partner Report.</p> <p>The Mission Committee were thanked for their work and a report will be made available after this meeting.</p>

<p>2024/13</p>	<p>Raising the Roof Report.</p> <p>Paul Thomson provided an update to the report made available prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The roof is now in a state of good repair that should last for at least 100 years and final activities should be completed by the end of May.</p> <p>Paul thanked Lisa Brooker and Jess Batten for their work obtaining grants, Chris Dingwall for overseeing the finances, Ian Frearson for managing the project and the contractors for carrying out the work.</p>
<p>2024/14</p>	<p>Electoral Role.</p> <p>The electoral role was revised prior to this meeting.</p> <p>The number of people on the Electoral Roll is currently 201, 75 of which reside within the parish, and 126 residing outside of the parish. This is a slight reduction from last year's figure of 203.</p> <p>A revision of the roll is due next year and will require those currently on the roll to complete a form.</p> <p>Huw Nicholas was thanked for continuing as Electoral Roll Officer.</p>
<p>2024/15</p>	<p>Mission Action Plan (MAP).</p> <p>Judith Nash noted that the report supports the vision for St Pauls and reflects what has been achieved against the 5 marks of mission.</p> <p>Judith drew attention to St Paul's having a variety of services with different styles of worship, the work that is happening with the children and young people and the success of the Easter and Christmas Journey's.</p> <p>The year has brought change with the replacement of the chairs and being able to be easily stacked has allowed the use of the space in a variety of ways.</p> <p>It was noted that the Sunday Communion Service was 8.30am and not 8.00am as noted in the report.</p> <p>Judith was thanked for overseeing the MAP.</p>
<p>2024/16</p>	<p>Vicars Closing Remarks.</p> <p>Jeni noted the steps of faith taken in appointing Amanda Ferris at All Saints and St Mary's and Nick Smith to support the growth at St Paul's.</p> <p>At some point in the future there needs to be some thought to the physical structure of St Paul's to continue to support growth for the next 100 years. Some questions were posed as examples to consider:</p> <p>Wouldn't it be glorious if our children didn't have to go out into the cold by a big road to get to their groups and that our young people had a proper space dedicated to their discipleship?</p> <p>Wouldn't it be wonderful if Community Café had sufficient storage space and our team had an office they could work in rather than laptops on knees at home?</p> <p>And what if we were the building between Jackman's and Lordship that had its doors open for people coming to and from town to have a coffee and shelter from the rain while they pick up and read our Alpha literature?</p> <p>In closing, Jeni thanked all those involved in the life of St Paul's, and especially those who stayed to attend the meeting who she considers to be the backbone of the church.</p>

2024/17	AOB. Morag Broadbent noted that after worshiping at St Paul's for 54 years with 6 previous vicars, that this season is the best and most positive, St Paul's is reaching out to the local community, and so many activities are happening within the church. She encouraged continued support to those who make this possible.
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The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm with the Grace.

Keith Blundell.
PCC Secretary.
April 2024