



ST JOHN'S CHURCH HOVE

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Hove



Agenda and reports for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Agenda for the Annual Meeting of Parishioners

(to elect Churchwardens) to be held on 18th April 2021

1. Welcome and opening prayers
 2. Apologies for absence
 3. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of parishioners held on 4th October 2020
 4. Election of two Churchwardens to serve 2021/22
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Minutes of the annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 4th October 2020

1. The meeting began with welcome by Earl Collins (Priest in Charge) and prayer
2. Apologies were received from 30 people – recorded on file.
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair.
4. **Election of 2 Churchwardens to Serve 2020/21:** Mary Thomas and Barbara Bush (both proposed by Lisa Godfrey and seconded by Sue Davidson) had agreed to stand for a further year. There being no further nominations for the post of Churchwarden, Mary Thomas and Barbara Bush were unanimously elected to serve for 2020/21.

It was noted that this was the 6th and final year for BB and that the PCC had agreed MT could stand for a further year by exception only.

5. **Election of PCC Representatives to Serve 2020 to 2023:** Julie Beattie (proposed Pru White, seconded Ken Nightingale) and Sue Davidson (proposed Isla MacFarlane, seconded Judy Puttick) agreed to stand again. They were elected by vote. Alistair McNair had reached the end of his term, and Gill Corps has stood down a year early. Thanks were recorded to both for the service they have given to the Church. Andrew Maynard and John Browne were proposed by Mary Thomas and seconded by Barbara Bush and Sue Davidson respectively. There being no other proposals, the two were duly elected by vote.
6. **Election of Deanery Synod representatives to Serve 2020 to 2023:** Tom Savage had agreed to continue his term of office. Barbara Bush agreed to stand in place of Gill Corps. She was proposed by Pru White and seconded by Isla Macfarlane, and there being no other proposals, was duly elected by vote.
7. **Election of the Independent Examiner 2020-2021:** it was noted that Clare Osbond has given excellent service again as Independent Examiner. There being no other proposals, she was duly elected by vote to serve again.

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting on 4th October 2020.

Chair.....Date.....

Agenda for The Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held on Sunday 18^h April 2021

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the papers for this meeting were circulated to the congregation in advance, with voting intentions and questions submitted ahead of the meeting.

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 4th October 2020
- 3) Matters arising
- 4) Reports
 - 4.1 PCC Secretary's report
 - 4.2 Churchwardens' Fabric report
 - 4.3 Safeguarding report
 - 4.4 Electoral Roll report
 - 4.5 Deanery Synod report
 - 4.6 Mission Action Plan report
 - 4.7 Vicar and Churchwardens' report of the year
- 5) Elections and Appointments
 - 5.1 Election of new PCC members
 - 5.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 6) Finance
- 7) Questions
- 8) Any other business
- 9) Closing prayers

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 4th October 2020

The meeting was chaired by Earl Collins, Priest in Charge.

There were 12 parishioners present, the names of whom are recorded on the attached list

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from 24 parishioners. Their names are on the attached list.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF 28th April 2019

The minutes of the previous year's meeting were agreed with no amendments and signed by the Chair.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4 REPORTS

Due to Covid 19 restrictions the reports had been circulated prior to the APCM.

The PCC did not speak to the reports individually, however Barbara Bush summarized matters, saying the three main areas for the Church in 2019 had been a focus on income sources, the excellent Pastoral Care work undertaken by Pru White and Sue Davidson and the Fabric and Maintenance programme managed by Mary Thomas.

The reports were accepted as presented.

5 ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

5.1 Election of new PCC Members

Covered above.

5.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Barbara Bush recommended that Clare Osbond FCIE, who had examined the accounts of the previous year, be appointed for the following year. The motion was proposed by Mary Thomas and seconded by Chi Ho.

It was agreed to appoint Clare Osbond as Independent Examiner for 2020/2021.

6 Finance Report

Chi Ho provided a summary of the report to those present. The main issue the Church faces is that our income dropped by 9% in 2019 and the drop in costs were all one-off occurrences. Chi Ho urged all Parishioners to review their Planned Giving.

The report was received with no amendments.

7 QUESTIONS

TS responded to the only question raised, in respect of the future of the Trinity Trust. There had been no progress made since the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 and ensuing restrictions. TS advised he would seek an update at the next Deanery Synod meeting.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TS noted that Jez Aitchison had indicated he would be happy to run the Curry Club again. TS advised it would be held at a local restaurant, TBC, and that anyone who attends should ensure they are comfortable with the implementation of government Covid 19 guidelines at the restaurant chosen. Earl Collins confirmed it is open to all. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Jez Aitchison or Tom Savage.

CLOSING PRAYERS

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 12.05pm with The Grace.

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting on 4th October 2020

Chair.....Date.....

Reports for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the year ended 31st December 2020

4 Reports

4.1 PCC Secretary's report

Tom Savage

There were 6 PCC meetings held. At each meeting the following were discussed or at least on the agenda: church fabric and maintenance; finance; safeguarding.

In the course of the year, the following main items were discussed:

- The impact of Covid-19 – Church closure/opening and risk assessments
- Online services during Church closure periods
- Church attendance
- Planned Giving, including online donations
- Safeguarding SQP training and accreditation
- Revised budget forecasts
- Grant applications for Quinquennial report
- Church policies
- Approval of draft reports for APCM

4.2 Churchwardens' Fabric Report

Mary Thomas

Despite the church being closed for twenty-four weeks in response to the COVID-19 lock-downs, we worked safely with our service providers, within the regulations, to complete the programme of preventative maintenance and to attend to urgent unplanned repairs, e.g. the replacement of a pump to one of the boilers. The total cost of these works was £1,469. Some limited cleaning by volunteers continued during those closure weeks. We are immensely grateful to all who helped to keep the church interior so wonderfully clean, tidy and welcoming.

We are pleased to report that planned repairs to the roof below the South window, a major source of water ingress, were completed with the help of the Cornerstone Community Centre who generously paid for the work. Separately a leak in the vestry was resolved by replacing a tile on the East porch roof.

Graffiti was noted at the East end of the church by the Flower Stand and successfully removed at no cost. It was noted, too, that the edge of parts of the coping to the South gable had broken off. In discussion with our inspecting architect, it was agreed that there was no danger to the public but that this area should be monitored for further failures.

Outside of routine tasks our focus centered on addressing two areas. First, a priority recommendation in the last Quinquennial Report - the repair of the bell housing, which includes installing a system of safe access to the bell platform. Second, the damage to the East window caused by bird impact. For both areas, permission (a Faculty) is required from the Diocese before any work can commence. This involved on line provision of a large number of documents and photographs and liaison with our Inspecting Architect. Our Building and Finance Group has been closely involved in reviewing the service providers' quotes and making recommendations to the PCC. Additionally, Trevor, a member of the group took responsibility for applying for grants to pay for the bell work as we cannot afford the costs out of our own funds.

After starting the Faculty process in August 2020 permission to proceed was only granted in early January 2021. At the time of writing the outcome of our grant applications is still awaited and apart from the East window repair which is covered by insurance, work can only proceed if our grant application is successful.

As part of contingency planning, ahead of any official mandate, a decision was made to bulk purchase hand sanitizer, surface cleaner and masks. We were well prepared for what was to come. Another precautionary measure was to allow one organist to practice during closure periods to avoid the organ deteriorating.

Our garden, hugely valued by the local community, continued to be maintained by our gardener, Joi, even though we needed to reduce her hours as part of a cost-saving exercise. As ever we are grateful to Chris Woodley and his staff on the Flower Stand for keeping us supplied, at no cost to us, with wonderful flowers and our Christmas tree.

During the year we lost the last of the iconic historic phone boxes at the East end of the church. Despite our pleas, BT removed it one night without informing us.

Expenditure in 2021

Even when the church is closed the programme of preventative maintenance must still be undertaken. Not to do so merely stores up potential problems that are more costly to address. We are able to fund the installation of a safe access system to the bell platform and, when funds permit, we will repair the bell housing. If our grant applications are unsuccessful, we will need a major fund-raising effort to do this. We will also progress the lower priority Quinquennial recommendations.

4.3 Safeguarding Report

Lisa Godfrey

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults has continued to have a high profile in the parish as well as the Church as a whole.

There have been no safe guarding issues noted in the past year at St Johns. All policies are up to date.

Although the church has had limited services and has had to close at intervals due to the pandemic, there have been systems in place to support and check on those vulnerable members of our congregation.

4.4 Electoral Roll report

John Browne

Electoral Roll as at 31 December 2020: 75

New Members: 4

Moved or left: 0

Died: 1

4.5 Deanery Synod Report

Tom Savage

Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns there was only 1 meeting of the Deanery Synod held during the year: The main topics covered at the meeting were:

- The closure of the Trinity Trust
- The need for volunteers to sit on the Deanery Synod board itself.

4.6 Mission Action Plan Report

Barbara Bush

2020 has seen the final year of our most recent Mission Action Plan at St John the Baptist. And along with the many challenges of the pandemic, by the grace of God, it has delivered to us some new and invigorating opportunities. Never has the need been greater to support one another in the church, to focus in on our worship and prayer and to intensify our consideration of how we can best support the wider community, than at this difficult time.

The overall Mission of St John's for the last three years has been to Discover and Share the Love of God. In addressing this pragmatically we have planned, and now review, it in three parts: Open our Lives through Worship and Prayer; Share our Lives as a Christian Community; Work in Partnership with community groups to assist those in need.

Open our Lives through Worship and Prayer

We addressed the initial and changing regulations relating to COVID promptly and formally to provide safe modes of prayer and worship: this has involved a whole array of new methods of worship, from undertaking a detailed risk assessment to make the Church safe either for services, or for private prayer to assuring an effective track and trace service; training our stewards to manage safe sharing of the church space; providing and deploying a range of resources such as masks, gloves, surface cleaner; building an email mailing list to provide on-line contact, both worship and secular to support our congregation; increasing our pastoral calls across a wider group; ensuring notices outside the church are promptly changed with each new change. Particularly notable through this period have been the many sources shared between our congregation for prayer, hymns, and wider support that we alone were able to provide. During Easter and Christmas particularly, additional materials were provided to focus our Bible Study and reflection appropriately. Those joining the church during this time again commented on the quality of the welcome they received, even when the difficulties of that were so many. As each version of the regulations affected the services, they were promptly adapted to bring us together even if not in person, and when in person, with a priority on safety of our most vulnerable congregation.

Share our Lives as a Christian Community

During this year we have looked to the Diocese for guidance and for materials and have been blessed that our vicar is uniquely placed in his role in Continuing Ministerial Development to develop both their resources and ours. Our Building and Finance Group have worked collaboratively to address some of the serious practical and financial challenges that a Grade II listed building presents and continues to do so. We have continued, in whatever form of service, to extend

those contributing, through delivering Readings or Intercessions, and in discussing changes and taking feedback. As we developed our on-line communications, we were able more quickly to link in with new visitors to the church, some of whom have already become regulars. We have shared in the form of an on-line Bulletin valuable signposts to services and support, mental health advice, and good news stories from around the community.

Work in Partnership with community groups to assist those in need

This has been a challenging year for our partners in the church, who also service our community, as their services too have been at times closed down altogether or severely constrained by the regulations. Earlier in the year, we undertook a sympathetic review of the lease agreements, that recognised the challenges they are facing. We have kept in close touch with what they are able to offer, offering support where possible. Particularly we are grateful to Cornerstone, who despite all, managed to donate the cost of our roof repairs this year. We agreed parking facilities for a film crew, that brought income into HOP50+. And we worked closely with the Flowerstand, a well-known focal point and service to the community, as they varied their goods to both meet community needs and ensure the survival of the business. Our key charitable giving is effected through the leases with Cornerstone and with HOP50+, recognising our shared mission to provide support across all groups in the community. The lease with HOP50+ on that basis is set at one tenth of the market rate: this currently equates to an annual subsidy from the Church of £15,750. And for Cornerstone, only a notional annual rent is set, which we can estimate as a roughly equivalent size of subsidy to their community services by the church. We have continued to collect for Fareshare and held a particularly successful appeal at Christmas, resulting in a large donation of food and toiletries for distribution to those in need. In order to make as great a contribution to our Parish Share to the Diocese as possible, we have reviewed and trimmed our regular costs. And as we approached the year end, we had a wonderful response to a request for Christmas Events. This led to an on-line Carol Service, the raffle of an original art work and a lively on-line Christmas Quiz. All of these contributed significantly not only to the depleted church funds but to the morale and community spirit of our congregation.

4.7 Vicar's Report of the Year

Rev Earl Collins

It is hard to believe that I have now served in St John the Baptist, Hove, for almost eighteen months since being appointed priest in charge in July 2019. I am delighted to say that on the 3rd of January 2021 I will be licensed as Vicar and Incumbent in the Sunday service, following unanimous approval by the PCC in November.

Although 2020 was greatly affected by the appearance of the pandemic in February/March and the implementation of the various measures required to limit its spread and keep everyone safe, we initially got off to a good start with normal parish life – celebrating our usual round of services (having in 2019 added Compline at 7.30pm on Tuesday evenings). We also continued our weekly study circle, looking at various topics in Holy Scripture and theology. Each event was well attended, with Compline at times having up to 18 worshippers and the study group welcoming as many as 15. We also brought the donations generously made by parishioners in Advent and at Christmas 2019 to Fareshare. We held a timely Stewardship Service, with input from John Kemp, in February, little realising what

pressure our Finances were about to come under for the rest of the year and beyond, but more of that later.

Joyful parish events

The parish experienced a number of joyful events, including Penny West making her first Holy Communion on the 5th of January and the baptism of Sophia Watson on the 19th of January. I was invited to preach at All Saints for Candlemas. Later in the year, between lockdowns, we also rejoiced at the regular visit of the Swedish Lutheran chaplain in London to celebrate the Eucharist with the Swedish community of Brighton and Hove on the 25th of September. Just before the second lockdown began we were delighted (and relieved!) that we could also celebrate the baptism of Milena Standen on All Saints' Day.

A Funeral

A sadder occasion was the funeral of Gillian Threshie on Tuesday the 6th of October, which due to Covid regulations her husband Ernest watched from home on computer. Their son Duncan, a Baptist Pastor, took the service: he kindly invited me to participate and use the Anglican Rite for the committal. Funerals are difficult due to the pandemic but Gillian received a good send-off, worthy of a much-loved wife, mother, and grandmother, and a cherished parishioner who had generously served her community.

Parish responses to the pandemic

During the first three months of normality, ministry to the housebound continued (bringing Holy Communion and visiting parishioners). I also continued my other work as CMD Officer for Chichester Diocese and in a variety of diocesan commissions. However, having enthusiastically launched Lent with an evening Ash Wednesday service, it was not long before we found ourselves in lockdown. Thankfully a timely PCC meeting saw us slightly ahead of the game in responding to it. Although home visits had to be suspended, we ensured as a high priority that housebound parishioners continued to be regularly telephoned to check on their wellbeing. In 2020, the Pastoral Team made 25 home visits and 263 telephone calls.

Twice-weekly Vicar's messages (sermon/reflection and prayers) were emailed to parishioners, or delivered by hand. The Wednesday ones were shorter messages (including some guidance about managing enforced solitude); the Saturday ones were longer and contained the relevant Gospel reading, a reflection/homily, intentions for prayer and the Sunday Collects. Regular bulletins were sent or delivered by the Church Wardens to all in the parish to keep people up to date with developments and encourage morale. During and after lockdowns regular meetings have continued with the Church Wardens to plan ahead and monitor our outreach to housebound parishioners.

The Eucharist continued to be celebrated (by me, alone) every Sunday at the altar of St John's. While such solitary celebrations are far from ideal (though the Church's tradition has always permitted hermits to celebrate alone), they should not be seen as "private events." In every Eucharist we celebrate together with the heavenly community of angels and saints invisibly present. Even in the physical absence of the congregation, it was moving to invoke God's protection on all in our

parish and local community, and to feel God's blessing pass beyond the walls of the church.

That was true also for the celebration of Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday and moving on to the "Three Great Days" (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday). Each of those services was celebrated alone, concluding with the lighting of the Paschal Candle on Easter Sunday morning. It was surely the strangest Easter but the truth was still the same: Christ is risen! During that time, regular Easter email communications were also sent to the parish.

With the easing of the first lockdown, we were able to open the church for two hours on Wednesdays (10.00am-12.00pm) for personal prayer and reflection, strictly in accordance with the regulations and with the Vicar and a steward present. There was a regular flow of visitors each week, some from our congregation, others unknown to us, who took the opportunity for some quiet time for prayer and reflection. Various people remarked how important it was to see the church open and able to offer such a facility.

With public worship permitted again, albeit under strict controls, our Sunday morning schedule was adapted to allow for two celebrations of the Eucharist at 10.00am and 11.00am, "said services" but with organ accompaniment provided by our faithful organists. These two shortened services enabled us to open for the average number of our congregation, whilst fulfilling the rules on social distancing by limiting numbers at each service and allowing time for sanitising between and after events.

With the ending of the second period of lockdown our Covid-regulated pattern of Sunday worship (two short said services) was again resumed on the 2nd Sunday of Advent, the 6th of December. Compline was also held on the evening of Tuesday the 8th of December, in the main body of the church. Happily, we have continued to have substantial numbers worshipping at our two Sunday services.

The challenges continued throughout the rest of the year, seeing further regulations and changes to reflect the changing infection rate and NHS pressures. I am relieved and pleased however to report that the steps we put in place for all eventualities worked like clockwork when we heard of our first COVID positive Church member. Our register, mailing list and Track and Trace mechanisms supported a smooth notification both to those directly in contact with the individual, and to all members of the Church re a week long closure, despite very late notice in relation to the main Sunday Services.

Christmas – reduced but celebrated!

While our usual services had to be reduced, a said Eucharist with organ music was celebrated at 10.30am on Christmas morning. Unfortunately our annual public carol service – much loved by the parish and general public – could not take place. However thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Lisa Godfrey, a splendid online version was recorded and posted on our website on the 20th of December 2020. On Christmas Eve the church was also opened for two hours for personal prayer before the crib and a considerable number of people availed of the opportunity.