

St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Goring on Thames
Annual Meetings held in the Canterbury Room
Sunday 28th April 2024 at 11.00 a.m.

Minutes

Chairman: Ben Phillips

Secretary: Henry Parkinson

Present : Judith Aguda, Jenny Boyd, Bill Bird, Bridget Braham, Jonathan Clifton, Catherine Coulson, Ginty Fay, Matt Foster, Alison Gray, Harry Hogg, Rob Howard, Alun Hughes, Brenda Kerr Muir, Sue Melsher, Elizabeth Parkinson, Don Shrimpton, Hazel Shrimpton, Matt Walker, Melissa Walker

Apologies: Joan Fountain, Nigel Fountain, Judith Hogg, Elwyn Hughes, Sarah Meyrick, Robin Middleton, Wendy Middleton, Mary Plowman

Welcome: The chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those present and noting apologies for absence. He led the meeting in prayers of thankfulness for the year past and the year to come. He remembered those from the congregation who had passed away during the year: Christine Tucker, Jan Thomson, Kate Herbert, Marian Coward and more recently Norma Bryant and Harry Wincott; and welcomed those who had joined us during the year: Jon & Margaret Styles, Martin & Claire Leckie, Chris & Laura Kelly, and Matt Foster & Emily Mustoe.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Election of Churchwardens: The Chairman emphasised how blessed we are to have two churchwardens willing to serve the congregation in St Thomas'. He reported that two nominations for churchwarden had been received: one for Mrs Brenda Kerr Muir, nominated by Elizabeth Parkinson and seconded by Melissa Walker; and one for Mr Rob Howard, nominated by Elizabeth Parkinson and seconded by Melissa Walker. There being no further nominations, Brenda Kerr Muir and Rob Howard were unanimously agreed by the meeting and elected. The chairman thanked Brenda and Rob most warmly for all they are and have done and for their willingness to serve again for a further year.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2023:** The Chairman asked if there were any comments on these. None were expressed, and all present indicated that these be accepted. The Chairman signed the minutes.
2. **Parochial Church Council (PCC) Statutory Reports:**
 - a. **Electoral Roll:** Judith Aguda, Electoral Roll Officer, noted a correction to the information reported for last year's electoral roll which should have said that 4 people on the roll had moved away and 5 had died. She reported that for this year there are now 117 names on the Roll, up 1 from last year. There were 7 new names on the Roll, with 6 people having moved away or died. The chairman thanked Judith for her work as Electoral Roll Officer.
 - b. **PCC and Parish Activity during 2023:** Written reports produced by the leaders of the various church organisations had been received by the PCC Secretary and combined into the "Reports of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the Parish in 2023". The report had been made available online via a link in the weekly notices, a copy of the report had been displayed on a notice board in the church and copies were available at this meeting. The Chairman noted that there had been lots of continuing activity during the year and picked out a few examples including: our link with CMS partners Steve & Lindsey

Poulson and their extraordinary work with young people in Honduras; the work of the Primary School with our own young children; and the bell-ringing team for their audible outreach. He thanked all those involved in these and the many other activities which sustain church life noting activities represented by those at the meeting: the hymn committee and music, coffee making & hospitality, flower arranging, transportation and safeguarding.

c. Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ending 31st December 2023: The accounts had been made available online via a link in the weekly notices, a copy of the accounts had been displayed on the notice board in the church for the previous week and copies were available at this meeting. Don Shrimpton, PCC Honorary Treasurer, pointed out the following features of the financial statements:

- Unrestricted Funds Income was about £19k greater than the previous year at around £133,000;
- Expenditure was substantially greater than last year due to higher energy bills, but mainly due to undertaking repair work identified in the last quinquennial report;
- The Piano Fund has been added to the Restricted funds for the upkeep of the community piano under the custodianship of the PCC and the Organ Fund has been closed following the completion of the organ rebuild and as originally planned, the fund has morphed into the Organ Scholarship Fund.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Brenda Kerr Muir and the meeting indicated unanimous approval of the accounts. The chairman offered his thanks for all who have given during the past year, financially, of their time, and of their spirit, and also for the hard work of the treasurer.

d. Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church: Rob Howard thanked the congregation for their patience during the quinquennial repair works and said that he had been pleased with the work completed by the contractors. The final stage of work to replace the red tiles in the chancel floor will start in May. As part of this, lifting wheels will be fitted to the communion table to make it easier to move. The next quinquennial period starts in May and Rob said that he has engaged a new architect to undertake the work.

e. Proceedings of the Deanery Synod: The Chairman referred the meeting to the written reports.

3. Elections of Parochial Representatives of the Laity:

a. To the Parochial Church Council

Nominations had been received for Simon Merrit and Melissa Walker who were both willing to serve for a second three-year term of office. This did not exceed the number of vacancies (6) and both were therefore elected to the PCC. The chairman thanked the returning and remaining PCC members and also noted that Sarah Morton had stood down from the PCC during the year and he thanked her for her service to the church.

4. Appointment of the Independent Financial Examiner: The chairman noted that the Independent Financial Examiner was from Mercer Lewin Ltd and Don Shrimpton proposed that this company should continue in this role next year. This was agreed unanimously.

5. Vicar's Address: The chairman noted the work in support of the care homes in the benefice, with he and Jonathan Clifton going to the Grange to lead simple services there, Wendy Middleton and Liz Dowding regularly visiting Lyndhurst and Cleeve Lodge and Clive Windebank and John Rogers visiting the Coombe. Working with the young, we tried the Genesis after school club which didn't take off as we had hoped but was good to try. We are continuing look for initiatives to support young people and keeping our existing family groups engaged and supported. The vicar noted his thanks to all in the ministry team and suggested that we should support Jo Allen in her new job through prayer. Similarly, we have been fortunate to have Clare Stephenson with us and we wish her well as she takes up her new post in Cambridge. He concluded by reflecting that God, remarkably, has hope in us, and we thank God for all we have. The vicar was thanked for his inspirational leadership during the year.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.50 a.m. with a time of quiet and prayer.