

The Parish of Amesbury

Annual Meeting of Parishioners and APCM Wednesday 25th May 2022, held in church, 7.30pm.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Fr. Darren welcomed everyone to the meetings and opened the proceedings with prayer.

The Election of Churchwarden:

The nomination of Mrs. Sophie Moody as Churchwarden was approved. Proposed by Mrs. Barbara Maddocks and seconded by Mrs. Jacqui Brick. Fr. Darren thanked Mrs. Barbara Maddocks for her valued service as Churchwarden and expressed the good wishes of the meeting for her new life in Carlisle.

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Amesbury Abbey Church

Apologies for absence were given by Mrs. Jan Swindlehurst and Mrs. Wendy Ellis, because of the changed date of the meeting.

In the absence of Mrs. Jan Swindlehurst, Fr. Darren chaired the meeting.

The ***Friends' Annual Report*** was circulated before the meeting.

The President's Address

Fr. Darren expressed thanks for the work of the Friends during the past year and observed that this had been especially challenging because of the continuing Covid19 pandemic which had seriously curtailed activity.

The Chairperson's Report

This was circulated before the start of the meeting and approved unanimously.

Election of the Friends' Committee

The committee members were collectively re-elected, proposed by Mrs. Sophie Moody, seconded by Mr. Tony Pryor-Jones, and approved unanimously.

The Financial Report

This was circulated before the meeting. There were no questions forthcoming from those attending the meeting. The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Mrs. Shaula Crabtree, seconded by Mrs. Ruth Davies, and approved unanimously.

There were no questions, and the Friends' Annual General Meeting was concluded.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mrs. Anne Bush, Mrs. Lisa Courtney (Treasurer), Mr. Nigel de Foubert, Mrs. Barbara Maddocks, Mrs. Christine Thompson, and Mrs. Pat Southwell.

Those in attendance at the meeting:

Father Darren A'Court, Mrs. Jeanette A'Court, Mrs. Angela Bayliss, Mrs. Pam Bishop, Mrs. Shaula Crabtree, Mrs. Ruth Davies, Mrs. Rosemary Eaton, Mr. David Felgate, Mr. Alex Fryatt, Mrs. Julie Lewis, Mr. Doug May, Mrs. Anne May, Mrs. Sophie Moody, Miss Katie Newham, Mr. Michael Nottage, Mr. Tony Pryor-Jones, Mrs. Trish Pryor-Jones, Mr. Andrew Robson, Mr. Gerry Southwell, Mrs. Liz Wrighton.

The Minutes of the APCM of 2021

Mrs. Angela Bayliss expressed her objection to having been muted at the meeting (that took place via Zoom because of the Covid19 pandemic). It was explained that because of the technicalities of the Zoom arrangement all those attending were muted. Those PCC members assigned to the answering of particular questions were unmuted for the duration of their answers to those specific

questions. Everyone was at liberty to ask questions or express opinions during the meeting via the chat function. This facility was used by a number of participants. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the APCM of April 21st 2021 (via Zoom), proposed by Mrs. Ruth Davies, seconded by Mrs. Julie Lewis; with one abstention.

The Electoral Roll Report

There are 99 electors on the Church Electoral Roll dated April 6th 2022. The Notice is signed by Mrs. Barbara Maddocks as Churchwarden and Acting Electoral Roll Officer, and posted on the church notice board. Fr. Darren thanked Mrs. Jill Reece for her service as Electoral Roll Officer. He expressed his pleasure that Mrs. Shaula Crabtree has agreed to take on the duties of Electoral Roll Officer.

The PCC Secretary's Report

This report is to be found on page 5 of the Amesbury Parish Church Annual Report.

The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement.

In the unavoidable absence of Mrs. Lisa Courtney, Treasurer to the PCC, the Financial Statement was presented to the meeting: the Income and Expenditure Account for the period ending December 31st 2021, the Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at December 31st 2021, and the Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Wyndham Hall as at December 31st 2021.

Mrs. Angela Bayliss asked if there are plans to address the deficit, and, if so, might this include the reconstitution of the appeal committee? Fr. Darren spoke about the current financial situation facing the parish, a difficulty experienced in common with many other parishes, and commented that the task will take some time. He further explained that the funds raised for the fabric of the church are restricted as designated funds for use on the fabric of the church building only and are not permitted to be used for the meeting of parish expenses. He was pleased to say that the next stage of the roof repairs, to the tower roof, will be met from a legacy. Further work will require applications for grants from relevant bodies. Funding for the work of the parish will continue to be provided by the regular giving of parishioners and supplemented, importantly, by our own fund-raising initiatives, including coffee mornings and other activities. The presentation and signing of the audited accounts approved by the PCC on May 12th 2022: proposed by Mrs. Angela Bayliss, seconded by Mr. David Felgate, and agreed unanimously.

The Appointment of Independent Examiner.

Fr. Darren proposed that Mr. John Reid be asked to continue in the role and this was agreed unanimously.

Fabric, Goods, and Ornaments: purchases and disposals during the past year.

Mrs. Angela Bayliss noted that a pair of candlesticks appears to have been lost from the altar in the Jesus Chapel. Fr. Darren indicated that it was his understanding that the brass candlesticks that had been used in the Jesus Chapel are now located on the nave altar. Mrs. Sophie Moody, appointed earlier in the meeting as Churchwarden, said that the inventory will be examined during the forthcoming Archdeacon's Triennial Inspection in June. The Inventory remains the same as last year and the paper copy is signed by the Churchwarden.

The Elections of members of the Parochial Church Council

Miss Katie Newham, proposed by Mrs. Sophie Moody, seconded by Mr. Michael Nottage, and Mr. Alex Fryatt, proposed by Mrs. Angela Bayliss, seconded by Mr. Doug May. It was unanimously agreed that both should be elected to the PCC.

The Election of Gift Aid Secretary

Fr. Darren thanked Mr. Jerry Kernow and Mr. Gerry Southwell for their work in relation to the parish's Gift Aid scheme. Miss Katie Newham was elected as Gift Aid Secretary, proposed by Mr. Michael Nottage, seconded by Mr. Gerry Southwell, and agreed unanimously.

The Deanery Synod Report

Mrs. Sophie Moody has been the parish's Deanery Synod Representative; there were no questions about the Deanery Synod. No volunteer was forthcoming to represent Amesbury at the meeting. Fr. Darren spoke about the importance and usefulness of the role and encouraged

parishioners to consider whether this is something that could be their personal contribution to the life of the Church in Amesbury.

Approval of Sidespersons

Fr. Darren spoke of the key role of the Sidesperson in presenting the welcoming face of the Church, the first encounter with someone when arriving in the church for a service. Mrs. Julie Lewis kindly volunteered to undertake this role and Fr. Darren thanked her for taking this on. It would be helpful, too, if there are other parishioners who would be prepared to help out in this way.

Adoption of the parish's Safeguarding Policy

Fr. Darren observed that the parish Safeguarding Policy is based on the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, and that it is re-adopted each year at the APCM. Mrs. Ruth Davies is the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Fr. Darren thanked Ruth for her work in this role and for agreeing to continue to contribute to the life of the parish in this way. It was proposed that Mrs. Ruth Davies be re-elected as Parish Safeguarding Officer; proposed by Mr. Tony Pryor Jones, seconded by Mrs. Shaula Crabtree, and agreed unanimously.

The Address by Fr. Darren

Father Darren observed that the past three or four years have been a particularly demanding time for the Vicar and the parish, not least because of the Covid19 pandemic. Despite the challenges involved he expressed the belief that we must now look forward, and that there are exciting and positive times ahead for the parish of Amesbury. He commended the warm and friendly atmosphere at the Sunday morning Eucharists and the social times in the north transept with coffee and biscuits afterwards. The 'sociable strollers' have revived their walking and pub lunch programme for the first time since the pandemic and, overall, the parish has much to celebrate and be thankful for. God is faithful. Everyone is invited to come together to further the Church's mission.

Questions raised at the meeting

Mr. Michael Nottage asked if there are plans to attract young people and children. Fr. Darren expressed his intention that the life of the parish should include young people and families. He commented that this is not necessarily just about worship, though the pattern of worship will require some flexibility on everyone's part if this need is to be met. Involving young families and children is about ensuring there is a welcoming church community, successful links with the schools, and a range of clubs and activities. Fr. Darren visits the primary school regularly and looks forward to the school restarting its visits to the church that were suspended because of the Covid pandemic. He commended the work of Mr. Tony Pryor Jones in connection with community relations, particularly with the Scout Group.

Mrs. Angela Bayliss commented that in her view there is a need for a short Family Service and that an hour is too long for children and families.

Mrs. Jeanette A'Court spoke of the scope, post-pandemic, for developing both the worship and the social activities.

Fr. Darren emphasised the need for support to make these things happen, and that an All-Age Service would require a broader range of musical styles than we have provided in the past.

Mrs. Sophie Moody, Churchwarden, told the meeting that she will provide an ideas book for parishioners' suggestions for ways we can attract new members, especially younger people and families.

Mr. Alex Fryatt also asked about the prospect for the future growth of the worshipping community, and asked if the parish has a vision of the Church in Amesbury for five or ten years' time.

Fr. Darren invited comments on this question from the floor of the meeting. Responses included the perception that 'we would need to work harder', that 'perhaps we haven't tried hard enough', and that we shouldn't hold 'dogmatic' views. Fr. Darren pointed out that we are an episcopal church regulated by canon law. On the matter of the arrangements for coffee after the Sunday

Eucharist Fr. Darren reported much positive feedback, not least for the greater potential for mingling in comparison to sitting around tables. Mr. Fryatt suggested the PCC consider an awayday to reflect on the idea of drawing up a long term vision for the parish. Mrs. Sophie Moody challenged the implication that the PCC had not given sufficient thought to preparations for the future life of the parish and spoke of her experience of being involved since 1997. She accepted that there is a need to encourage new people in to the life of the church but drew attention to the 'Fit-for-the-Future' deliberations and work that had been going on in the parish for at least ten years. She commented that much work goes on 'quietly and faithfully' despite parishioners' own personal challenges and family needs. The Covid pandemic, the parish's financial challenges, including the matter of the future of the Wyndham Hall and its recent sale have all significantly consumed the energies of those actively involved.

Fr. Darren said that, above all, we need to pray for the flourishing of the parish.

Questions submitted prior to the meeting

From Mrs. Anne Bush:

The Church website has published the minutes of a meeting held on 12/01/21 at which the future of the Wyndham Hall was discussed. These minutes were not published until much later in 2021. They were not published before the April AGM, why was this?

Answer: The PCC approved the minutes; the Archdeacon reviewed the minutes; they were published on the website as soon as all the processes were completed.

It can be noted that the minutes of this extra meeting are in a different format from the regular monthly meetings. Where and when did these minutes come from ?

Answer: The minutes were recorded and typed by a member of the PCC, there being no permanent PCC secretary at the time.

There were several members of the PCC who were not registered as trustees at the time.

Answer: All the members of the PCC were properly elected members.

My next question is does this make the decision to sell the Wyndham Hall legal?

Answer: The PCC, as the legally-responsible body, made the decision; it was scrutinised by the Archdeacon. The hall could not be sold without the permission of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and this permission was granted.

The parishioners who sent in questions to the AGM were muted so we're unable to discuss their questions. For example I asked "why didn't we advertise for a new hall manager, so that the hall be opened up as lockdown was now opening up" I was told in no uncertain terms and quite rudely that the church couldn't afford a manager ! As I was muted I was unable to answer and point out that if we employed a manager it would generate an income for the church.

Answer: The APCM was held via Zoom because of the Covid pandemic. To manage a complex meeting on Zoom made it necessary to invite questions in advance. Those attending the meeting were muted. The PCC members assigned to answer specific questions were unmuted in order to answer the submitted questions. Parishioners were encouraged to use the chat function on Zoom and many did so.

Why were we told at the very end of a long meeting that the PCC had decided to sell the hall.

Answer: The PCC, whose responsibility it was, made the decision to sell the hall and that decision was recorded in the meeting minutes as detailed above.

I would like it minuted that the decision to sell the Wyndham Hall was made without any involvement of the parishioners in spite of many attempts to meet with the PCC to discuss this enormous decision.

From Mr. Nigel de Foubert:

In the financial report there is a reference to 'Rentals'. What are these?

The rentals line in the Wyndham Hall accounts show the proceeds from the hiring out of the hall to individuals and groups. There were no hirings of the hall in 2021.

Where is the Zebedee gate? For clarity, there were two metal gates at the entrance to the church from the Abbey external car park, leading past the War Memorial to the Vestry door. When will they be replaced?

Answer: The gates were removed and are stored in the boiler house until the funds are available for their repair. They were removed because one of the concrete bottom fixing points had subsided and so the gate could not swing open without dragging into the footpath. It looked that it was going to be expensive to repair and so it was deferred.

'Fit for the Future':

Are there plans? If so where are they, if not, when will they be presented to the congregation?

Answer: The PCC has met on a number of occasions to consider its vision for the 'Fit for the Future' development, including with the architect who is working on outline plans being made in response to the PCC's meetings with her about the Church's perceived needs for the future.

What is the timetable for progress?

Answer: This depends on the architect's outline plans which we do not yet have.

Is there a Committee, who is driving this major initiative?

Answer: The PCC is responsible for this project assisted by consultants.

What is the estimate of costs?

Answer: This depends on the architect's outline plans.

I note the Wyndham Hall receipt is held by Church House, will the interest be credited to our account?

Answer: The interest will be reinvested in the same fund.

Any Other Business

Mrs. Angela Bayliss invited the meeting to congratulate Mr. & Mrs. Glover on their purchase of the hall and for reopening it as a meeting and social facility. Fr. Darren responded that he had had ethical objections to the sale of the hall and had therefore distanced himself from involvement in the sale. Mrs. Sophie Moody expressed the view that the hall is now a private venture alongside a number of other similar facilities and that the church should not be seen to be favouring one in particular. The declared intention of Mr. & Mrs. Glover to reopen the hall as a social facility was a contributory factor in the PCC's decision to sell the property to them, and consequently we are pleased that the hall is now functioning again. Fr. Darren concluded this discussion with the message that the church sends its good wishes to all such ventures in the town.

The date of the next APCM

Mrs. Sophie Moody reported that the PCC is to consider arranging the APCM for 2023 to take place after a Sunday Service and that a decision would be made in due course by the PCC.

There being no further business, Fr. Darren concluded the meeting with a request for everyone to pray for the building up of the Body of Christ in the parish.

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of Amesbury of May 25th 2022, to be presented at the Annual parochial Church Meeting in April 2023

..... Incumbent,(Date)

AR
May 2022.