



CHURCH OF ST NICOLAS, CRANLEIGH, SURREY

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held on Wednesday 17th April 2024 in Church

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS or VESTRY MEETING AT 7.30PM

The Rector, Canon Roy Woodhams, welcomed parishioners to the meeting and the curate, Revd Erik Heemskerk, said the opening prayer. 34 parishioners attended the meeting. Nicola Craven-Smith took the minutes for the meeting as the Secretary, Paul Jenkins, was unable to attend.

1. Apologies for absence to cover both meetings: Judy Murdoch, Maggie Booth, Jean Quallington, Mike & Celia Roberts, Paul & Celia Jenkins, Sue Tresman, Bill Rothwell, Jill Saunders, Maria Poole, Dorothy Walton, Lesley Thomas, Sandra Keeping, Frank & Petula Sole, Sue Martin, Hazel Cherry, Michael Wild and Chris Robinson.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners 29th March 2023 were presented. John Ashworth proposed that they be accepted, seconded by Kate Woodhams. The minutes were accepted, with all in favour, and duly signed by the Rector.

3. Matters Arising: None

4. Election of Churchwardens: Nominations, proposals and seconds were submitted before the meeting as per policy. Susan Clarke and Alan Walton were unanimously elected to serve for the coming year, with no other candidates standing for election. Susan Clarke was proposed by Malcolm Keeping and seconded by Alison Hendy. Alan Walton was proposed by Mike Roberts and seconded by Malcolm Keeping.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Minutes of the last APCM held Wednesday 29th March 2023 were accepted together as one with the minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners – see above for proposal and second.

2. Matters Arising: None

3. Election of Parochial Church Councillors This year there were three vacancies each for 3 years and one vacancy for 2 years.

There were three nominations:

Alison Hendy, nominated by Susan Clarke, seconded by Alan Walton

Sue Tresman, nominated by Susan Clarke, seconded by Steff Shepherd

Richard Tuck, nominated by Sue Knight, seconded by Sue Ansell.

These three members were duly elected for a 3 year term. The PCC will run with a vacancy as there were no nominations for the 2 year term.

4. Presentation of the Electoral Roll

Margie Nursey, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that there were 304 people on the Electoral Roll. This figure represents a decrease of 7 from last year. 11 have died/moved away and 4 have joined.

Margie noted that in 2025 we have to renew the whole of the Electoral Roll so from January 2025 reminders will be circulated to ensure that everyone who wants to be on has resubmitted their details.

5. Annual Report and Financial Statement

Rogan Dixon, Treasurer, presented the annual report and financial statement for the last time as Treasurer. After 27 consecutive years in the role of Treasurer, the last 3 of these at St Nicolas, Rogan is stepping down from the position.

Rogan began with some thank yous:

He thanked everyone who had contributed to the report.

Special thanks to Jane Mant who does the book-keeping, and whose hard work made his job as treasurer much easier.

To Nicola for all the office support

To those who bank the cash, Malcolm Keeping, Alan Walton and Jackie Vale, and who do so with such efficiency.

To Frank Sole whose role takes care of the regular giving, PGS, and collecting Gift Aid.

To Alistair Smith for taking on the role of Treasurer going forward.

The Annual Report and Financial Statement had been available on the church website prior to the meeting and will remain there for anyone to view. The Financial Statement had been independently examined, with no issues raised, and had been formally adopted by the PCC at their March meeting.

Rogan presented a series of slides summarising the contents of the Financial Statement and the church's financial position, which indicate a surplus in the budget for the coming year.

In summary, Rogan said he was handing over a good budget and positive outlook for the coming year. He drew attention to his final slide which detailed action points to increase resilience (e.g. Stewardship campaign, Regular Giving, Legacies, Letting Income and Fundraising)

There were no questions. The Rector thanked Rogan for his presentation and expressed his gratitude for Rogan's 3 years of exceptional service, especially during periods of ill health. Rogan was presented with a small token of appreciation. The Rector thanked Alistair Smith for agreeing to take on the role.

6. Stewardship Recorder's Report

The report of the Stewardship Recorder, Frank Sole was covered by the treasurer.

7. Churchwardens' Reports

Susan Clarke:

"I would like to refer you to the annual review of the year, where Alan and I have summarised the main highlights of 2023. You can access this from our website, under the heading PCC.

You will see from that, that in-person attendance at church continued to improve, particularly at Christmas, and our live-streamed services continue to be appreciated by those who cannot make it in person to church for many reasons.

You will also know that the PCC approved the introduction of charges for the use of the car park. This has been running since December, and so far is helping reduce over-use and mis-use of the car park, whilst also raising some much-needed money which will help towards the upkeep of car park, church rooms and church. At £1 for two hours, it is not a major expense, but it adds up to a useful total. Euro Car Parks are managing the car park, with no fee, and we receive 80% of car park charges (we do not receive any of the money from fines).

2023 was a bit of a 'bumper year' of social and fund-raising events. I would like to thank the Social Team, the Rectory Fete organisers, the Christmas Tree Festival committee,

and the '1170' group for laying on such a great variety of events that help us to knit together as a community and provide resources for many initiatives.

On this note, could I commend to you our next Social Team event, our Desert Island Discs cheese and wine evening on Saturday 18th May at 7 pm! We have 5 castaways - Nicola Craven-Smith, Peter Bond, Steff Shepherd, Bill Bruford and Erik Heemskerk - who have agreed to tell us what book and luxury item they would take to a desert island and, in particular, which piece of music they would save from the wreckage of their ship. This should be a really entertaining evening so please reserve your tickets from the parish office as soon as possible!

You can read about all the teams and groups who contribute so much to the life of our church, do have a read, the annual report is as I said available on the church website. Thank you to all who play a part in all these activities.

A few more thank yous - We are very grateful to everyone who volunteers on the Welcome Team rotas, greeting people as they arrive at church and looking after them while they are here. A special thank you also to servers, readers, pray-ers, AV operators, and the many others who help our church services run smoothly.

I would like to especially thank Celia and the team of cleaners who do such a marvellous job cleaning the church week by week, and a special thank you to the Flower Team who keep our church looking so beautiful.

Last but not least, I would also like to record all our thanks to our rector Roy for his hard work and dedication as ever over the past year. It has not been an easy time for him as area dean with so many vacancies and absences within the deanery, but he has led the team, the PCC and the parish with his usual good humour and wisdom. He has a caring heart, an encyclopaedic knowledge of church and parish affairs, an eye for key issues, and a vision for the future, and we are grateful for all he does. Thank you, Roy!"

Alan Walton:

"I would like to start by thanking Roy, Susan and the church community for their support during my first year as a churchwarden here at St Nicolas. It is much appreciated.

Particular thanks to Mike Roberts who continues to oversee our church technology - including the IT, AVA system, church heating and lighting clocks and ordering cleaning materials for the church rooms. Mike also successfully coordinated the 2024 Diocese of Guildford, Lent course which was delivered in 3 venues (2 homes and in church). Highlights of the year include –

1. Successful repair of the Lady Chapel ceiling (my first task as CW).

2. 22 Orchard Gardens – From October 2023 Hestia Lettings and Property Management, Cranleigh took over the total management of the property on behalf of the PCC. A monthly income is derived from letting (see financial report).
3. The Church Halls Management Team (CHMT) has been re-convened to coordinate the management of the church offices and rooms, including storage space. One of the projects is to consider a new main kitchen. Outline plans and quotes have been obtained from Wrens and Howdens (thanks to Nicola for arranging these). Susan Clarke is coordinating a spreadsheet of potential grant awarding bodies who fund new kitchens in church halls. The kitchen options will be considered by the Team and PCC for approval.
4. The Buildings Team continues to perform an important role in supporting the churchwardens with the repair and maintenance of the church buildings. Team members carry out a range of cost effective minor repair and maintenance jobs. Whenever necessary the required trade professionals are employed.
5. Church Accessibility - A new group ('Positivity & Accessibility') was convened to consider an accessible toilet and small kitchen in collaboration with our church architect. The potential work also includes levelling of the nave floor and pew removal (full, or partial). It is recognised that this may be phased. Three floor plans have been produced by the architect. These will be shared with the PCC, congregation and wider community during 2024. The preferred option will be costed by MEA Construction Consultants, and discussed with the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches. Inevitably a fund raising campaign will be required; including grant applications to various charities (of which there are many) supporting this type of essential development within churches to improve access.
6. Damage to bell frame of 6 cwt 4th bell. The bell frame and stay were broken recently during ringing practice. The Tower Captain has received 2 quotes from bell repair specialists. Funding (church insurers, or bell repair grants) will be considered by the churchwarden in liaison with the Tower Captain. The DAC Bells Adviser, is also liaising with the Tower Captain. On the topic of bells – thank you to our bell ringers who ring each Sunday and at other services as requested.
7. ECO Church – Congratulations and appreciative thanks to all involved in supporting Sue Tresman in enabling the completion of A Rocha UK's questionnaire; resulting in their Bronze Award being awarded to St Nicolas. Work is well underway towards achieving silver and gold. This is a timely intervention in helping to combat climate change through our church buildings and churchyard.
8. Thanks to Malcolm Keeping for coordinating the annual mowing rota.”

The Rector thanked both Alan and Susan for their reports.

8. Safeguarding Officer's Report

Brian Boxall referred to his main report which is included in the Annual Report. In November 2023 he presented to the PCC the new national safeguarding standards, which the PCC adopted. The challenge for 2024 is to achieve level 3 on the Parish Dashboard.

Brian thanked Katherine Tuck for her role as Safeguarding liaison with the PCC.

There were no reported safeguarding incidents this year.

The Churchwardens and volunteers of the various youth events and groups work with Brian to ensure that relevant checks are done and that safeguarding standards are adhered to. PCC members complete the required online training.

Safeguarding must remain a priority across all of St Nicolas community - it is everyone's concern, not just for the leaders of the church.

Brian drew attention to the cost of living crisis and the impact this is having on children and vulnerable adults. Mental health in children is also a rising problem, especially since COVID and other new pressures that the youth of today are facing.

The Rector thanked Brian for his commitment Safeguarding in St Nicolas. Katherine Tuck has now finished her tenure on the PCC and so Bryn Jones has agreed to take over the role of safeguarding liaison.

9. Report of Church Organisations can be found in the annual report. The Rector encouraged everyone to read these as they are a celebration of the life of our church. They show all that is happening and having an impact in the community.

10. The Rector's Report

"When we pray at All Age Worship we sometimes use what we call 'Teaspoon Prayers'. TSP, in this case, not standing for 'Teaspoon', but for 'Thank you', 'Sorry', 'Please'!

What I have to say to you tonight is going to be a 'Teaspoon Rector's Report', as I have just three things to say: a 'Thank you', a 'Sorry', and a 'Please'!

The '**Thank You**' is the traditional one, where I make my annual recognition of all that is done to support me in my role as Rector.

- Thank you to my family, and especially to Kate, who manages so remarkably to balance the rigours of a full-time teaching post with the demands of being a Rector's wife, and for her constant loving encouragement and gentle critique, without which I would find it very hard to do what I do. Also to Martha who put a lot of time and work into our new website.
- Thank you to Susan and Alan, our extraordinarily dedicated Churchwardens, who have supported me so rigorously through another year as your Rector.
- Thank you to our fantastic Ministry Team – currently, Erik, Rutton, Martin, Rodney and Bishop Peter. During the year, we have said goodbye to Tim as he has left us to take

up his new role as Rector of Merrow, and we have seen the retirement of Peter Poole, and the stepping back of Tricia after her fall, but it has been a delight to welcome Erik, who has so quickly and easily fitted into the life of our parish, and Rodney after his move to Cranleigh from Oxford. I need to make special mention of all that they do in supporting me in the deanery, but I shall be saying more about that later. They have been assisted by our 'Occasional Preachers', The two Claires, Alison, Steff and Mike, as well as by the many others who have supported Trackers, Discovery Service and All Age Worship (especially during this time when we have not had the benefit of an employed person in our Young people's and family role.) We have also seen the retirement this year of our Verger, Sue, and again I thank her for all her years of service.

- Thank you to the amazing Nicola, whose cheerful, calm and professional control of the Church Office is absolutely invaluable to the smooth running of all that we do.
- Thank you to Rogan, for his hard work and clarity as Treasurer and Paul our PCC Secretary. Also to the Finance Team who support the Treasurer – especially Chris, as Chair of the Finance Team, Jane as Assistant Treasurer Frank as Administrator of Gift Aid, and Alan, liaising with PCC.
- Thank you to Michael, our inspirational and extraordinarily dedicated Director of Music. As well as leading our music, Michael has also taken on the painstaking task of providing the slides for our 10am worship on the screens. Thank you, also to the choir and music group.
- Thank you to Margie for all the different things that she does, but especially today for her work on the Electoral Roll.
- Thank you to our Pastoral Assistants, PCC, musicians, intercessors, readers, servers, bell-ringers, cleaners, flower arrangers, gardeners and lawnmowers, coffee providers, welcomers, AV operators and to anyone I have inadvertently missed out, Thank You!

And so to the '**Sorry**'! This is a personal note from me to you, acknowledging that this year my role as Area Dean has taken me away from you more than it should have done – and for that I am truly sorry! As of today, we have three vacant benefices in the deanery, representing six churches. In addition to that, there is another church whose incumbent is likely to be on long-term sick leave, and at the end of June two retirements will add another two churches to that tally. When I became Area Dean almost five years ago, I would never have dreamed that there would be so many vacancies during my tenure!

As already mentioned, I am truly blessed by the team who help me, and who just about make it possible for us to cover the services in all these vacant churches. I am hugely indebted to them, but must make special mention of Martin who has led worship in one church or another on virtually every Sunday in the past year, except when he has been away on holiday himself. My sadness is that this role does take me away from Cranleigh on so many Sundays, and as April draws to a close, I am painfully aware that I will only have led the 10am service at St Nicolas on one Sunday!

In addition to the Sunday cover, I have also been distracted by the administration of those vacancies, and particularly by the time-consuming efforts to recruit new clergy into those vacant posts, as well as making sure that the pastoral care is maintained in those parishes. The good news, of course, is that St Nicolas is a well-oiled machine, and the team are

perfectly able to manage without me! However, I do know that some of you have noticed my scarcity, which is why I wanted today to acknowledge that I am aware of the consequences, and that I am sorry!

‘Thank you’, ‘sorry’ and **‘please’!** The ‘Please’ today comes in two parts: The first part is a very specific one. Our church is blessed by having a very encouraging number of families and young people. Our wonderful service of Baptism and Confirmation on Easter Eve, was living proof that God is at work in our church and that there is so much to be positive about for the future of St Nicolas. However, in order to continue to support and grow our ministry to families and young people, we do need, again, to have a full-time professional join our ministry team in this area. To that end, our PCC has taken a leap of faith, and we are currently advertising this role, even though we don’t, as yet, have all the funding in place to support it. Following my plea to you at the end of last year, we have had pledges of around £20,000 per annum for the next five years, but to get the right person in this role is going to cost us in excess of £30,000 per annum! So my first please, is that those of you who haven’t yet pledged an amount towards this vital work, give it prayerful, serious and urgent consideration, and that you get in touch via Nicola at the Church Office to talk about how you can make your pledge a reality.

The second strand of my ‘please’, has to do with the constant round of requests for help which appear on our notice sheet, and which all too often go unanswered. Being part of the Priesthood of all Believers, involves playing our part in doing God’s work in the parish. So again, I ask you to give these things your prayerful consideration, so that together we can fulfil our mission to be that Caring, Sharing and Daring Church that we want and need to be!

In St John’s Gospel, Jesus said, *‘I have come that you may have life; life in all its fulness’*. May we each be the ones to provide the means for that abundant life to be seen at work in our church and community, and in the lives of all around us.

So, ‘Thank you’, ‘Sorry’, and ‘Please!’”

11. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Rogan, as Treasurer, proposed that we delegate the decision to the PCC to allow Alistair time in his new role to review the appointment and explore alternatives.

Proposed by Rogan Dixon, seconded by Sue Knight. All voted in favour.

12. Any Other Business

Val Watts gave a passionate plea for volunteers to join the Flower Team. The St Nicolas flower team has decreased from 20 volunteers to 10 volunteers, and we no longer hold flower festivals and other such floral events as we used to be able to do.

Val highlighted that anyone can do it, you do not need to be an expert or have previous experience and the existing volunteers would be very happy to help newcomers learn the ropes. Anyone interested in volunteering should please speak to one of the team, or to Nicola in the church office.

The Rector added that the same please does apply to any and all of our rotas of volunteers. Alan Walton mentioned that the Rikkyo School have flower arranging classes.

Next PCC Meeting: Wednesday 8th May, 7.30pm

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9pm.