

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS  
ALL SAINTS GRAYSWOOD – 21 APRIL 2024

I ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

Rev Fi Gwynn welcomed 25 people to the meeting and opened with prayer.

(i) Election of Clerk for the Meeting

Tracy Garland was proposed by Allen, seconded by Pauline and elected.

(ii) Election of Churchwardens

Jackie Holmes was proposed by Angela Wheeler, seconded by Tracy Garland and elected.

John McLean was proposed by Daphne Bleach, seconded by Greg Bleach and elected.

(iii) Any Other Business There was none.

II ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

(i) Apologies: Rev Chris Bessant, Jane White, Daphne and Greg Bleach, Dian Mordin, Nicola Miller, Di Cook, Paula Mortimer.

(ii) Minutes of the 2023 annual meetings. These were agreed and signed. There were no matters arising.

(iii) Presentation of the Electoral Roll.

Diana Ramsden (Electoral Role Officer) presented the report for the Electoral Roll: 82 members of which 53 reside in the parish. Fi thanked Diana for her work on revising the roll.

(iv) Annual Report of the Council.

Our PCC had six full meetings in 2023 which all began with a reading and prayer. The January meeting was held via zoom to save heating costs.

We include in our agendas, at most meetings, a main item of particular interest or challenge in addition to covering routine matters.

It was agreed at our January meeting our theme for the year would be 'awakening new hope' as this is relevant to our church development plan. The Parent/carer and toddler group has been well attended so have the monthly coffee mornings at the club and weekly housegroup.

Safeguarding is a standing item on our agenda. The Diocese safeguarding 'dashboard' is kept up to date with Jane, our safeguarding officer, and meets all the Diocese targets. All PCC members have undertaken Safeguarding training approved by the Diocese.

Anthony and Angela, our Deanery representatives keep us informed of any deanery matters we need to consider.

Our logbook and terrier are kept up to date. Risk assessments are reviewed annually.

During the year we supported Grayswood School and our regular Missions. These missions are CMS, Skillway and Crossways counselling and in our last meeting of the year we choose a charity we would like to support for the first quarter of the next year. It was decided to support the work of Christians against Poverty as many people are now affected by increasing energy costs and living costs.

Christmas and Easter services were well attended, with a slight increase in numbers from 2022. A village Harvest celebration was held at Imbhams farm and a pet service was very popular with 20 dogs and 2 ponies in attendance!

The village continues to support the community 'needs' database and a poetry competition was held during Advent with creative poems being published each day.

*Tracy Garland – PCC Secretary*

(v) Annual Report on the Financial Affairs of the Parish

I have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 which have been independently examined by James Holland-Leader of Knox Cropper, Chartered Accountants. The accounts include the Trustees' Report which is the report by the PCC to the members of the church about the year ended 31 December 2023.

The accounts are required to conform to various accounting standards and so include many pages which are of limited interest to most people. I would say that most interesting pages of the financial statements are the Balance Sheet (page 9), the Statement of Financial Activities (page 8) and the notes set out in pages 12 to 18. The detailed statement of financial activities is set out on pages 20 to 21 and this is the closest to the treasurer's reports during the year. This year I have prepared a separate sheet which I hope sets out the PCC's results for 2023 and our financial position at 31 December 2023 in a simplified, and clearer manner.

The PCC's income was £34,855 less than its expenditure in 2023 but there were assets of £131,834 as at 31 December 2023. Some explanation is required:

During 2023 we carried out two major projects, the resurfacing of the paths and the installation of the new audio visual system. We were able to fund these thanks to the legacy received during 2020 and with the help of a substantial grant from the Friends of All Saints for whose on going support we are very grateful.

We made substantial charitable grants during 2023, some to our regular Missions, but also extra grants to the Village School and Skillway as part of the tithing of the legacy received in 2020.

You may be surprised that we pay a significant rent to the village hall. The upper room is used every week during term time by the Toddler group, which is an important resource for the parents and guardians of very small children in the area, we meet in the village hall after church each Sunday and also use it for occasional services and courses, such as the Lent Course. We are fortunate to be able to access such a space for these events and we are supporting a village resource by renting it, and we are able to use the hall car park.

The most significant sources of income for the PCC are regular giving and gift aid claims from HM Revenue & Customs. These are almost as much as the monthly amounts of the Diocesan Parish Share and the cost of running the parish office. During 2023 we joined the Parish Giving Scheme, which has taken over most of the administration of the regular giving and Gift Aid claims. We hope that all our regular givers will join the scheme in due course.

If we strip out the cost of special projects, such as the paths, the additional charitable donations and the grants received towards those costs, the position would have been a deficit of about £13,250. That is roughly £1,100 per month. We are continuing to try to reduce costs and increase our income, but we are limited in what we can do. For £2024 we expect a slightly larger deficit, about £14,500. If our regular givers could increase monthly donations by, say, £25 per month, that would yield £12,000, plus gift aid claims of £3,000, a total of £15,000, which would cover our deficit! So please do consider increasing your regular giving if you can.

Another way of helping our financial position would be to leave a legacy to All Saints PCC.

As always, I would like to thank David for his hard work in connection with regular giving and the tax claims from HMRC. Thanks are also due to Sarah Bennett and to the many people who have helped at fund-raising events, and indeed supported them by spending money.

*Nicola Miller - Treasurer*

(vi) Approval of the Accounts

Angela proposed the approval of the accounts, seconded by Anthony and all were in favour. Our thanks were expressed to Nicola for producing the accounts and to David for managing the regular giving income and gift aid.

(vii) Appointment of Independent Examiner

Knox Cropper is willing to continue as our independent examiner. David proposed, Elaine seconded and all were in favour. Tracy will write a letter of thanks.

TG

(viii) Report of Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

There were two major projects undertaken during 2023, both of which required a Faculty.

Firstly, the sound system was in serious need of updating and the PCC had agreed that we should take the opportunity to enhance the equipment to provide an audio visual system that was fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This included a drop-down screen and fixed camera with enhanced Zoom user-experience. We were able to use part of the legacy from the estate of Lady Lewis to fund the new system and like to think that as a music lover she would have approved of the much-improved sound quality. The new system has been a great success and we will no doubt develop further ways to use it to its full potential over time.

Secondly, the path at the front of church and down past the Garden of Remembrance was re-laid. It had needed attention for some time as it became rather boggy in places when we have heavy rain and access for the mobility-impaired was poor due to the gravel and uneven ground beneath. Having considered a number of alternative surfaces and discussed with our architect and the DAC, we agreed on self-binding gravel. The surface is a great improvement and has been given the thumbs up by members of the congregation who use wheeled mobility aids.

As always, our sincere thanks go to the buildings and grounds team, cleaning team and others who ensure that our church building and graveyard look tidy and remain well-maintained. Special thanks must go to Sarah Bennett, our administrator, and David Hutton who have done a fantastic job of documenting and photographing all the fabric of the church and items in the churchyard for the online Terrier (albeit this was done at the start of 2024 and not in the year ending 31 December 2023). They have also (with the help of Sarah's son William) continued a review of all the graves – photographing each one and identifying any which require repair/laying down due to them being unsafe. This is an ongoing review, carried out with the help of experienced stonemasons, and advice has been sought as to how repairs might be carried out. We are also trying, with some success, to identify any living relatives who might fund the cost of repair to a gravestone.

Finally we must thank the Friends of All Saints, who made a significant contribution towards the cost of the path and continue to support the improvements to and maintenance of the fabric of the church through their fundraising.

*Jackie Holmes and John McLean, Churchwardens*

(ix) Deanery Report

Anthony Ramsden and Angela Wheeler continue to represent the parish at the Deanery Synod. This year they met on 17th May and 15th November.

In May they received a presentation on Modern Day Slavery and were encouraged to invite the speaker to parishes, which All Saints did.

Parishes were reminded that bids for a grant up to £1,000 were still available from the Deanery Mission Fund, even for parishes that had previously applied, as we had. Three grants had been made to date.

It was reported that the problems with banking continued, with changes still not having been made to the signatories, despite great efforts by all involved. The Area Dean highlighted the decision to award a 5% pay rise to clergy; in addition, the Diocese reported a surplus for 2022 and offered £1,000 back to each parish.

Parishes were encouraged to work towards being Net Zero by 2030. It was reported that the Cathedral was in a difficult situation as it tried to address its fabric problems, because its development plans had been thrown out, and members were requested to include this in their prayers.

In November PCCs were urged to adopt the Racial Justice Covenant, which has been approved by our PCC.

PCCs were invited to study the Deanery Parish Needs Process grid, with a view to cooperating with other local parishes on common areas.

A new Deanery Leadership team was elected and Anthony stood down as Deanery Treasurer after many years of service, which was recognised at the meeting. The meeting also paid tribute to Jacky Tickner who had sadly died since announcing she was stepping down from the position of Lay Chair to the Synod.

Parishes were again encouraged to submit bids to the Deanery Mission Fund.

*Anthony Ramsden and Angela Wheeler - Deanery representatives*

(x) Election of members to the PCC

On our PCC we have ex officio members – Fi and Elaine, our two wardens Jackie and John and our deanery representatives Angela and Anthony, and 9 elected members. These currently are Sarah Hatherall-Good, David Hutton, Tracy Garland, Ailsa Guidi, Pippa Hollins McLean, Nicola Miller, Dian Mordin, Jane White and Charlie Webb. They are elected for a term of three years and may stand for election again for further terms of three years. Ailsa, Sarah and Jane have come to the end of their three term. Ailsa and Sarah have decided not to stand again and Fi thanked them for their contribution to the PCC. Jane is willing to stand again and was proposed by Tracy Garland, seconded by Angela Wheeler and elected.

(xi) Safeguarding Report

As in previous years safeguarding for our lovely little church is a pleasure and a delight.

The Diocese have moved to an online portal now which tells me what, when and who and everyone is normally very good at doing the what and the when. All our PCC members have to undertake safeguarding training and this is reviewed every three years. Additional training is then made available to ensure all PCC members' knowledge is up to date.

The Diocese is great at helping with any questions and although training is now done via zoom instead of face to face it is still done with tenderness, with love and Christ at the heart.

As in previous years if anyone has a concern please speak to Fi, Elaine or myself and I will find a solution.

There are signs in church signposting anyone to relevant websites or telephone numbers, if you need help just ask and again I will help.

I would like to thank Tracy who has been great when we sit down and go through the portal - her brain for dates is amazing.

Please don't think that it can't happen here, it really can and anything you think can help anyone else may just be the piece of the jigsaw that is needed.

*Jane White - Parish Safeguarding Officer*

(xii) Report from Revd Fiona Gwynn

It seems apt that today the readings are for Good Shepherd Sunday. Jesus, the good shepherd, not a good shepherd, **the** good shepherd. Jesus, the focus of all we do here at All Saints and following where the shepherd leads us in a wider sense is what we are called to do as Christians.

The image of God as our shepherd, and Jesus as our good shepherd, is such a familiar one. But I sometimes wonder: is it still of help to us? In biblical times, everyone knew a shepherd. It would have been a very familiar and helpful metaphor. But is that still the case?

And yet, somehow, this image continues to speak to us as people of faith. [Psalm 23](#) is still one of our most loved psalms and passages in scripture. Jesus as the Good Shepherd is still one of the most familiar ways of thinking of him, and of picturing him.

As most of you know, I do not consider myself to be a natural leader – I have had to learn to become one – and I am still learning. Over the last 2 years I have been attending monthly sessions with other new incumbents in the diocese to look at leadership within the church and to learn how we can be the best that we can, with God's help.

It has been informative and helpful, not least learning how very different every church context is.

For me, the standout thing has been that I would not want to be anywhere else other than All Saints. We have a truly wonderful congregation here who have a heart for Jesus, who support each other, and those in the wider community, and who are also supportive and encouraging to me. Sadly, that is not always what I am hearing in other settings.

Looking back at 2023 it is so encouraging to see how we have grown and developed over that time.

We had the new sound and AV system installed in the church which has transformed the zoom experience for those at home and has made the school services so much easier to plan and to run. We haven't used it regularly on a Sunday morning yet but going forward we will be exploring how to utilise it more.

We had the King's coronation in May and the Friends held their Open Gardens in June.

We held our Pet service in September, which was a great success and which we look forward to making an annual event, and the Friends held a successful quiz night in November.

A poetry competition arranged by Angela rounded off the year.

Our weekly congregation numbers started to rise again for the first time since the pandemic and if everyone who attends All Saints, came every week, we would have a lovely full church. That’s not a criticism, I am fully aware that for many of you that is not possible, and you are here today to hear me, but it reflects the national statistic that regular attendance is now considered to be once a month.

There were also some sad times, including the death of Elizabeth Holthouse and Elaine’s husband Eddie.

But as a congregation you are wonderful at coming alongside people in their times of need and showing both spiritual and practical support.

The continued cost of living crisis still affects many and the foodbank in Haslemere was very grateful for the donations provided by the village. Thank you to Nicola Pugh who takes the donations to the Methodist church for us.

It is always dangerous to single people out for thanks – as there will always be someone I miss but I do feel that I need to mention some people specifically.

Firstly, to my Standing Committee, to Jackie, John, Nicola, Tracy and Elaine for all that they do to support me and to keep All Saints running so smoothly.

And thank you to the PCC for all that they do in keeping us accountable and helping us to use our finances wisely and to ensure that we continue to provide outreach both locally, nationally and internationally.

To Jane White our safeguarding officer who does such an amazing job of keeping us on track and dealing with issues promptly when they arise.

Also, to Sarah Bennett, our administrator who manages to juggle so many different things whilst being regularly interrupted in the office.

To Jean and George for playing for our worship each week.

I would also like to thank David Hutton, who with Sarah has done an amazing job of logging all the grave spaces and memorial garden plaques, and who goes above and beyond on a weekly basis to maintain the building and grounds.

And a genuine and heartfelt thank you to every single one of you here. You all contribute to the life of the church whether you are on a Sunday rota, lock and unlock the church, are on the coffee team, run a home group, help clean the church or tidy the grounds, provide pastoral support, fold or deliver the runner, or arrange the flowers in the church – a massive thank you for making All Saints the special place that it is for our congregation and the many visitors who pass through the doors.

As we continue into this year, let our prayer be that we continue to be open to God’s calling on our lives. To listen to the shepherds voice, who is guiding us in the way that we should go, and to continue to offer a warm welcome to all who enter our doors and to lead them to a personal relationship with Jesus.

Amen

(xiv) Any other business

Fi thanked those who contributed to the Reports of teams and missions for 2023 and encouraged everyone to read a copy as it is a reflection of the work of All Saints over the previous year. An error was made in the coffee and chat report which will be amended.

Fi thanked everyone and closed with the Grace – 11.45 am.

Signed .....

Date .....