**St Peter’s Church, Shipley.**

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

**held on 25 April 2021**

**Vestry Meeting**

1. Rev John Rainer (vicar) explained the papers for the meeting had been circulated in advance on the church website and made available on request in paper copy. The last annual meeting had taken place in November 2020 under extraordinary conditions due to the covid pandemic.

The meeting would be Live-streamed so that those who were still not comfortable to attend due to the ongoing pandemic were at least able to watch proceedings.

Apologies for absence were received en masse – John asked for any others to be passed on if individuals were keen to have them recorded.

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of 2020:** were accepted by the meeting.

2. **Election of Churchwardens:** There were two vacancies for Church Warden. One nomination had been received for **Hazel Wilmshurst** was nominated by **Martin Fawley** and seconded by **Katharine Leech**. John declared Hazel elected unopposed as church warden for the coming year.

John explained to the meeting that, there currently being no other nomination, **Karen Parkinson** remained in post as the second warden but had given notice she was going to formally resign to the bishop as she needed to step down and had already stayed a great deal longer than originally intended, for which we needed to thank her. He said that all the staff had appreciated what she had done over the past few years, and the whole church owed her a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Karen had been part of inducting Hazel over the last few months and she had appreciated that Karen had been there to guide her through the initial months in the role.

Karen said she was very disappointed that no one else had come forward. It was now 2 years since she had said she would be warden for one year to support a new warden but, due to the pandemic, this had become 2 years, for 6 months of which, she had been the only warden until Hazel arrived. Karen had been warden for 8 of the last 10 years and she felt it was time for a fresh face and fresh ideas and so she would be writing to the Bishop to formally stand down. She intended to remain on the PCC and to support, mentor and advise Hazel and any other warden who came forward. These were exciting and challenging times for the church and someone with enthusiasm and drive was needed, but they would not be doing this alone. They would be working alongside Hazel, the staff team, PCC and all of the Church. It’s not just up to the leadership, it’s up to all of us and we all have to contribute. God will equip you to do this, even if you don’t think you can. Karen encouraged anyone who felt called to the role to listen to the voice calling and listen to God’s voice and come forward if that’s you.

Karen concluded that being warden was a challenging and responsible role but very rewarding. She thanked the congregation for their support and prayers, thanked John and thanked Jeff, her husband, for his forbearance while she had been the role. She added she would also like to thank the rest of the staff team, the co-wardens team, Judith for administration and her cheerful disposition but mostly, she would like to thank God for walking beside her and carrying her when she needed carrying.

John said we had been busy looking for successor to Karen, and did approach several individuals, who declined. We had until 29 June until the Archdeacon’s visitation when Wardens were appointed, so have more time to think about this and could reconvene the Vestry meeting before then to agree another appointment..

A selection of gifts were presented to Karen, and Hazel said she was grateful to Karen who had been wonderful.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

This followed on from the Vestry Meeting. Those present were the same.

**1. Minutes of APCM 2020:**

The Minutes of the meeting in 2020 had been made available in advance. Martin Forbes had asked about an offer he made and a question asked at the last meeting about whether there was anything that could be done to increase the number of weddings in church as a means of outreach to the community by covering some of the cost. John had spoken to Martin before the meeting to say the item was not filed away permanently but the pandemic situation meant that weddings were not taking place and only one wedding was booked in currently. This could change once the restrictions were off and people postponing weddings may start booking, so John would get onto this as soon as was appropriate.

The minutes of the meeting were then accepted as a correct record and there were no further questions.

**2.** **Annual Report of PCC Business 2020 and Accounts:**

As a charity, we had to present our report of business and our accounts, which had to be consistent with each other, to the Charities Commission. Material had been circulated ahead of time.

Mike Moss (treasurer) thanked all those who had been involved in financial administration tasks over the year. He also thanked all the congregation, as giving had remained at a high level throughout the pandemic.

2020 had been a difficult year because of the pandemic. We had seen our income reduced by over £10,000 from missing hall income, although voluntary income held up well. People had moved to the Parish Giving System, which greatly eased administration, or transferred from envelopes to standing orders.

We had tried to keep costs down and be a good employer – an inflation-based rise had been awarded to the employed staff in April. The church has furloughed the cleaning/caretaking staff to some extent through the year when the building was closed but had paid the difference to make up the government grant to their full salary. Energy bills had been kept low by reduced use of the building but we had to keep some heating on to avoid damage to the halls. The problem had been a lot of roof repairs required, leading to the current appeal for finance. Major work had already needed to be done on the hall roof and on damage to the roof over reception and the halls corridor.

The result was that we didn’t pay our share in full for the first time in several years. Share reductions were being capped by the diocese and we underpaid by about £25,000.

Mike ran through the accounts. Income held up well given the loss on hall income but, in total, had been down about £9000 on budget. Expenditure overall was slightly lower than last year but things were still difficult because of the repairs required on the roof.

There were no questions on the accounts.

John thanked Mike for all his work and for keeping in touch regularly, especially with those who were not on line.

He said the accounts had to be received by this meeting but the PCC were now responsible for approving the accounts, which they had already done

3. **Appointment of Independent Examiner for the 2021 accounts** – Mike said, for some years, we had used Hart Wright Accounting in Keighley who had done a very good job – one examined our accounts, while other partners provided payroll and pension services to us for our staff and did a very good job. It was proposed by Mike Moss, seconded Tony Wellsteed and passed unanimously by the meeting that Hart Wright Accounting be appointed as Independent Examiners for the 2021 accounts

**4. Electoral Roll Report** – John said that Moira Gledhill, our Electoral Roll officer, could not be present but the Electoral Roll now stood at 181 of whom 63 were men and 118 women. He did not have exact details of the split of those who live parish and those who don’t, but this could be obtained if required and was about 50/50.

**5. Fabric Report** – This was a statutory report. Karen thanked all those who contribute to maintenance, upkeep and cleanliness of the church and grounds, especially to Dave and Hazel Wilmshurst for snow shovelling in the winter and to Cynthia Hargreaves and Sue Pedley for arranging the flowers at Christmas, Harvest and Easter and Viv, Julie Rainer and the wardens who had helped. They were not quite as magnificent as in the past, but we were very grateful to everyone for doing these, despite the difficulties of the pandemic. She also thanked Guy Barford who had contributed greatly to the maintenance of the church over the years, although he had been shielding over the past year, but had continued to act in an advisory capacity.

Most of the last year’s expenditure on the building had been on repairs to the roof over the general office and hall and this had highlighted the poor state of the hall roof in general. The church was already aware there was likely to be work required, as this had been brought up by our architect in the last quinquennial report, but due to weather damage and further investigation, it was evident that the time has come when we need to get on with the work. The PCC had established a sub group to progress the work and 3 quotes were obtained from 6 companies we approached and we had asked those 3 for references and examples of similar work. As the work was investigated, it was also felt by the PCC that this presented the ideal opportunity to consider the installation of solar panels. Mervyn Silva had joined the roofs sub group as he had some expert contacts in this area.

Quotations for the roof work were around £90,000 plus VAT and, if we went ahead with solar panels, that would cost around another £25,000. Due to the generosity shown at gift day we were already half way towards the target – so far we had raised £42,165. The sub group was also applying for grants to help with the work and had written to all hall users asking them for letters of support towards grants and to consider making a donation or doing some fundraising for us. If anyone had any fundraising ideas, Karen would be grateful to hear of them - or for people to just get on with it! We would also be considering asking people to consider sponsoring a tile at £10 per tile.

Christine Woodward asked if we had written to church users or outside users or both and Karen confirmed we had contacted all users.

John thanked everyone for their generosity and said we had approached 8 grant awarding bodies for assistance – they were often looking for match funding and, because of the congregation’s generosity, we had already raised a very substantial amount which had helped us enormously in the process of looking for funding.

**Karen Parkinson proposed, Jo Baxter seconded and the meeting agreed unanimously to accept the fabric report.**

**6. Other reports:**

A number of other reports had been published in advance of the meeting, which were not being spoken to individually, with questions only.

John pointed out that the key project for Shipley Christians Together was the debt centre which we, along with 5 other churches, were contributing funds to. Thomas Knight, who was the manager of the centre, had spoken to the PCC in March and they had had opportunity to ask questions. Maria Mullin and Andy Thorlby were going to be our points of contact for the debt centre. Mike pointed out it was asked at last year’s meeting what we were doing with the former Local Outreach Co-ordinator fund money and this was being used to support the debt centre to meet local needs – it was a restricted fund and only certain things could be done with it but this met the use criteria.

**7. Children’s and youth report –** no questions were asked on Rachel McGirr (Youth and Children Worker)’s report. John said that, when coronavirus hit last year, most churches put their youth workers on furlough. We decided not to do that because Rachel was able to work from home and on line and that work was important enough to stay in touch with our children and young people. Rachel had led and featured very heavily in much of our online content over the last year. This had not been easy and we thanked her for her efforts.

Rachel thanked everyone. It had been year of highs and lows and she thanked people for general support and allowing family and youth work to be an important part of church life and personally for prayers and support for her as well.

**8. Elections to PCC**

John explained that we currently had 6 vacancies on the PCC, with 2 vacancies held over from a previous year, 1 current Deanery Synod Vacancy and three PCC members reaching the end of their current terms at this meeting.

Four nominations had been received:

**Mark Davies: proposed by Mike Moss, seconded by Viv Brealey**

**Karen Parkinson: proposed by Rachel McGirr, seconded by Mike Moss**

**Sue Pedley: proposed by Julie Rainer, seconded by Julie Platt**

**Gemma Richards: proposed by Cynthia Hargreaves and seconded by Zahida Mallard**

Further nominations could be taken from the meeting but none were forthcoming.

John declared the four nominations elected unopposed and we retained one vacancy on PCC and one on the Deanery Synod. John said he would like to thank Elisabeth Wightman and Andy Thorlby who were stepping down from PCC at the end of the terms and welcome Gemma back for a further term and welcome Mark and Sue as new members to the PCC and Karen back to it as an elected member, rather than a warden. John would share the list of meetings for the coming year with members.

**9. Vicar’s Report**

John gave the following report:

The last 12 months have been an experience in church life such as we have never had before. Not even in World War 2 were churches compelled to close and clergy forbidden to enter their buildings. For much of the time, we have been severely restricted in what we can do. And we keep being reminded that we are not out of the woods, even now.

First of all, I would like to thank my Staff Team, who have worked so hard over the past year to ensure that church life continues wherever possible. Some of us have been on a fast learning curve acquiring new skills, especially with technology. But I want the whole church to know that we owe an immense debt of gratitude to our Wardens, to Mike, Viv, Rachel and Judith for all they have been doing, including the support and encouragement they have put in my direction.

So what of the future? Back to normal on 21st June? Well, unfortunately, I can’t promise anyone that. At this stage, we just can’t be sure how much previous activity can resume, or whether all activities can be covered. The PCC are going to have to make a number of important decisions over the next few months about resumption of worship in particular and whether we can staff our services and associated activities ranging from healing prayer through to Sunday children’s groups, to refreshments after services. It may be that over the coming summer a number of interim arrangements will be put in place in readiness for a fresh start in September. But I don’t want to second-guess the PCC on that. We have to build a sustainable recovery.

Additionally, we have the serious issue of the state of the hall roof. At present, we are very much hoping that this work can be done before the end of the summer, including the installation of solar panels as part of the project. Your generosity has ensured that a good start can be made and we are also hopeful of getting some grant assistance towards it. But then we still have the Parish Share to pay, so the situation will remain challenging throughout this year.

We now also know that we face considerable uncertainty about the wider church situation in Shipley. By early June, both Windhill and St Paul’s parishes will be vacant. This will trigger a discussion about pastoral reorganization which will certainly affect us, if only because there will be a strong demand for us to help cover services. The diocese will certainly be aiming to reduce ministerial provision in Shipley over the coming years. The Bishop tells me that he only has the outline of a long term plan so far, although I suspect there is a lot I am not being told. I think it is inevitable that the under-resourcing of St Peter’s will continue.

For myself, I can tell you that I have applied for a period of sabbatical leave in 2022, although I won’t find out for some time whether this will be granted. My health remains a bit fragile, although the lockdown has enabled me to keep working. Like many of you, I am looking forward to a holiday and praying that foreign travel will open up soon.

So – is this as time for despair, or, as some want to put it, a time of new opportunity? I would prefer us to remember that we serve a God who speaks. As God speaks into our present time, as He certainly will, will we listen? Will we do what He says? And if we hear Him calling us to something new, will we be courageous enough to respond? Following Jesus and responding to His call is the only safe place for any of us in times like these.

**10. Any Other Business for PCC attention:** This was for individuals to raise matters that should be brought to the PCC’s attention.

No other questions were raised under Any Other Business.

The meeting closed at 11.50am in prayer

**Special Parish Meeting for the election of churchwardens**

**Sunday 30 May 2021 10.30am**

1. Rev John Rainer (vicar) opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. The reason for the meeting was that, at the APCM a few weeks ago, only one churchwarden had been appointed and we need to have two. In those circumstances, churches are able to call a further meeting before the Archdeacon’s visitation (on 29 June) and could reconvene for the purpose of electing a churchwarden. This did not invalidate the election of Hazel Wilmshurst, which took place at the annual meeting – this was purely to receive any further nominations.

John had received one nomination for churchwarden:

**Mervyn Silva, proposed by Kathy Tedd and seconded by Ian Walker.**

As there was only one nomination and one vacancy John declared Mervyn duly and properly elected to the office of churchwarden. He and Hazel would be formally admitted to the office of churchwarden on 29 June and Mervyn was churchwarden elect until that time.

John invited Karen Parkinson, as the warden who would be stepping down on 29 June, to speak.

Karen said she had known Mervyn for 38 years since they had worshipped at another church together, St Anthony’s in Windhill. Mervyn and Janet, his wife, had started to attend St Peter’s after attending an Alpha course in the early 2000’s but they had been married at St Peter’s in 1982. They had been regular attenders at the 11.15 and the 6.30 services and Mervyn served on the laptop rota and read in the services. Mervyn and Janet had travelled to Israel 4 years ago with a group from the church. Mervyn volunteered with Shipley Neighbours where his IT skills had been very useful and was on the Hall Roofs Subgroup and his experience around solar panels had been valuable and we were very grateful. He was man of deep faith who had responded to God’s call, he would be diligent and conscientious and he would make an excellent churchwarden working alongside Hazel.

Mervyn said he had attended an Alpha course at St Anthony’s in the early 2000s and he and Janet had felt drawn back to St Peter’s as they going through some turbulent times and questioning their faith and here they found a faith community and a building that was clean, well lit, warm and it welcomed them back. Mervyn had continued to come to church here for the last 15-18 years.

He said he had been praying for a new warden for some time but felt there must be people who were better qualified and God could not be looking for him. He said he had asked God to give him a sign and show him what to do, and what to say. He realized he had been been praying this without thinking or knowing if he meant it – but when he was approached independently by 4 different people to stand as warden, he knew he had to respond. He was looking forward to developing his own faith and he wanted to do whatever he could as a contribution for God.

John said he welcomed Mervyn’s appointment and looked forward to working with both Mervyn and Hazel in the months that lie ahead of us when there is much to do and a lot of change to administer. He asked people to pray for both wardens as there were decisions to be made, often difficult, on a daily basis and they would appreciate our prayers. Both Mervyn and Hazel felt they were on a very sharp learning curve and probably wouldn’t get everything right immediately, so John asked the congregation to be patient with them and continue to pray for them and we would see God at work through them.

The meeting closed at 10.45am.