

**St Peter's Church, Shipley**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**  
**held on 12 May 2024**

Viv Brealey, Licensed Lay Minister, opened the meeting saying that St Peter's was a registered charity and so obliged by law to have an annual meeting. The meeting would be in two parts: the first part (vestry meeting) for the election of churchwardens for all residents of the parish and the APCM for church business and election of PCC members, which electoral roll membership was needed to vote for.

The parish was currently in vacancy and the PCC had been chaired for most of the previous year by Miss Gemma Richards, one of the churchwardens. Mr Mike Moss, Treasurer, was appointed by the meeting to chair the vestry meeting in the absence of a vicar/priest-in-charge.

Apologies for absence had been received in advance of the meeting and could be taken on the day. All of the documentation for the meeting had been available on the church's website.

**Vestry Meeting**

There were 64 adults present at the meeting.

1. **Minutes of the Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 2023** had been available in advance. These were **proposed by Mike Moss and seconded by Jo Baxter** and accepted by the meeting with 2 abstentions.
2. **Election of Churchwardens:** Mervyn Silva had decided to stand down after 3 years' service and we were very grateful for all he had done. Two nominations had been received so no election was required

**Alan Armitage proposed by Hazel Wilmshurst and seconded by Mike moss**

**Gemma Richards proposed by Lisa Chadwick-Firman and seconded by Hugh Chadwick Firman**

As there were no other nominations, Mike declared them elected as churchwardens for the year.

Mike said it had been hard work since previous vicar Rev John Rainer left which had put quite a burden on both Gemma and Mervyn and they had done an amazing job at leading the church through that time and we were very grateful to both for all they had done through this time.

Mervyn said it had been quite a challenging time but we have stayed together and been the real family of God. It had been an experience and good learning for him as well. Although he and his wife Janet were married in St Peter's

back in 1982, they had not been living in the parish and it was at the millennium when an Alpha course brought them back with younger daughter Catherine, who went to the youth group. Mervyn said what kept him coming was sound, scripture-based teaching and great music and worship and he had always got something out of being here as a place to reconnect and offer worries and frustrations for the week ahead. He had been attending for over 20 years but didn't consider himself for a leadership role as he felt he didn't have anything to offer as others were a lot more spiritual. He had to be nudged and nagged by Karen, Hazel and others to consider becoming churchwarden until he finally said yes. He had experienced nothing but love, goodwill, and encouragement and support from the congregation and staff team. This is a God-centred community, led by the Holy Spirit, who see God's will and try to live by God's word. Being warden had been a great honor and he felt blessed being part of this community.

Mervyn had retired 8 years ago from paid employment but had not stopped working. He had a natural link and affinity to Sri Lanka due to his cultural heritage. The country was a tourist tropic paradise, but had gone backwards since independence, with corrupt and incompetent leaders. He believed it was better to light a candle than curse the dark so had been running a scholarship scheme and bursaries for needy children, co-ordinating that and supporting 150 children to give them a way out of poverty. 2024 was an election year, the government would crumble in Sri Lanka and people of courage were speaking truth to power. The Christian Church has been setting an example and that's why Mervyn decided being engaged with them and supporting the voiceless was important for him to do but it takes time. He could no longer do justice to the warden's role as a result and needed to make room for someone who could and that's why he was stepping down now.

Two things he would look back on with pleasure were installing the solar panels on the hall roofs and being actively involved in the appointment of Natasha, which was a pleasure he had got a lot out of. He was stepping down but not taking his bat home and would continue to support on Land and Buildings work in particular. A last word of appreciation was to the congregation for supporting him in running a marathon which raised £4113 for Yorkshire Cancer Research, a fair chunk of which came from people at the church. Mervyn concluded by saying most people tiptoe through life as though they want to look pretty to the undertaker. As for me I want to live my life to the full so when I get there I look like a pair of old boots! He thanked the staff team, the congregation, Martin and Catherine for all their love and support over the last 3 years.

Mike thanked Mervyn for all he had done, which he under-estimated, and we very much hoped he would indeed continue to be involved in St Peter's long into the future.

The vestry meeting was closed at 11.25am.

### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

This followed on from the Vestry Meeting. Newly re-elected churchwarden Gemma Richards took the chair. She had been chairing the Parochial Church Council since the retirement of the previous incumbent in September 2023. Those present were the same as at the Vestry Meeting.

**1. Minutes of APCM 2023:**

The Minutes of the meeting in 2023 had been made available in advance.

**The minutes of the meeting were proposed by Keith Brown and seconded by John Rhodes** and accepted as a correct record. There were 7 abstentions.

**2. Annual Report of PCC Business 2023 and Accounts:**

Gemma said thank you very much to Jo Baxter who has been our Disability Officer for over 20 years. She had decided it was time to step down. Many of us remembered her advice especially during the reordering and we were grateful for all her work. Jo's legacy would continue with a new officer.

Gemma asked for any comments or queries on the first part of the annual accounts but none were forthcoming.

Mike Moss, Treasurer, thanked various people who, behind the scenes did a lot of work including Elisabeth Sture for banking, the bank account signatories, Mark Davies for all of the gift aid recovery, Jenni in the office for all the invoicing which was a big job now as we had massively increased the number of users of the buildings. Andree had looked after the Shipley Neighbours Fund, which had now stopped and we were using some of the funding there for Welcome Spaces, so she had now stepped down but deserved thanks for her work over the last 3 years. Mark Jordan and Jenni had also been very diligent about getting grant applications in towards funds.

Financial issues over the past year had included boiler issues and repairs which had been very costly. The fire alarm system also required repairs and thanks to Martin Forbes for the work he put in to ensure that was done properly and in a safe way. We replaced the intercom system at the main doors. Some roof issues on the halls had caused subsequent problems which had to be fixed and we replaced the heating system in the lounge, got the new projection systems in the church and built a small kitchenette area in the

Small hall. The emergency lighting system had been upgraded and improved to come up to the latest standards. Additional electrical work and socket replacements had been done and the floor covering had been replaced in the disabled toilet. The good thing was the massive increase in income from the halls lettings, which had gone up to nearly £45,000 in the year, which was amazing and hopefully will continue.

Income overall had been very slightly down on the previous year, regular giving dropped nearly £7,000 and that was a concern. There was a need to continue to push for people to donate regularly – if you haven't increased giving for a year or two, maybe time to review it – because we're hit by inflation as badly as everyone else. We had not had the gift days we've had in previous years so that income was substantially less. However, we had received quite a lot of donations last year, gift aid had held level and a number of grants came in last year as well. We were looking for grants for most of the work we need to do in the buildings and for any new work so if anyone knows of any grant making bodies sympathetic to churches, let Mike, Jenni or Mark Jordan know. Nearly a 50% increase in hall hire doesn't come without its problems – a busy car park was just one example - but the fact was the buildings were being used. When the church was reordered back in 2006-7, the vision was that the church would be used every day and we are beginning to see that now – blood donors, polling station etc – things we wouldn't have been able to do before the reordering. So we were now seeing the fruition of that original vision,

Expenditure showed a small increase in total, but was less than inflation. We gave slightly less to mission last year, mainly because we didn't have a mission gift day. We also paid less to share which was around £100,000 and we had paid approximately £70,000 of that, which didn't cover the truly calculated share. The Share System changed in 2017 with an aim to give a calculated share that was fair for everyone but we were still being requested about £10,000 above our calculated share. We were doing our best to meet it but it is hard work, with all the work we have to do to keep the buildings here up to speed. The repair bill last year was nearly £50,000 - double the previous year. Hopefully work done last year will set us in good stead for future but it is a never-ending job. Not many churches in the diocese have as many buildings as we do to keep up with.

Youth work costs had dropped quite a bit because we had no youth worker. There had been some expenditure as we were paying Jenni to do some youth admin to free up Jessica to do hands-on children's work. General running costs did go up by nearly £20,000 partly down to inflation and pay rises to the staff and we also had to pay Kerry's maternity leave but will get most of that back from government next year.

Deposit accounts – there is some money in the youth fund doing quite nicely over £21,000 - but would not cover a year's salary. We could still employ

someone for at least 2 years or maybe 3 on current funding. At the end of year, we ran most of the accounts down to pay as much of the share as we could so there was only about £2,000 in at the end of the year. We have to make sure we have enough money in all the accounts to be able to pay the staff for at least 3 months due to PCC policy.

We had had some issues with the solar panel system. Electricity was being generated and sent out to the grid but we couldn't get reports on how much at the moment due to problems with wi-fi but were hoping that will be resolved soon.

There were no questions on the report and accounts. Gemma thanked Mike for all his work and his report.

**Peter Dyer proposed and Zahida Mallard seconded that the annual report and accounts for 2023, as already approved by the PCC, be adopted by the APCM. This was passed with no votes against and one abstention.**

3. **Appointment of Independent Examiner for the 2024 accounts** – Mike explained that our accounts were independently examined and accounted by Hart Wright Accountants who were a local firm who understood church finance very well and had done a good job for us over a number of years. **It was proposed by Mike Moss, seconded by Lisa Chadwick Firman and passed unanimously by the meeting that Hart Wright Accounting be reappointed as Independent Examiners for the 2024 accounts.**
4. **Electoral Roll Report.** Zahida Mallard took on the task of Electoral Roll secretary from Moira Geldhill in September. She thanked Mervyn and Mike for helping her to set up an electronic system and Jenni for her help in inputting new people.  
As from 1 May 2024 there were 173 people on the electoral roll, of whom 74 are men, 99 are women. 90 resident in the parish and 77 not resident in the parish.
5. **Fabric Report.** This had been renamed the Land and Buildings report because we do have a land and buildings group. Mervyn said the Land and Buildings group was managing the fabric and land on behalf of the PCC. Mike has explained maintenance and the report gives itemised figures. Hive, one of our big tenants, has been here almost 12 months and their contract finishes this summer while work on their own property at Kirkgate Centre in Shipley is ongoing. Fernhill land – several meetings had been held about the future direction of work there which Jackie Loach had pulled together to raise awareness of what's going on there and make sure we are making best use of the site. On 15 June, an open day was planned for the community and church members to come and see what's going on up there.  
Mervyn thanked those who were on the land and buildings group, led by Mike, also the cleaner and caretakers and others who help with maintenance.

Mike said there was a slight mistake on the second page of the report – what was fitted outside the office was a sounder for the fire alarm system not a sprinkler. This was pointed out by Martin Forbes.

**Guy Barford proposed, Karen Parkinson seconded and the meeting agreed to accept the Land, Buildings and Fabric report for 2023.**

**6. Other reports:**

**Deanery and Diocesan Synod reports and Shipley Christians Together reports** - Gemma said we were grateful to Hugh who was our representative on Shipley Christians together and did a lot of good work to promote Christianity in the area. The reports had been circulated in advance and there were no questions.

**Safeguarding report** - Frances, our Safeguarding officer had produced a report. She said there was a list of people who needed to do safeguarding courses. They were not tick box exercises and it was really important that we did the necessary training to make us aware so if Frances or Jenny approached anyone please do the training. Safeguarding is everybody's business so please do be aware of any vulnerable adults or children.

**Children's and youth report** – the report had been put together by Jessica Criddle and Jenni Reid, Jackie Loach and Karen Baguley. Particular thanks were due to Jessica for taking on much of the work leading children's activities. Jessica said thank you for how many people had helped with children's work and with the wider youth work as well. It had been enjoyable and she wanted everyone to be encouraged by what she was seeing going on in children's work and she invited people to come along to Messy Church and see what was going on for themselves.

**Mission Report** – this was covered in the PCC report as well but since John left, a number of people had taken on keeping in touch, so thanks were due to Anne and Eric Parker, Moira Gledhill and Gillian Towel for keeping in touch on a formal basis and a number of other people who did so informally and kept us up to date with what's going on with our mission partners.

**Environment Report:** Jackie Loach said we were really pleased to get our Silver award for eco church from A Rocha. Buildings and land had been the hardest to get up to silver. On a land front she was really pleased that we had managed to set up a group with church and Fernhill users and would be so pleased for people to be able to go and look round during the open morning. It was a long time since we had reaffirmed our commitment to Fair Trade, so we had reapplied and got new certificates now to say that we are a Fair Trade Place of Worship, committing us to using fair trade tea and coffee and promoting ethical fair trade sourcing of things. Barbara Judd has done phenomenal work in this area across the whole of Shipley, so huge thank you to her and all others involved in that.

## **7. Elections to Parochial Church Council (PCC)**

Gemma said that PCC members were normally elected for 3 years and we had 3 vacancies for 3 years. However, this year we also had a 1-year vacancy due to a resignation before the end of a 3-year term and a 2-year vacancy, arising because Alan as warden was automatically a member of the PCC. We also had one outstanding Deanery Synod vacancy, which had not been filled the previous year.

She had received the following nominations:

**Mark Davies nominated by Jessica Criddle and seconded by Maria Mullin**

**Chris Beard nominated by Gemma Richards and seconded by Mike Moss**

**Karen Parkinson nominated by Suee Pedley seconded by Andrea Peace**

**Sue Pedley proposed by Claire Wright and seconded by Andrea Peace**

**Mervyn Silva proposed by Chris Beard and seconded by Eric Parker**

No nominations were forthcoming from the floor and so all four were declared elected. One would be appointed to a two-year term and other to three-year terms.

## **8. Vice Chair of PCC Report**

Gemma said she had known John was turning 70 in the near future, so the fact that he might retire was something she did take into consideration when standing as warden. However, she didn't consider that logically that would mean someone else would have to do the job of chairing the PCC.

However, she had found there were lots of really nice unknown unknowns to being warden, not least the encouragement of so many and those who put together rotas, ensure things run smoothly, all the staff team, the door stewards, the sacristans and he was grateful to all who put up with things not going as you might expect from time to time. Particularly in this time when we haven't had a vicar, she would especially like to thank Keith and Carol Brown, Joe Batt and Karen Parkinson who had done a lot of the pastoral work, co-ordinated by Keith and Carol.

Her favourite part of the role of churchwarden was being a door steward. Being in the porch saying hello to people when they arrive was the thing she enjoyed the most and she remembered former warden Hazel Wimshurst had instilled the importance of being present in the porch trying to give a welcome to all who come through the door, regulars, visitors, new church seeker, Christian, potential Christian – it was really important to be welcomed. It was a reciprocal thing too – there was something really nice about exchanging a few words as we all come together to worship God.

Being on a threshold as a church had been a strong theme for us as we had been in that place between John leaving and Natasha arriving. God has not stopped, though we've been waiting for something new to start. The vacancy time had been good for us as a church, we had pulled together and benefited by services led by church members and visiting clergy.

We had spent the period between Ascension and Pentecost waiting for the Holy Spirit and had a time of praying for more people to come to know Jesus. We all have our roles in helping others across that threshold from doubt to faith. As Christians, we are all called to help others come to know Jesus and welcome them into the Kingdom of God. There had been a joint Shipley churches service on Friday night at the end of the Thy Kingdom Come day of prayer and Revd Emma Wilkinson had said we were all called to fill up that God-shaped hole in people's lives - our lives are infinitely poorer when God's not in it.

Thresholds appear in the Bible – for example, in Judges where people are often doing horrible things because they haven't got God in the centre of their lives. There is a description of someone reaching out to touch the threshold of the house but being unable to get into the sanctuary of the buildings. Some people have been on the threshold of God but unable to get inside – and have not invited God to be at the centre of all they do. Our church holds lots of exciting things for the future for our church and for the community in Shipley. We need to ensure we are building it up in the right way following God and doing it with God. As we begin the next 12 months, we will hopefully continue to grow more and more as a spirit-filled church, inviting God to keep his rightful place as we continue.

- 10. Any Other issues for PCC attention over coming year:** This was for individuals to raise matters that should be brought to the PCC's attention.

Karen Parkinson said this was not so much a matter for PCC discussion but she would like to mention Warm Space in the meeting. Warm space had grown beyond all our imagination. It was originally supposed to last 5 months and 18 months later, by the grace of God, it's still going. Many of those who come are not Christians but lives are being touched.

Halfway through the first service today before the meeting, a lady had come into the church who didn't come to the service, but she had come on Friday with her grand-daughter for the first time but didn't give a donation so she had come back this morning to give some money – she had said what you are doing is so good, I had to come. This was a tiny example of lives being touched. We don't always know how what we are doing is touching people's lives but God is working in their lives because somebody saw a need and got involved.



Gemma closed the meeting in prayer at 12.15pm