

ALL SAINTS WESTON

Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 21st May 2023, 7.00pm
Meeting (in person) – All Saints Church, Weston

Charity Reg No: 1136968

The papers listed below were available in advance from:

https://www.allsaintsweston.org.uk/Articles/662902/APCM_2023.aspx

1. Minutes of the APCM of Sunday 22 May 2022
2. Trustees report and Audited Accounts
3. Written reports:
PCC report,
Buildings Report
Deanery Synod Report
4. Agenda

Meeting of Parishioners

The Rector, Rev Tom Yacomeni, opened the meeting with a welcome at 7.01pm. He dedicated the meetings to God's service and thanked Pat Dunlop for stepping in to take the minutes.

1. Appointment of Church Wardens:

Nominations have been received from Paddy Gleave and Peter Ward, who were appointed unanimously by a show of hands. Tom described them as two awesome wise men who constantly provided All Saints, and him personally, with good counsel and dedicated service.

The Rector informed the meeting that Paddy Gleave is intending to stand down as Church Warden on 3rd October and that Rosie Coates is willing to stand from that date. The appointment of Rosie Coates with effect from 3rd October 2023 was agreed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Tom thanked Paddy for shouldering the extra responsibilities caused by the interregnum and said that he was grateful to him for agreeing to stay on a full year after his own appointment as Rector.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

40 voting members attended the APCM, and a register of those present was taken.

1. Apologies for absence

Tom Yacomeni (Chair)

Apologies were received from Paul Bright, Mike Everson, Derek Hall, Sandy Hewit, Peter Heywood, Jackie Heywood, Sally Houseman, Teresa Oaten, Tom Peryer, Annie Robb and Lynn Ward.

2. Agreement of the Minutes of the APCM of 15th May 2022

Tom Yacomeni

The minutes were approved by a show of hands, *nem con*, with a few abstentions.

3. Matters arising

Tom Yacomeni

There were no matters arising.

4. Electoral Roll Officer's Report

Robert Groezinger

Robert reported that in May 2022 there were 232 people on the roll. In the past 12 months, 26 people have joined, either during the year or during the electoral review, including one child. Four people have sadly passed away and have been removed and 12 people have moved away or disconnected from All Saints. The current electoral roll is therefore 242 members.

He was pleased to say that after the disruption caused since 2019 by the Pandemic and the change of Electoral Officer, the Roll now represented a more accurate picture of church members. There is a copy available to view in the Church Centre.

5. Receipt of the written reports:

Tom Yacomeni

The following written reports have been published on the website:

- The PCC
- Building Committee
- Deanery Synod
- Trustees Report and Audited Accounts

Rob Gray, Treasurer, presented the Trustees Report. Tom thanked the Treasurer and Finance Team for their hard work. Questions on the Report included "Who are the trustees?". Tom responded that the Trustees are those on the PCC, and listed their names.

The Chair asked if everyone was happy to accept these reports and those present voted to accept them. There were no votes against and a few abstentions.

6. Appointment of Tellers, if needed

Tom Yacomeni

The Chair concluded that tellers were not required to count votes, as there were places available on the PCC for all of those standing.

7. Election of Lay Members of the Parochial Church Council

Tom Yacomeni

Given the current size of the congregation, 14 people can be elected as lay representatives. Anne-Marie Lewis has been nominated and she was appointed unanimously by a show of hands.

The three Deanery Synod reps were appointed unanimously, namely Pippa Page, Peter Ward and Hylton Asplin.

TY thanked Pippa Page in particular for her work as Lay Dean, which involved work with the Diocese, the Deanery and with Synod, in addition to her considerable work in the Parish.

8. Appointment of Auditors

Rob Gray (Treasurer)

Rob Gray reported that Burton Sweet had been the auditors for several years, most recently at a cost of £3,200 for the preparation of the 2021 accounts. This year Lisa Vernalls, our Finance Officer, prepared them very effectively and the Burton Sweet cost reduced to £1,600.00. If Lisa is willing - as the overtime she had to put in was quite onerous - Rob proposed that we do the same next year. This was approved unanimously.

9. Financial Report

Rob Gray

The Treasurer outlined the Financial Report, supported by graphs and pie charts which will be available online after the meeting.

Rob Gray reported that moving on from Covid has produced new challenges. Despite the current climate of economic uncertainty, our income has nearly returned to 2019 levels. There are no more Covid Recovery grants, so we are returning to our previous sources of income. The end of 2022 was a difficult period and inflation has again been a big issue.

Income in 2022 was approximately £844,000, as opposed to the £492,000 in 2021. However, over half of this figure was Restricted income and the vast majority of this was for ROCK. The overall projection for 2023 is lower, because it is a combination of Unrestricted Budget and expected Restricted ROCK income only.

Our income from Charitable Activities (the Centre, Hub etc) was up more than £30k on 2021, thanks to the hard work of our staff. Indeed, we are nearly back to the heights of 2019.

Our main source of income is from donations. This has decreased the last couple of years from the peak of 2019. However, it is worth noting that donations from Standing Orders alone was the highest it has ever been, beating the previous peak in 2019 by nearly £14,000. Rob thanked all who gave regularly to the church and emphasised how much every contribution was valued.

Unrestricted giving, including Gift Aid, was £281k, which was 3% down on 2021 figures. This supports the bulk of the work and ministry of the church. We also received grants of £90k and rent of £11k from our residential property and land. All Saints Centre generated £51k in bookings and has almost returned to pre-Covid income levels. Weston Hub generated £42k in bookings and this covered its ongoing management costs.

We have set our budget for 2023 as being a bit more ambitious than 2022 in this regard. Following the drop due to Covid, we are hoping that we see a move back towards where our overall unrestricted giving should be.

Restricted Giving: The ROCK pledge drive early in the year contributed to a massive increase in Restricted Giving in 2022. Whilst we are not expecting to receive as much this year, our current projection is around £300,000, of which we have already received about a third. We expect this to pick up further as we approach the start of the building work on the ROCK project.

Expenditure: 2022 year was another high spending year. However, this is again largely due to money spent on ROCK. Further, as we start building later this year, we are projecting that this will increase substantially. In 2023, the Rock Project will be the largest single expenditure.

Apart from the ROCK Project, the main costs last year were staff and Parish Share. In 2022 we increased our Parish Share by 25%. There was a massive increase in restricted giving and the church received £270k more than we spent, but this is because we spent less than anticipated on ROCK.

The PCC has agreed a balanced budget for 2023 but this is looking increasingly challenging due to inflation, especially as we move into the next stage of the ROCK project.

Assets: The final breakdown of our assets at the end of December 2022.

Of the total of £817,649:

- £650k is ROCK money
- £51.5k is Capital Projects
- £24k is our Rainy Day Fund
- The bequests have increased to nearly £61k
- Our Hub Refurb pot stands at just over £11.5k
- We have just over £8k in the Millennium fund
- Just under £3k for senior workers; and
- About £9k across other minor pots.

Reserves: As a charity we aim to hold three months unrestricted reserves, which equates to £105k. Our reserves took a hit during Covid but in 2022 we managed to increase them by nearly £7k to nearly £76k. We also managed to increase our Parish Share substantially. The reserves may be challenged again in 2023 due to the ROCK project, and therefore selling some of our residential property remains an action of last resort.

Questions: There was a question about the Parish Share, namely – “Are we paying all we should be?” Tom Yacomeni answered: no, we paid £132k in 2022 (which included Dave Parr’s salary) and in 2023 we are working on £128k, which is increased but still less than what the Church is asking for. We are now paying what we can, by agreement with the Diocese. TY said that large churches used to receive a discount off the Parish Share, but that this discount has not been applied and the full sum is miles away from what All Saints can achieve. He said that the Diocese understands this and that discussions are ongoing.

In response to another question, Rob Gray said that the discounted Parish Share amount would be about £130k, which is what we are aiming to give.

TY thanked Rob for all his considerable work, and also Lisa Vernalls and the Finance Team.

10. a ROCK Report – project management

Richard Lewis

Richard Lewis presented the latest Rock Project update. Each month Richard produces a report for the PCC showing in detail the current situation. His report will be available online after the meeting.

He emphasised that, as Project Manager, his priority is to challenge all costs and get them down to an affordable level. It is for the PCC to decide if sufficient funding is available, but Richard will not allow the project to begin until he knows that funds are fully in place. He therefore requires accurate, detailed and transparent accounts to be available, from which he can manage the project.

As per Tom Peryer's report, Methodist Chapel Aid have indicated that the maximum that they will loan is £400,000, which is down from the £750,000 previously envisaged. This will reduce the scope of the Project again.

He emphasised the following elements of the report:

- Early indications are that B&NES planning conditions will be less onerous than previously envisaged. Nevertheless, in RL's view this still represents the greatest single threat to the ROCK Project.
- Project design is ongoing, with detailed final technical specifications currently outstanding, which is the major activity on the project at present.
- We are seeking to ensure that a "meaningful start" occurs before 21st January 2024 by submitting planning permission to drive piles into the ground in the area covered by Phase 2, at a cost of c £15,000. This is reduced from an initial estimate of £50,000, and is well worth the effort as it will future-proof the current planning permissions.
- Faculty conditions, although less onerous than B&NES Planning Conditions, still represent challenges. These conditions include improving wheelchair access to the church.
- A cost-efficient method of improving wheelchair access would be to increase the width of the North Door and level the external path, this carries a provisional estimate of £300,000 and will require Faculty and Planning consents.
- The Victorian Society want us to keep the pulpit. This needs to be addressed.
- The Welcome Centre construction works are not possible within the current project plan.
- The design for a reduced-scope extension has been agreed, future-proofed to allow further work at a later date, as Phase 3.
- No funding will currently be allocated to any works in Phase 3 of the project.
- Tender drawings are currently being assembled by the various consultants, and Greenwoods are providing a pre-tender cost estimate for phase 1, 1b and 2, with the intention of proceeding to tender in June.
- The months of May and June will be very busy until the designs are completed, but this work is well worth the effort, because if the various contractors dovetail their designs, this will reduce the overall cost substantially.
- This timescale implies being on-site in November, starting with the church building itself and then moving outdoors.

Phasing: 1 = internal reordering and necessary works to secure planning permission
 1b = improved disabled access and refurbishing the toilets
 2 = The hybrid scheme (half the extension).

Questions:

In response to a question about affordability, RL said that his top priority was to get a handle on costs. He will only let the project go ahead if the finance is forthcoming. He indicated that he and Tom Peryer had worked hard producing detailed spreadsheets which reflect true numbers and that any expenditure will match the finances. He will be clear with the PCC if the finance is not available.

One member commented that there was a special general meeting 25 years ago to enable all church members to vote on the Church Centre scheme; however, this time there hasn't been a meeting. In response, TY reported on the process this time, which has included a day of prayer and an extraordinary PCC meeting including a blind ballot to decide whether or not to go ahead.

TY indicated that with Methodist Chapel Aid offering a £400k loan, 19 Chandler Close would be held as security against that loan. Chandler Close should soon be worth £400k and therefore this is a pragmatic means of underwriting the loan if no other source of funding is found. He also said that unless there is a further injection of cash, we would not proceed with Phase 2 yet.

In response to an encouragement from a member's account of another church's experience of God's provision, TY indicated that we are being faithful and also keeping our options open, but we will not spend out recklessly or ask contractors to tender for work that we do not intend to undertake.

TY thanked Richard Lewis and Tom Peryer for all the hard work that has brought the project to this point, and commended the ROCK Project team for their commitment over a period of nearly ten years.

10 b. ROCK report – fundraising

Tom Peryer

Tom Peryer provided a written update for the APCM on the latest situation:

b.i. Finance, income The main development on Finance relates to the application for a loan to the Methodist Chapel Aid. A huge amount of work was put into preparing a number of 10 year cash flow forecasts for all church finances, including ROCK. These looked at how our financial position could be if we did just Phase 1, Phases 1 & 1B and Phases 1, 1B & 2.

On 19 May, I heard from MCA that the officers are likely to recommend to their Board that a loan of £400,000 is the maximum loan and that this should be repaid over a period of 10 years. Annual repayments would start at £57,000 per year reducing to £41,000 per year.

A loan of £400,000 would mean on current estimates that we are £140,000 short of the total funding estimated to be needed for Phases 1 and 1 B. However we will need to confirm that the grants given, offered and hoped for will still be given, even though we are not adding kitchen and toilet facilities via the Welcome Centre.

Given what we know now, there is no chance of starting Phase 2 (barring a sudden miraculous influx of cash). The ROCK project Board will review the situation in the week after PCC meeting.

b.ii. Resolving Faculty conditions: Efforts continue to get clarity from the Diocese as to the procedural pathway for resolving the conditions. The primary outstanding issue is the issue of

the pulpit. We were required to give the Victorian Society an opportunity to make further representations about the pulpit. They have now come back with requests for more information.

b.iii. Communication: The church has been kept up to date with the current situation via presentations in services, leaflets available online through the newsletter and hard copies available in church.

11. Rector's Report

Tom Yacomeni

Tom reported that he is very grateful to be working for such a wonderfully committed bunch, who have a passion for God and a desire to share the life and message of Jesus such that the whole community is transformed. He loves the diversity of the church, including young and old, rich and poor, and people from all sorts of cultures and backgrounds who have come together to follow Christ.

He has been praying that All Saints, after several years of being buffeted by change and loss, will feel like a safe place to be, and will keep to the church's main object of sharing Jesus. After eight months at All Saints, Tom is beginning to feel secure as well; he and Mims feel loved in the church, and they are grateful for this.

Although memories of the past will still invoke feelings of loss and distress for some, Tom believes that we can start to look forwards with confidence because the Lord is with us and He wants to take us deeper. Like the Israelites travelling in the desert, he feels that God's priority at present is for us to learn what it actually means to be the people of God, to adopt God's priorities, re-tune our identity and practice the art of discipleship – namely to develop distinctive attitudes, prayerful practice and a way of life that is different from the world around us.

The world will only recognise the value of our faith if we can learn to live a better way, if we can cope with challenge and struggle, if we love despite differences and carry genuine hope for the future. We need to be grateful for what the Lord provides. Our verse for the year reflects this hope: Luke 5 v4 "Put out into deep waters, let your nets out for a catch."

We have four clear challenges over the next few years:

Finance – seeking God's provision in obedience and trust, praying and letting down our nets.

Culture – asking for God's wisdom to speak into our culture and its fractured direction, prayerfully observing the signs of the times and understanding where we need to speak out God's word with compassion and kindness.

Relevance – discernment in applying our energies to the right areas, addressing the areas that the world finds relevant.

Integrity - God's Spirit to keep us walking in integrity and take risks with openness and honesty.

We have small but dedicated sister churches at Langridge and North Stoke - we are committed to supporting them and God will honour this. Tom also praises God that we now have Wardens in every church and that they are committed and capable people willing to work together for the whole Benefice.

Tom thanks God that All Saints is a community that is generous in big and small things, will put up with many inconveniences, offers a warm welcome, provides lots of laughs and displays a wealth of talent. It is also honest and prayerful, has dedicated intercessors, stands alongside folk in prayer, waits on the Lord for prophetic words, and supports worship with music, leading us faithfully into God's presence each week.

Tom produced a word cloud highlighting all the teams that contribute so much to the life of the church community:



And then listed nearly 40 different teams and groups that provide service to the whole. There were so many contributors that individuals could not all be named, so each team was applauded as their name was read out. The Rector then prayed for the Holy Spirit to enable the church to rise to the challenges it faces.

12. Opportunity for questions and answers

Tom Yacomeni

Members wanted Rev David Parr to receive a special mention for seeing the church through the interregnum with such skill, dedication and pastoral care. The view was that with Dave's presence and the talent and hard work of Pippa Page and Tom Peryer, the church was blessed with a formidable team who shouldered the responsibility for worship and teaching throughout a challenging period.

Chris Chatfield thanked Tom Yacomeni for answering God's call to become our new Rector and said that the appearance of Tom & Mims and of Richard Lewis in the past few months were evidence of God's provision for the church. This was met with heartfelt applause.

13. Prayer

Tom Yacomeni

The Rector closed the meeting with a blessing at 8.15pm