**ST. MARY’S CHURCH, WEST CHILTINGTON**

**VESTRY MEETING, - SUNDAY 20th SEPTEMBER 2020**

**PRESENT:** Rev’d Stephen Merriman**,** Diane Bennett (Churchwarden), Pam Wells (Churchwarden), Brenda Bull (Treasurer), Ali Littleboy (Secretary), Fiona Hardy (Secretary Desig), Malcolm Bennett, Vivienne Bicknell, David Burnett, Norman and Sally Boyland, John and Hilary Brocklebank, Ann Chapman, Clive and Stephanie Cole, David and Barbara Evans, Joan Granville, Frances Hancock, Barbara Hovell, Vanessa Llambias, Beth Merriman, Claire Roake, Penny Wilson.

**1. WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER**

Father Stephen opened the meeting with a few words of welcome. There then followed some words of reflection and a prayer.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies have been received from: Ed and Mel Cole, Ian and Andrea Carlson-Hedges, Peter Evans, Nicholas Foster, Daphne Mabbitt, Jocelyn Mountain, Rob and Jenny Neal-Smith and Jane Stoy.

**3. MINUTES OF VESTRY MEETING HELD ON 28th APRIL 2019**

The Minutes were approved as a correct record.

**4. ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS**

Diane Bennett and Pam Wells were nominated. Both were duly re-elected.

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)**

**SUNDAY 20th SEPTEMBER 2020**

The APCM immediately followed the Vestry meeting.

**PRESENT:** As for Vestry Meeting

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

As for Vestry Meeting

**2. MINUTES OF THE APCM HELD ON 28th APRIL 2019**

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**4. REPORTS**

(a) Electoral Roll Report

Ali Littleboy read out the electoral roll report on behalf of Andrea Carlson-Hedges, the electoral roll officer, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Following the six year review the 2019 electoral roll stood at 124 members. The present roll stands at 125 members. Rosemary Coleman, Chris and Liz Williams, and Iqbal Mall came off the roll because of moving, and sadly June Knowles, Gillian Holliday, Kathleen Boothby, Mo Mall, Nichola Hamilton and Tony Hills have all died.

We welcomed Beth Merriman, Hannah Merriman, Julia Jordan, Patrick and Sue Higham, Ellie Runton, Murial and Philip Race, Katherine Young, Jennifer Packman and Jan Van Leeuwen as new members of the roll bringing our total to 125. There was insufficient time before ‘Lockdown’ for applications from any new people worshipping at St. Mary’s church. However, Andrea would like to remind you that applications can be made at any time. Please contact her for an application form.

(b) Trustees’ Annual Report

The churchwardens highlighted key events which had taken place during the year including:

* A ‘light stop’ event for ‘All Hallows’. Many local children participated in the event
* A Lent course with an intriguing theme entitled ‘The Mystery of Everything’
* The formation of a new prayer group
* The formation of a parish visiting team. Following a six week training course and the completion of DBS checks the team were commissioned during a Sunday service earlier in the year. It is hoped that with the introduction of this outreach initiative those who would benefit from a visit will be encouraged to make contact.

Diane and Pam were honoured to be nominated by the Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, Mrs Susan Pyper, to attend a Royal Garden Party. They commented that ‘it was the highlight of their year’. In September the Rev’d David Coleman took up a new appointment in a Yorkshire parish and so following the family’s departure St Mary’s was once again in an interregnum. Following completion of the recruitment procedure it was not long before a successful applicant was appointed and it was with great pleasure that we welcomed Father Stephen, his wife Beth and their four children to St Mary’s in January.

Pam and Diane concluded by thanking everyone for the support they have received throughout this somewhat extended year since the last APCM. There followed a round of applause.

(c) Financial Report

The treasurer, Brenda Bull, gave a brief overview of the financial section of the Trustees’ Annual Report, a copy of which is on the noticeboard in the porch and also on the church website.

At the year-end the General fund, church hall fund and restricted fund reflected a combined increase in receipts of £25,723 on the previous 2018 figures. A generous legacy of £50,000 has been received from the estate of Richard Holliday for which we are sincerely grateful. However, there was also a combined increase in expenditure of £54,936 on the 2018 figures. The majority of expenditure relates to payment for the new heating system installed in late 2018 amounting to £41,238 and a £6,000 increase in the parish share. Regular giving and gift aid recovered were both down on the 2018 figures as was fundraising income. Nevertheless, the combined bank balances at the year-end was £118,268.

Brenda wished to record her sincere thanks to Francis Midmer for his continuing assistance, in particular with the gift aid claims. Also to Adrian Radford, our independent examiner, for his advice and support in examining the financial report.

Brenda was thanked for her work as treasurer for both the church and the church hall and there then followed a round of applause.

(d) Fabric

Norman Boyland, our fabric officer, gave a detailed report of all action taken during the year. A summary of key areas of work addressed is as follows:

* New energy contracts negotiated for the church and church hall
* Insurance inspection completed and accordingly safety improvements undertaken
* A certificate of completion for the new heating system forwarded to the Diocesan registry
* The water tank in the church hall was reinstalled and a leak at the main stopcock repaired
* A full electrical inspection carried out in both church and church hall
* Repair/repointing of east wall of the churchyard is being undertaken by Rob Parker. Norman thanked Rob for his painstaking work
* Vandalism to the former youth club has required complete boarding up of the building. Action to organise a surveyor’s report is in process
* Prevention measures to deter local youth from causing damage to the church hall roof is being sought
* Continued work with Dennis Sinclair to facilitate his work in the churchyard and ensure his conditions of service match the requirements of the job
* Work to upgrade paths around the church to improve safety will start in the coming months
* A partial quinquennial inspection will commence soon.

Norman was thanked for his work in ensuring that the fabric of St Mary’s is kept in good and safe working order. There followed a round of applause.

(e) Deanery Synod

Diane Bennett, reported on the Deanery Synod meetings which are held three times a year. The February 2020 meeting was hosted by St Mary’s, West Chiltington. It was Father Stephen’s first meeting as our parish priest and he was welcomed by the Deanery. It is hoped that there will be an October meeting and the speaker will be the new Bishop of Horsham, Rev’d Ruth Bashyager.

**5. ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD MEMBERS**

There were three nominations, Diane Bennett, Pam Wells and Brenda Bull. They were all elected. Pauline Turier has stepped down this year and Father Stephen thanked her for her many years of service.

**6. ELECTION OF PCC MEMBERS**

There were four nominations for election to the PCC: Andrea Carlson-Hedges, Ann Chapman, Claire Roake and Penny Wilson. All were elected.

**7. APPOINTMENT OF SIDESMEN (EN BLOC)**

A list of sidesmen was read out and all were re-elected *en bloc*.

**8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Brenda confirmed that Adrian Radford had expressed his willingness to continue as our Independent Examiner. The motion to re-appoint him was proposed by John Brocklebank and seconded by Sally Boyland and unanimously agreed.

**9. PCC SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Ali Littleboy summarized the PCC’s activities during the year. There have been six Standing Committee meetings, Six PCC meetings and 3 Extraordinary PCC meetings held since the last APCM in April 2019. There has been a 95% attendance at meetings over the year. Scheduled meetings during lockdown were cancelled.

She listed the standard items on PCC agendas and also summarized other items discussed during the year including:

* Creation of a stable/tomb for Christmas and Easter festivals
* Change of personnel: parish administrator, editor of parish magazine, PCC Sec, appointment of verger
* Introduction of and training for a parish visiting team

The PCC has been busy but it is time well spent and most rewarding.

Ali reported that she would be stepping down as PCC Secretary. She said that she had very much enjoyed being part of the team. She introduced Fiona Hardy who has kindly volunteered to take over with immediate effect.

**10. SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

Ali Littleboy read out the safeguarding report prepared by Andrea Carlson-Hedges, the safeguarding officer, as she was unable to attend the meeting. There were no safeguarding issues to record or report. Andrea took over the role of safeguarding officer in January from Pam Wells who has very competently fulfilled this role for several years.

Andrea has been DBS checked, and has completed and passed the necessary modules to qualify for this voluntary post. Her certificates are operational from 11th January 2020 until 11th January 2023. Copies are filed in the office. The safeguarding folder has been updated and is retained on the church premises. The porch notice has been updated.

Andrea has requested that all PCC members should complete the safeguarding modules which are on-line at the Chichester Diocesan web site as soon as possible. This will be applicable to any new members of the PCC. They will only need to complete module C0 (and CO1 in some instances) which is quite straight forward. She will also need their DBS checks in place as soon as possible. DBS checks can be completed on line. Andrea, who has taken over this role from Frances Hancock, will require DBS certificates to file. Andrea commented that in an ideal world the aim would be to get every member of the congregation to complete the Foundation C0 module. She concluded by offering assistance to PCC members who are experiencing difficulty in completing the DBS process.

**11. RECTOR’S ADDRESS**

Father Stephen explained that as a recently arrived incumbent at St Mary’s he was unable to report on the life and worship at St Mary’s during the last year. However, he conveyed his thoughts in the following message:

‘Firstly, I should begin by thanking everyone who has made Myself, Beth, Hannah, Joseph, Isabelle and Thomas welcome. For making us feel very much a part of your Church family. What a very strange, unexpected turn of events that we faced shortly after we had arrived, but all we have done thus far this year is really for next year’s report.

Love is life’s greatest blessing. Blessed Mother Teresa once said, “Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do that matters...but how much love we put into it”.

The Words of Jesus at the Last Supper. Jesus gives his friends, the disciples, a new commandment – they must love one another as Jesus loves them, with whole-hearted and unlimited generosity. Jesus’ message is for us too. When we invite Jesus, as a loving friend, into our family then love grows and life becomes more joyful.

I would like to edit Blessed Mother Teresa and say, “Love begins at Church, and it is not how much we do that matters, but how much love we put into it.”

For if we had a deep-rooted Love of God, a deep and meaningful relationship with God. That our life was so centred on Christ, then all that we do in Church is for God and not for ourselves or for self-praise. We must love one another as Jesus loves us, with whole-hearted and unlimited generosity.

Do I have a whole-hearted and unlimited generosity in giving – does it reflect my Love for God and His Church and the mission of the Church?

Do I have a whole-hearted and unlimited generosity of patience– Do I make myself as welcoming or make allowances for everyone?

Do I have a whole-hearted and unlimited generosity of understanding – Do I sit in judgement of what is not achieved? Gossip and take pleasure pointing out faults and failings of others?

Do I have a whole-hearted and unlimited generosity to my Church, that no matter when things don’t go my way or I feel undervalued, that I give so much and do not receive the accolade I feel I deserve, unappreciated for what I do, for what I achieve, am I wise enough to know to remember.

“Love begins at Church, and it is not how much we do that matters, but how much love we put into it.”

If we truly have that Love, I believe we would be more generous in our giving, more understanding and forgiving, more prayerful, more ready and willing to come and worship the God we gather today to Worship.

As the year now unfolds and we are gripped by the coronavirus, let us not lose sight of the God who loves us and sustains us and let our response to him be seen in love towards one another, humility in service and dedication to His Word and Sacrament.

*God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life’.*

*(John 3 v.16)*

He concluded by thanking all those people who so freely give of their time to the life and work of St Mary’s and he presented a small gift to each of them as follows:

Norman, Adrian, Francis, Brenda and Ali (outgoing PCC secretary). He also thanked Frances Hancock who had so generously given her time and expertise to updating the website and also acting as DBS officer.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

Following the Grace the meeting closed at 12.50pm

The date of the next Vestry Meeting and APCM will be confirmed.

Chairman………………………………………………………………………

Dated……………………………………….