

St Mary Bredin, Canterbury - Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2022

Thursday, 28th April 2022 at 8.00pm

MINUTES

Barney de Berry welcomed everyone to the meeting. He encouraged everyone to look ahead to see what the Lord is calling us to do over the next year.

He opened the time together with prayer.

VESTRY MEETING

1. Minutes of the 2021 Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting on 29th April 2021 were approved and will be signed by Barney.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Barney and the meeting thanked the Churchwardens Rosemary Wade and Peter Bobb for their work for SMB. Both are willing to continue to stand as Churchwardens and appointment was agreed unanimously.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence

Apology for absence was received from Pam Webster, Martin Williams, Andrew Way, Alison McDonald, Julian and Hiliary Hills, Jim D'Eath, Margaret Griffin, Sam Locke.

2. Minutes of the 2021 Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting on 29th April 2021 were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report

Barney started by reading Psalm 121

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
- 2 My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
- 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
- 6 the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
- 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

The last few years have affected our perception of time but for two years we have lived with the effects of lockdown. In 2021 we started the year in lockdown and the first in person service was on Easter Day and the last APCM was on zoom and it was some time before we

could have congregational singing. Even at the end of last year the Carol Service had to be moved into the car park. It has been wonderful to return to the corporate worship that we had missed. It has been a challenging year but God has sustained us, provided for us and met our needs. We have more than survived the last two years and God has grown us with new people, and new life, being welcomed into the church family. Some people have been launched and others have gone from strength to strength. The Kingdom of God continues to grow and the Lord has continued to provide. In our finances God has given just what we need at the right time. In our staff team the right person has been called at the right time and in the church family the right people, with the right gifts, have stepped up into new roles at the right time.

As the Psalm says “He who watches over the people of God watches over us now and for evermore.”

Despite the challenges of the year we also moved forward in our mission to be Holy and to be a blessing. The establishment of SMB as the debt centre for Canterbury for Christians Against Poverty (CAP) was really important as the need in the City is so great. Tony Washington has been great as the new debt centre manager. Tony gave an update on the work of CAP

CAP

Tony reported that CAP has recently made a statement of its understanding of its Biblical mandate and emphasized the Old Testament injunction to have social justice, to not consider land as ours but God’s and to observe Jubilee and Sabbath and periodically cancel debts. CAP sees itself as an inheritor of Jesus’ announcement of the Good News of the cancellation of sin and oppression. CAP started with one divorced man with two children and a lot of debt. There are very few techniques or shortcuts and the work must be done one person at a time. Each one is difficult and different to the last one. However, the paperwork has been done and the experts at CAP have been able to come up with solutions. The first client has now gone debt free and there are two more who are very close to this goal. The work has to be done in partnership and is slow and frustrating but there is a great need for anyone, who can cope with that, who would like to be a Christian witness to become a befriender. Tony asked for prayer for the day to day work, the new debt coach from City Church, and that the evangelistic opportunities will be seized.

Megan started as youth paster during the year and has already laid good foundations for the work and she gave an update on the exciting things that have been happening.

Youth

The new youth drop in evening, Café Lumen, was started recently. The aim is for the young people to have a safe space to go in a rather chaotic world. The Link is set out with café tables and they are able to buy a token to get a milkshake, toastie, and maybe cake. If they can’t afford a token they can still get squash and toast. There is a craft corner, a group of consoles where they can play games and ping pong, table football, & air hockey. There is also a football cage which keeps the ball contained so that it can be used inside as well. There are various activities such as embroidery and other skills. Nearly half of the attendees are unchurched with some from other churches. They come from most of the main schools in Canterbury. There is a team of volunteers for all the activities, kitchen, etc. Some of the older volunteers have even been able to help with history homework! The team pray from 3 pm and then from 3.30 the fun begins and then it is packed down in time for the older youth at 6.30 pm. The kids are bringing their friends and even if they won’t go the church they will come to Café Lumen, which of course is church.

Barney thanked Marlee Worsley who worked on the finance team during the year to cover Helen's maternity leave. Catherine Colley stepped down from the Church Manager role at the beginning of the year and towards the end of the year Sarah Buchan also stepped down. Barney thanked Catherine for holding things together during the difficult lock down periods and also Sarah for her contribution in a challenging time. Katie Mickleburgh took on the role of Church Manager and has done an amazing job. We are very grateful to God for calling her to this role and her positivity. In the last week or so Tana Harris has taken on the job of administration assistant and Debbie Cavero has also been helping out. Barney also thanked Manny, the caretaker, and James, the cleaner, for their faithful work. Sam and Rowan have been a great help during their Discipleship Year and Mim continues to be a great star as she provides a safe space for children to find Jesus. Her job title has changed to "Growing Faith Pastor" to reflect the commitment to resource the work of growing faith and also the fact that Mim is part of the senior leadership team. Barney has enjoyed working with Stephen and Charmaine and thanked them for their support.

For many years Barney has spoken of SMB as a resource church for other churches and ministries and we are now moving towards an official recognition as a growing faith resource hub for the Diocese to meet their vision to reach children and young people. This means being a training centre for other churches within the Diocese. This will be outworked in many ways and although we are already doing this Barney is excited to see how this might evolve as God calls us to bless others.

The Parish Share is based on attendance figures and was previously capped at a maximum 6% pa rise, whatever the growth in numbers for each church. We have usually grown above this level and so the cap had been to our benefit but last year it was removed and this led to a significant increase to around £150,000 pa in the next year to reflect our size. There was very short notice which was a challenge, but was in fact due to the removal of a benefit not an additional charge. We believe God will provide and have already seen this. The Parish Share covers the ministry cost at SMB and within the Diocese, including Barney as the Vicar and any Curate, although the Associate Vicar is paid for by SMB directly. SMB are the largest contributor to the ministry of the Diocese which shows SMB's role within the Diocese.

Another challenge within the Church of England (CofE) is the debate relating to human sexuality and increasing pressure on the church to change its definition of marriage in order to bless same sex marriages. The C of E is going through a process called Living in Love and Faith (LLF), which is a way of learning and listening in order to gather feedback and opinions from people so that the House of Bishops can weigh this and decide on the next steps for the C of E. As part of this there has been a five week course with teaching and Bible study and testimonies and there has been a Deanery course in Canterbury. The PCC spent five meetings doing the course and have submitted feedback and a statement on behalf of the PCC. This is an important and sensitive issue and we must tread carefully, but it does have massive implications for the church generally. It is important to get this right and more is at stake than just the blessing of same sex marriages. We need to hear what God is saying and not shy away from talking about this. Barney invited people to talk to him with any questions or thoughts. He wanted to hear what people have to say and know if anyone thinks he is wrong and whether we are teaching on the subject enough. Barney is concerned that this issue could split the C of E and wants to ensure that this church is united in our love for God and for each other and listening to God and desiring to seek His truth.

The pandemic underlined that we need community and there is no better community than the family of God. Barney continues to praise God for the church family at SMB and for the faithfulness of the congregation who give in so many ways. God has plans for this coming year and will provide whatever we need to do His work. Barney has been vicar of SMB for 12 years and continuously checks that he is still called to be here. He always hears that the best is yet to come. There is no greater way to bless someone than to lead them to the Lord.

Barney thanked everyone, and especially Ruth, for their support.

4. Electoral Roll report

Katie Mickleburgh reported that there were 218 people on the 2021 Electoral Roll. During the year 11 people had been removed and 22 added so the new Electoral Roll stands at 229.

5. Fabric Report

Peter Bobb confirmed that the Churchwardens had completed the annual 'terrier', which involved checking all items of value belonging to the church. He was pleased to report that everything was correct and in order.

6. Treasurer's Report

Simon Webster started with the good news that the finances are in a very good position and spectacular generosity has already occurred in 2022. There was unfortunately an error in that the wrong version of the accounts were provided by the accountants and circulated to the meeting. The corrected version is now available for review.

Income exceeded expenditure last year. Over the last month there have been some large donations and this has improved this year's position. Once income is sufficient to pay operating costs surplus can be used to fund outreach and mercy ministries. There was a great gift day and giving remained strong despite the pandemic. We were able to take on a youth worker part way through the year. Simon reminded people to review their support regularly, to perhaps remember SMB in a will and especially to remember gift aid as this gives a real boost to our funds. He also thanked Marlee for taking on the book keeping role temporarily and Helen who is now coming back after maternity leave.

Lynn Shaw asked about the item "upkeep of services" – this refers to provisions for communion etc.

John Ward thanked Simon for the work he does and asked about the gift day numbers and whether there was £56,405 that was not gift aided. - This amount couldn't be gift aided for various reasons.

Nina Coulthard asked about the family fund and the Vicar's fund. - Simon agreed to answer the question after the meeting.

Simon said he was satisfied that the accounts were largely correct apart from a couple of small errors which were being addressed by the accountants. He proposed that the meeting approve the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 subject to these corrections. This was seconded by Barney and all were in favour.

7. Appointment of External Examiner of Accounts

Simon proposed that SMB reappoint Burgess Hodgson as Independent Examiner of the Accounts, which was seconded by Barney and agreed unanimously.

8. Election of representatives to the Deanery Synod and Parochial Church Council

Barney said that his year there are three vacancies for PCC and two for Deanery Synod. Philip Lewis and Zac Bawtree had reached the end of their term and the other vacancy was due to Jacob Nicholson taking on a Diocesan Synod role which means he is automatically part of the PCC. Philip does not wish to stand again and Barney thanked him for all he has given to PCC over the years. He has been a member of a PCC for 46 of the last 50 years!

There are three people willing to stand for PCC and Barney mentioned that if anyone else is wanting to join PCC there are two Deanery Synod places to fill. Zac Bawtree is willing to stand again and the two new members willing to stand are James Jirtle and Laura Asfour. For the first six months James and Laura will be non-voting members as they have only just joined the electoral roll. All were in favour of the appointments. Pascal Sleigh, who is a member of our youth, is now part of the Canterbury Diocese Youth Council which means he is part of the Diocese and Synod and means he also qualifies for the Deanery Synod and will become part of the PCC.

9. Any Other Business and Questions

Harry MacDonald asked about the church website and database - Barney said the website was approaching launch after a couple of tweaks. He thanked Katie and Peter for all their hard work. Most of the benefit will be behind the scenes to make things work better. The church database is Churchsuite and seems to be working very well for rotas, etc and it can be integrated into the website.

Alison MacDonald asked how we overcome the difficulty that only 15% of the adult congregation have shared any contact details making it harder to contact each other easily - Barney said that this is now a sensitive area due to data protection and people are more wary of sharing their details with everyone. The option to share is available but we must respect the fact the many do not want to do so.

Barney prayed for the new members of the PCC, the Churchwardens and all that is happening through the church family.