

**St Mary Bredin, Canterbury - Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023**  
**Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 8.00pm**

**MINUTES**

Barney de Berry welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He opened the time together with prayer.

**VESTRY MEETING**

**1. Minutes of the 2022 Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 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 Sarah Genders, James Jirtle, Roger Thornington, Sam Locke, Graham & Jenny Bough, John Ward, Tony Washington & Tom Gilbert.

**2. Minutes of the 2022 Meeting and Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

**3. Chairman's Report**

The chairman's report included three reports on ministries within the church.

**ALPHA**

Cheryl Mvula shared that during the pandemic Alpha went through a dry spell and without sufficient numbers it is not really possible to make it work. In 2022 from September there was a dramatic turnaround and there have been two sessions back to back with 21 guests. Interestingly the people who have attended have been from outside the church, often living difficult lives and God has brought them to us. The Spirit moved in great power and it was good to see how God moved in people's lives. On the second term many from the first course came back and brought friends. The highlight is always the Holy Spirit day and this time it was away from the church building and it provided a lovely family time. The majority of the guests were blessed by the Spirit, with tears and laughter and people giving their lives to God. On week three one guest gave their life to Christ and he was then in too much pain to come to the remaining sessions, but God knew and met him at the right time. One guest who is receiving counselling has said that the counsellor wants to attend a course to see what had made the change in her. Some of the attendees have joined a fellowship group. Some want to get baptised and they have set up a WhatsApp group where they are sharing verses and helping each other. Some find it hard to go from a small group to a big church and have found attending services harder. Cheryl wanted to thank the amazing team who make Alpha possible.

### **Bumblebees**

Angela Swindley told us that Bumblebees is another way to demonstrate God's love and most weeks there are around 40 families with a minimum of one adult and one child. There are various areas in the church with larger toys and a quieter area in the link for snacks and chat. Most of the people who come are mums with small children and most have no headspace apart from looking after the children and juggling life. There are huge pressures on mums these days and when they arrive at Bumblebees they just need some space. They are welcomed and given coffee and snacks and have people willing to come alongside to encourage them. Each morning the team pray for the Holy Spirit to come and be active throughout the morning. There is a great team but as many have small children themselves, they do sometimes have to cancel at the last minute. There is therefore a need for more help as some, including Angela are stepping down this year.

### **Meeting Point**

Nina Coulthard said that the perception of a Seniors ministry as being boring should be re-considered. Whilst some may not want to just be with people of their own age, for some it is very important. Phrases such as silver surfers etc. show that the older we get the more precious the titles. Nina reminded us that Moses was 80 when he started his main ministry. Nina hoped that Meeting Point is not a group of old people sharing their latest ailments, or bemoaning the changes in the world, but it is a group where there can be fun and friendship, especially for those who live alone. It is a chance for people to get out and meet others. Friendship is one of the main issues for those who are stuck at home and lonely. The sessions start with a meal and thanks to Anne Young, Anne Ovenden and Rose Ward for providing these. The main meeting has included speakers and quizzes and even keep fit. There was also a talk on the background to the war in Ukraine. We want to be accessible to those who want to come even if they do not come to SMB. Some bring their friends and neighbours and some have grown in confidence in themselves. It would be good to have some younger people in the team to support what happens. The overriding aim is that within the experiences shared that people will move closer to Jesus from wherever they started.

Barney commented on the fact that there are so many people in the church who are willing to serve on and expressed his thanks.

Barney started his report by reading Col 1 v 3 -1 4

3. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,  
4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—  
5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel  
6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.  
7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,[c] who is a faithful minister of Christ on our[d] behalf,  
8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.  
9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,  
10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,  
12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.  
13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,  
14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Thinking back to the beginning of 2022 we had only just come out of covid restrictions and this last year was a time of getting back to family life within the church. This included Alpha and the privilege of seeing people being brought into the light. CAP and the kids work have flourished and Café Lumen has really taken off. We had two interns for the first half of the year, but none for the second. There are now three interns confirmed for next year. God has continued to provide financially and also brought new people to the church over the year. Barney said the staff team are amazing and Katie in particular is a great asset as office manager, and Tana has brought her own special gifts to the team. Helen is back from maternity leave and dealing with the finances. Tony is great with the CAP team and Megan has done a fantastic job with the youth. Mim has been here for ten years and we feel blessed by her willingness to stay. Manny and James as caretaker and cleaner respectively, have been a blessing. The clergy team have worked well together and Barney thanked Stephen and Charmaine. Charmaine will be leaving shortly and Barney said that she will leave a real legacy and her gifts have given us so much.

Looking ahead Barney is very excited about what is to come and that there is a great harvest to be brought in. There will be a parish weekend away at Ashburnham early next year and the speaker will be John McGinley who was a vicar in Leicester and now heads up a church planting organisation. Joy Dunton will be joining us as curate and will be moving to Canterbury very soon.

There are also challenges to face in the year ahead both financially, and due to the Church of England's position regarding same sex marriages and the proposed prayers. The Bishops have effectively differentiated among parishes and we need to see some structure to enable us to continue to be part of the Church of England. Barney feels that this is something that needs to be right as people's salvation will be at stake. It is unlikely that there will be support for the traditional position from the senior church leadership in the diocese.

When the pressure is on God does mighty things if we remain faithful to him. Barney has been at SMB for 13 years and said that from a church perspective this church is the love of his life. He also gave a big thank you to Ruth for all the support she gives behind the scenes.

#### **4. Electoral Roll report**

It was reported that there were 229 people on the 2022 Electoral Roll. During the year 13 people had been removed and 7 added so the new Electoral Roll stands at 223.

#### **5. Fabric Report**

Peter Bobb and Rosemary Wade 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 changed his normal presentation to show the big picture. The independent examiner's report is on page 5 and he noted that we do not need to be audited as the turnover is below the threshold. The examiner does, however, make sure that the money is

in the places stated. Helen Birch who keeps the books is really good and the accounts she prepared were accepted by the examiner with no changes.

The target is to break even. This is not easy, as it is highly preferable to avoid going negative. Total income in 2022 was £567,324, total expenditure was £566,708 so we were £616 in credit. This would be amazing as it was but 0.109% of turnover! Considering the expenditure this year with higher bills and a new boiler this is fantastic. The bank balance at the end of 2021 was £281,649 and at the end of 2022 it was £290,870. However, the gift day was intended to fund the following year but in fact we only had a £616 surplus. Gift aided donations have increased by 2% but gift aided donations on gift day were down by 30% and non-gift aided were down by 55%. If inflation continues at 10% we need an extra £56,671 to cover our costs. It would be good to get the monthly income in line with monthly expenditure as it could be quite tight this year. Simon said that we should all review our support and perhaps remember SMB in wills. He also mentioned gift aid as a good way to increase revenue.

Simon gave some personal thoughts in that we represent the family of God in this place. As a family we are stronger when we are acting together. Everyone is facing inflation and we are all facing higher food and energy costs. He thanked those who had been able to maintain their giving in the face of these stresses. The church also has high energy costs and needs to pay the staff fairly. The costs to the church of England have also gone up markedly. This is because we had been benefitting from a cap to costs and this has now been removed. We do however get a lot back from our contributions. We don't know what might happen with the Church of England and it is vital to continue to act as a family and to work together. The Vicar and the PCC are watching the situation very carefully but it is best if things are done together.

Simon proposed that the accounts be accepted and this was seconded by Lynn Shaw and agreed unanimously.

#### **7. Appointment of External Examiner of Accounts**

Simon proposed that SMB reappoint Burgess Hodgson as Independent Examiner of the Accounts, which was seconded by Andy King 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

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. Sarah Genders & Nedine Watson-Cutts are willing to stand again but Tom Gilbert has stood down this time. Tutu Popoola is willing to stand for the other place. All were in favour of the appointments.

Angela Swindley is not standing again for Deanery Synod but Martin Collings is willing to stand again and Lara Ovenden is also willing to stand. All were in favour of the appointments.

Barney thanked Tom and Angela for their service. We also want to formally acknowledge the role Margaret Griffin played over many years and we will miss her wisdom.

#### **9. Any Other Business and Questions**

Mike Avery asked about the property development fund. He asked what the plans are regarding the entrance at the Old Dover Road. Barney said that the prices have gone up markedly and things have stalled a little. The scale may need to be reduced but full planning permission has been granted. It will be necessary to start something soon to maintain planning but the front steps really need some work very soon.

Harry asked about plans for the Discipleship Year students. Tim and Lauren are from SMB and Analise is coming from London. We have filled our own quota but are praying that there may be other students for other churches. Stephen said he will really miss Charmaine's help but is looking forward to Joy taking on some of the role. We are able to get some funding from the Diocese towards this.

Manny asked about the new curate Joy and her husband Drew and whether they would both be part of the church family. Barney said that Joy will be ordained at the beginning of July and then they will move into the curate's house and will both be part of the church family.

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