

St Mary Bredin, Canterbury - Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024

Thursday, 25th April 2024 at 7.30pm

MINUTES

Peter Bobb welcomed everyone to the meeting in the absence of Barney de Berry who is on sabbatical.

He opened the time together with prayer and then asked Stephen Carter to lead the meeting.

VESTRY MEETING

1. Minutes of the 2023 Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting on 20th April 2023 were approved and signed by Stephen.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Stephen 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 proposed by Stephen Carter and seconded by Mike Avery and agreed unanimously.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence

Apology for absence was received from Karien and Paul Downes, Adetutu Popoola, Andrew and Elizabeth Bartlett, Robert Newport, Martin Williams, James Johnson, Anne Young, Zac & Kez Bawtree, Alison & Harry MacDonald, Rose Ward, Anna Levermore, Melene Locke, Laura Asfour.

2. Minutes of the 2023 Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting on 20th April 2023 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.

Stop The Traffik

Cheryl Mvula updated us on the Stop the Traffik ministry. Modern slavery has increased from 40 m trapped in 2014 to 50 m now, a 25 % increase. The organised crime groups are very sophisticated and stay one step ahead of the police. There is a big increase in the care sector and around 50 victims have been rescued in this sector in the last six months. The team has 20 active members from this church and others and some non-Christians from all walks of life. Awareness training is very important as people have not previously recognised the signs. During the last year there have been several awareness days in conjunction with the police. There is also awareness training with police, homeless charities, NHS, etc. to help staff know what to look out for. A midwife who attended was able to realise that one of the people she supported in the community was a victim and they have now been rescued. A new partnership last year was with South Eastern Trains and British Transport police. A lot of teenagers are transported via the trains. A campaign is to be launched soon with posters on the trains to show victims where to get help. There has also been a pilot in Canterbury West station to raise awareness amongst the passengers waiting for trains. This worked well and the team have now been invited to do this wherever they like. There have been a lot of joint ventures with the police. At one recently in Maidstone weapons were seized and one victim was taken out of the situation. They also work with IJM (International Justice Ministry) who originally ignited the passion for this work. There was a recent prayer day at SMB with IJM with much prayer for victims who are as yet unidentified. There was also a collaboration

with the Salvation Army to identify victims. One of the difficulties is that there is a need for a home office interview before help can be provided and there are not enough people to take the interviews. The team have stepped forward to help with this and Cheryl has become a first responder with the Salvation Army and two others are training to do so. There is also support offered for survivors of trafficking who need practical help to set them up as well as emotional support, especially for those sex trafficked. Some need help to navigate the asylum system as well. It has been a very busy year and none of it would have happened without the light of Jesus.

Men's Ministry

There are about 90 men at SMB who are emailed each fortnight about the men's prayer ministry. Steve Haddock has been involved for about 40 years and he believes that for a strong Christian family there needs to be a strong male lead. SMB is blessed with a lot of men and he encouraged them to come along and share the blessing at the Friday night and Saturday morning meetings. It is also an opportunity for men to be prayed for which is important in the light of the growing men's suicide rates. All men within the church should feel able to be supported and people grow closer through this. There are currently about 18 – 20 men who attend but they are of an age and it would be good to encourage more of the younger men to come. Those in the group have prayed for, and sometimes supported financially, those within the church and those known to them as needs arise. There is a Dad's and kids event coming up. There is also a men's ministry prayer guide to help guide personal prayer time. There will be prayer walk this coming Saturday followed by breakfast.

Women's Ministry

Jan Newport reported on the women's ministry which re-started last April. Sarah Donkin was instrumental in starting things back up but she went back to South Africa at the end of the year and so a new leadership team came together who decided not to continue with meals. The intention is not to ask God to bless the planned meeting but to wait for God to take us deeper. It is a space where people can be comfortable and can join in as appropriate. We are hoping that non-Christians may also feel they can come and fit in. The team are simply waiting on God.

Peter Bobb read Romans 15:1-22

Stephen turned to our Ashburnham verse and a chapter about a church bearing fruit.

In John 15 Jesus says, 'Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.' Both the Apostle Paul and the church in Rome had a passion and reputation for remaining in Jesus. And their church matured, their ministry bore fruit.

Stephen felt that we as a church should ask ourselves if we're bearing fruit in seven areas:

...bear with the failings of the weak (v1)

This opening verse of chapter 15 refers back to the previous chapter, a fellowship that continues to meet together, despite their manifold differences in personalities, ages, backgrounds, have a commonality in Christ that transcends other differences. Through our Sunday gatherings and weekly Fellowship Groups we're a church that is deeply committed to one another in relationship. For those that play a role in leading and facilitating our fellowship, thank you.

We are a church that sets our ministry amongst children and young people as a priority, we are a Growing Faith church. 2023 saw our first youth weekend away and we're so grateful for those who serve our children and young people.

He thanked those that bear with his, and the clergy team's failings and for the faithful service of our super staff team, Manny, James, Helen, Tony, Annalise, Lauren, Tim, Megan, Mim, Tana and Katie. He also thanked Tiffany for her daily love, sacrifice, encouragements and grace for him. He said that Barney would certainly want to thank Ruth as well.

... please our neighbours for their good (v2)

The church in Rome had a reputation for helping the weak and vulnerable. In *Make Lunch* the hungry are still fed, and 2023 saw the first cookery school through *Make Lunch*. In *Meeting Point* our seniors are connected. Through *CAP* those trapped in cycles of debt might find a way out. Through *Stop the Traffik* slaves are literally set free.

Stephen mentioned the Family Fun Day and Community BBQ respectively last year. Also, our engagement at Wincheap School and Archbishops' School along with Café Lumen and Hotspot. In 2023 we had our first ever, very tasty, SMB Kitchen. Stephen thanked those that serve in our outward facing ministries and those who serve on welcome and hospitality for our services for leading and inspiring us in being a blessing.

Praise the Lord, all you gentiles (v11)

The Gentiles... the people who were once not the people of God are now the people of God. Week by week our growing team of worship leaders and musicians lead us in worship, faithfully supported by our tech team, aided by those wonderful ladies who arrange our flowers, and shielded by our new drum screen purchased in 2023. For those involved helping the people of God praise the Lord, and make turning up to praise the Lord a priority in your life, thank you.

...as you trust in him... (v13)

God does the job of filling us with joy and peace, that we might overflow with hope, but our role is to trust in him. For those of you in our life together who've hung in when things have been challenging, who've given sacrificially, come forwards humbly in prayer, stepped out in faith, thank you for trusting in him, and modelling to the rest of the fellowship what it means to trust in him, that we too might ever be filled with joy and peace.

... obey what I have said and done – by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God (v18-19)

We describe ourselves as an Anglican, evangelical and *charismatic* church. For those who've joined in prayer, offered a word of knowledge, a prayer in faith, an intercession, a compassionate healing ministry, thank you for loving and leading us in these gifts, and calling us to do the same.

In 2023 many of us were blessed through being at or visiting the New Wine Summer festival in Detling. Whilst the return to Shepton Mallet might deter some of us from heading over in 2024, we're not deterred from being a Holy Spirit people, expectant for God to move in power.

...preach the gospel where Christ was not known... (v20)

For those of you who've invited your friends, colleagues, or neighbours to church or one of our events, even if they've still never come, thank you for your faithfulness which God sees. Whilst Ashburnham was not in 2023, the Lord has continued to lay on our hearts the unreached people and places. For those that have served on Alpha, disciple those new to the faith, and are bold in your witness of the goodness of God, thank you.

Stephen was grateful for those who've preached Sunday by Sunday, exercising your 'priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God', thank you. Also for clergy colleagues, previously Charmaine, latterly Joy, and ever presently (in 2023 at least!) Barney. As a church we

continue to pray for Charmaine as she explores her long term future, and for Barney on sabbatical.

...hindered from coming to you... (v21)

Life at SMB doesn't stand still for long, nor should it. God is always doing a new thing, there are always people who are yet to hear and respond to the good news. Until Christ returns, we will always be ministering to the poor and broken. In a healthy and fruitful church however there'll always be parts of our life together that are pruned, making space for new shoots, space for the light to enter in. We want to be a church that continues to bear good fruit.

Stephen used an example of an orchard that has been uprooted to say that he loves this church, and is thankful for those in it, for the faithfulness demonstrated across it but that in Luke 12:48, Jesus says 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.'

In the year ahead God will continue to invite us to step out in faith, to carry on being faithful, to carry on being holy and being a blessing. Will we each be ready for the much more that will be asked?

4. Safeguarding Update and Report

Sarah Genders updated the meeting on the safeguarding report regarding whether the PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidelines. There is a safeguarding group who meet once a term. The meeting thanked Philip and Liz Lewis for their long standing service in this role and it was confirmed that Andy King would take over as PSO for vulnerable adults. PCC members have all undertaken Domestic Violence Awareness training and we also had a session with Anne Lyttle from Rising Sun. A parish self audit tool is now available and this was worked through in November 2023. A safer recruitment process is now in place which Chris Greenfield helps implement. Training records are updated as required with all PCC members up to date. There is also an online form for reporting concerns. The contact details for SMB and diocesan safeguarding officers are available on the church website. We have signed up to use the parish safeguarding dashboard which makes administration and governance simpler and this is helping us to stay up to date and manage compliance.

The safeguarding group is:

Vicar – Barney de Berry

Associate Vicar – Stephen Carter

Child Safeguarding Lead – Sarah Genders

Adult Safeguarding Lead – Andy King (from April 2024)

Growing Faith Pastor – Mim Taylor

Youth Pastor – Megan Johnson

Parish Disclosure Officer – Nedine Watson-Cutts

Lay Advisor – Georgia Hirst

Office Manager Katie Mickleburgh

5. Electoral Roll report

It was reported that there were 223 people on the 2023 Electoral Roll. During the year 8 people had been removed and 9 added so the new Electoral Roll stands at 224.

6. 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. They were pleased to report that everything was correct and in order.

7. Treasurer's Report

Simon wanted to focus on a couple of important elements so they would be remembered. He started by reminding everyone of the meaning of the various elements of the accounts. The target is for the income to match expenditure - to break even. Helen Birch does all the bookkeeping and handed the accounts to the independent examiner and five years running they have come back unchanged. Simon felt his best day's work as treasurer was the day Helen was hired. The total income 2023 was £584,914 last year it was £567,324. The total expenditure in 2023 was £575,911 and last year it was £566,708. This year's revenue included a gift aid refund of around £50,000 and helped balance the books in 2023. But general fund actually spent more than income by around £1,784, and we start 2024 knowing we won't have that again.

At the end of 2022 there was £290,870 cash held and at end 2023 £275,581. However, in 2023 we had prepaid for Ashburnham which occurred in 2024. So our net asset position is a little better year on year

Our original budget for 2024 showed an operating deficit of £43,678, income of £525,268 and expenditure of £568,946. However, our budget for 2023 showed an operating deficit of £53,000. God provided in 2023 and we are believing that He will provide again this year. Therefore, we must all consider our own financial commitment to the church. Perhaps our giving should go up by the same percentage as our costs. We should all start saving for a gift day later in the year.

Currently most of our income comes from monthly standing orders and gift aid. But there will be a machine available from mid May to enable donations by card.

Cheryl commented that it is healthy to live needing to trust God to supply our needs. John Ward asked about the negative figure on the unrestricted funds. Simon said this was due to a re-allocation within the account. Martin Collings asked how much we would be paying to the Diocese for Parish Share for the next year. It has actually gone down by £200 compared to last year and is £152,282 for the coming year. Nina asked about expenditure for student work as it is almost nil in the accounts. SW advised that it is supported from a variety of sources but that it has not been a large amount recently due to the lower number of students.

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

8. Appointment of External Examiner of Accounts

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

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

Andy King, Chloe Baxter and Sam Locke have reached the end of their three year terms. Zac Bawtree is also stepping down leaving one year on his term. This means that this year three places on the PCC are available for a three year term and one place for one year. Stephen thanked Chloe, Andy, Sam & Zac for their service.

Bill King, Uche Ossisiogu and Emily Craig are willing to stand for the three year appointments and Sam Locke is willing to continue for a further year.

All were in favour of the appointments.

10. Any Other Business and Questions

Manny Mvula asked about our eco church status. He said that if some members were to share what they do at home this may increase our score. Rowan said that we are currently submitting our position for consideration to hopefully achieve bronze status. Stephen asked anyone who would like to join the eco group to talk to him.

John Ward asked about the feedback from Ashburnham weekend. Stephen said that it would be on the PCC agenda in May for wider discussion. He also mentioned that we are hearing more testimonies on Sundays.

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