

St Mary the Virgin Chalk

Please read through the report section (pages 4-7) ahead of the two annual meetings.

Agenda for Vestry Meeting 2024

1. Welcome, prayers & introductory remarks
2. Minutes of last meeting inc. matters arising
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Wardens' remarks
5. Any Other Business

Agenda for APCM 2024 (Annual Parochial Church Meeting)

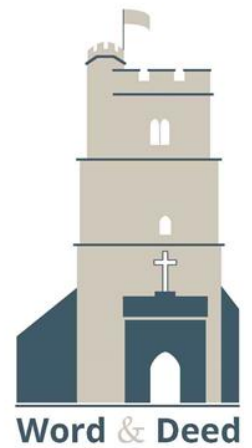
1. Welcome, prayers & introductory remarks
2. Elections to (a) ~~Deanery Synod~~ & (b) PCC
3. Minutes of last meeting inc Matters Arising
4. Annual Report including Accounts
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner
6. Review and the Future
7. Any Other Business inc ER



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St Mary the Virgin Chalk
Minutes of Annual Vestry Meeting
25th May 2023
Held at 7.45 p.m. in church

Present: Chairman Reverend Nigel Bourne

Numbers in attendance 19; see register for names of attendees

1. Welcome, prayers and Introductory remarks

Nigel welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained its purpose. He read from Acts 1 vs 8 and then prayed for the meeting and its outcomes.

2. Minutes of last year's meeting including Matters Arising

Proposal that the minutes as published be accepted as a true and accurate record.

Proposed from the Chair ALL IN FAVOUR

There were no Matters Arising

3. Election of Church Wardens

Barbara Millat and Steve Quinton expressed their willingness to stand once again.

Barbara and Steve were duly re-elected.

4. Wardens' Remarks

See comments under 'Core Reports/Reviews' 2023

5. Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.52 p.m.

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

St Mary the Virgin Chalk

Minutes of the APCM Meeting 25th May 2023

Held at 7.52 p.m. in church

1. Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Nigel welcomed everyone once again. He then prayed for Barbara, Steve, PCC members and those standing down from the PCC.

2. Election of Members to (a) Deanery Synod and (b) the Parochial Church Council

- (a) Deanery Synod: Karl Addy and Emily Bourne are willing to stand again as our representatives. They were duly re-elected.
- (b) Nigel explained that there are 12 basic places on the PCC; four are elected each year and they serve for a term of three years. The following people are standing down from the PPC this year: Mike Hammock, Beverley Glanville and Jenny Ellett. Nigel expressed his thanks for their commitment and hard work. Suzanne Smit and Mark Addy stood for election and were duly elected. Mark Morgan who will become our curate, will become an ex officio member of the PCC when he is ordained in September 2023.
- (c) Nigel informed the meeting that he will continue to be Area Dean for the next two years.

3. Minutes of APCM 2021 including Matters Arising

Nigel stated that they be accepted as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Anne Wilkinson Seconded: Steve Quinton ALL IN FAVOUR

There were no Matters Arising.

4. Annual Report including Accounts

- i) **Finances:** Martin referred to the Financial Review document. He said that since 2019 income and expenditure have been running on an even keel, largely due to the fact that we have adjusted our Parish Share contributions i.e. paying less to the Diocese than has been requested by them. Martin felt that it is likely to be a couple of years before we can meet the Diocese's full demand. He also pointed out that we have made a loss of approximately £10,000 owing to money spent on the replacement of one of the hall floors. Two grants were received in 2022; one from KCC for the refurbishment of the pond area (£7,000) and one from the Diocese to help with spiralling heating costs (£2,000). Nigel expressed his thanks to Martin for all the hard work he has done in relation to the accounts over a number of years. He pointed out that as Martin is due to retire from his role, legally the responsibility for the accounts passes to the church wardens. However, it was recognised that the issue of a replacement treasurer needs to be addressed with some urgency, including the possibility of having to pay someone to do take on the role.
- ii) **Annual Report:** Nigel informed the meeting that a summary of the Annual Report was available tonight and that a full copy of the report will be available on request once the office photocopier is fixed. He then asked if there were any questions concerning the report; there weren't any. Nigel said that it had been a better year in many respects due to the easing of Covid issues. He then showed the meeting a slide show highlighting some of the key events of the year. These included the Platinum Jubilee celebration, the installation of a defibrillator at the church hall and various Loaves and Fishes events.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Nigel reminded the meeting of the role of the Independent Examiner. Martin proposed that we continue with the Carley Partnership Seconded: Barbara Millat ALL IN FAVOUR

6. Review and the Future

- Nigel said that Mark Morgan, who has been on placement with us over the past, year will join us as curate on a part time basis in September. As he will be part time, he will be with us for approximately five years.
- Nigel then focussed on the key aspects of the Vision (Growth; Greater Strength in Christ; Communications; Resources – Personnel, and Resources – Buildings and Finance). He went through discussing briefly possible ideas as to how each area might be developed. For example, on a Deanery level two course have been run this year: 'Hearing God's Word' and 'Speaking God's Word'. The hope is that this will lead people to taking on a more active lay role within their church. Additionally, he highlighted the need to develop the excellent work of Julie's Loaves and Fishes in terms of how to bring these families more fully into the church family.
- A decision regarding the Barn Project as to whether to proceed with this will be made by Mr and Mrs Parsons by the end of the summer.
- Nigel discussed the possibility of re ordering the upstairs space in the hall. This would include the installation of a platform lift, the creation of an office (for use of the curate and hall manager), a meeting room and storage space. Costs are obviously a major consideration but Nigel informed the meeting that £20,000 had already been donated specifically for this project and that others had expressed an interest in donating
- Nigel informed the meeting that he expects to remain as vicar of Chalk for the next 4-5 years. He also said that judging by the way the Church of England is operating, it is unlikely that in the future, there will be a vicar purely for Chalk. It is more likely that, as has happened elsewhere, we will be amalgamated with another church. In the light of this he felt that the development of the upstairs of the hall would be very valuable.
- Nigel commented on the new heating system which is working well. He also said that further improvements are needed within the church i.e. the tea station area and the audio-visual system.
- Nigel pointed out that what was most important for the future is the development of people's spiritual life and the development of the lay leadership within the church.

It was proposed from the Chair that we receive the Annual report and Accounts.

ALL IN FAVOUR

7. A.O.B inc. ER

- i) Nigel informed the meeting that there were 111 on the Electoral Roll.
- ii) Nigel recorded his thanks to all of those in the church for their hard work and support.
- iii) Barbara proposed a vote of thanks to Nigel for all his work for us and the church.

There being no other business Nigel closed the meeting with a final prayer at 8.50 p.m..

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

St Mary the Virgin, Chalk:

APCM 30 May 2024

Core Reports / Reviews of 2023

Paper circulated in advance of meeting.

(The full Annual Report is available at Church; copies are available on request.)

Report on Church Buildings, Premises and Churchyard

We were fortunate this year to be given diocesan permission and, thanks to Steve's efforts, a large grant from Marshall's charity to install an efficient under-pew zoned heating system, and to begin a purpose designed tea station replacing the un-hygienic arrangement of cupboards and boxes. We are still troubled by the damage caused by invading squirrels in both the church and to a greater extent in the barns where plans for refurbishment and a café are on hold. Thanks to a generous donor a modern new church sign was installed as a memorial. The community payback team continued to work outside every week as did members of the congregation, including Marion and Eric who kept the flower beds looking attractive and Duncan who mowed the woodland grass. We are grateful to the coffee teams and to the church cleaners for their faithful efforts. The Jubilee Garden progressed with the work of Gary Cordice.

Barbara Millatt and Steve Quinton
Churchwardens

Safeguarding

Safeguarding information is included in every PCC meeting, including updates on the progress of the new three yearly Disclosure and Barring Service checking. The relatively new Parish Dashboard is a helpful tool for ensuring that everything possible is being done to keep our congregation safe, particularly any vulnerable adults or young children. Various online courses are run by the diocesan safeguarding team who are also available on the phone to answer queries. Information and posters are displayed in church with contact details for any who need to use their service. Again, a reminder that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the church and any concerns should be reported to the vicar, safeguarding officer or wardens.

Barbara Millatt
Safeguarding Officer



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Financial Review

This year's financial results show at long last the restoration of our finances to 2019 pre-covid levels of income and expenditure. We started 2023 in a healthy financial position and, despite a UK economic crisis in the autumn, rising inflation, rising interest rates, spiralling energy costs and rising labour costs, we ended the year only slightly impacted by these. Some impact our church finances but others do not. We incur no borrowing costs and food inflation has no impact but we are impacted by energy prices and general price increases passed on by suppliers for services and labour/material costs. Overall, unrestricted income increased by 9% this year compared to last year. This has helped offset our increased expenditure. In total, our unrestricted expenditure exceeded unrestricted income and we therefore incurred a loss of £7,288. (This does include depreciation of £6,128.)

A summary of financial activity (previous year's figures in brackets).

Total gross receipts of unrestricted funds was £117,331 (£107,557). This is represented by three income streams:

- Voluntary donations of £68,945 (£59,283)
- Fund raising activities of £16,299 (£17,791)
- Church activities, such as weddings, funerals and hall lettings of £32,087 (£30,205).

Total gross unrestricted expenditure of £124,619 (£116,359) was spent to provide Christian ministry at St. Mary's Chalk. Other notable highlights are:-

(i) A majority grant funded new church heating system £18,980 (ii) funding our continued growth initiative called 'Loaves and Fishes' with £5,347 (£3,483) from church funds. (iii) an improved contribution of £50,000 (£46,000) to Rochester Diocese towards clergy stipends, housing, training and pensions. (iv) a new tea station servery in church £5,131. (v) donations to charity increased by 17% to £5,031. (vi) Legacy income of £5,982 (vii) The Parish Hall generated income of £28,088 (£24,240) and, after deducting running costs, general maintenance and depreciation, a profit of £1,692 (-£9,845) was made. (viii) Parochial fees for weddings and funerals contributed £3,999 (£5,965) - there were 4 (8) couples married at church. (ix) Net income from fund raising events was £9,009 (£12,795). At year-end the net movement (loss) of unrestricted funds was -£7,288 (-£8,803).

It is PCC policy to try and maintain a balance of free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least 3 months unrestricted payments. This is the equivalent to approximately £31,000. The balance as at 31st December of total free reserves is £89,544 and is made up of £22,224 set aside for church and hall repairs and organ fund, £23,870 of restricted funds and £43,450 of free reserve funds. We invest fund balances with the Churches Mutual Credit Union and the Diocesan Board of Finance.

Martin Lake
(Outgoing) Treasurer

Overview of 2023

2023 saw the World Health Organization end COVID-19's status as a "global health emergency", but officially it remained a pandemic. The new normal increasingly looked a fair bit like the old normal, other than the painful decimation caused both to lives and to the economy – factors that inevitably affected each other. Church attendance improved but did not regularly regain something like pre-covid levels until the Christmas services. Inflation remained stubbornly high (around 9% early in the year). High prices continued to prevent the barns by the church being converted to a (shared use) tearoom which would have brought a rental income into the church. (It became clear in 2024 that the project would not go ahead for at least the foreseeable future.)

The proclamation and the living out of this gospel (or good news) has of course been a feature throughout the year and especially so at Christmas and Easter and as we have supported folk in weddings, baptisms and funerals. This has chimed with various elements of positive news such as the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III on 6 May, which we marked with a ringing of bells and a special service and picnic lunch the following day. Other positives included the installation in the church of both a new (and effective) under-pew heating system and a much upgraded tea station. We also gained planning permission that will eventually (we hope) allow the introduction of a lift to Chalk Parish Hall and the improvement of the space upstairs to give a committee room and an office that can be used in various ways for the management of the Hall and Parish - as well as still giving lots of storage space! We also installed a bright, welcoming new sign outside the church, and also incorporated the design into the three main spaces at the Hall. The usual elements of Village Fete, Harvest Supper, Fireworks and Christmas Fair all played their part too in bringing a sense of fun and joy as covid memories began to be left behind. The generosity of folk has also allowed the PCC to make various charitable grants, including to the Hands of Compassion School in Zambia, all of which will have done something to bring a measure of healing to at least some of the brokenness mentioned earlier.

Other points of note include my being asked to deputize for the Civic Chaplain in June for the Borough's marking of Armed Forces Day. Rather than the obviously more solemn Remembrance activities, this is a celebration of all that the Armed Forces 'family', including the cadet forces, does for the country. As a Sea Cadet Chaplain for the unit based in the parish and with earlier service in the Royal Navy, this was a joy as well as a duty. Our 'placement person', Mark Morgan, transformed into our Assistant Curate in September 2023; Mark will be with us for about five years in this role as he completes his practical training as a member of the clergy, and it has been really good to work with him. Of course, the whole operation only works because so many people volunteer to do everything from making the coffee to looking after the woodland, managing the Hall and running various spiritual and practical activities. On behalf of the whole church here and, in many ways, the community of Chalk, I want to thank

everyone for all their contributions, especially PCC members, lay ministers Janet and Michael Munson, churchwardens Barbara Millatt and Steve Quinton, our Treasurer Martin Lake (who began his handover of responsibilities to Ram Patla – thanks Ram!), Andy Howe (Hall manager), Sue Hammock for magazine editing and Hall booking etc, Mike Hammock for Barn Fellowship, and all who are helping with various elements of the young people's work (much of it under the *Loaves & Fishes* banner) and not least Julie Garrod, Jane Abrehart, Suzanne Smit, Philippa Perry and Joan Wall. (Sorry that I can't name everyone!)

Some progress is being made across the Deanery, and our new Bishop seems to be taking a more strategic view across the Diocese as a whole. Nevertheless, I was glad to give up my 'seat' on the Diocesan Synod after 25 years, and I am assuming the Area Dean role will continue only for one more year. There are a few more years before retirement is due and there is still much to do here – and this needs to continue as a joint effort! A joyful service in March to mark my being the Vicar of Chalk for 25 years (thanks to Joan for icing the cake and to Sue for baking it!) was also accompanied by a renewing by the congregation of our commitment to a vision to be stronger in Christ, to reach out and to grow as a family of all ages. What can we each offer to help achieve this? Love, time, talents, prayer, money, energy, encouragement, good ideas – and probably much more? Well, yes – they are all needed!

PCC Meetings

The atmosphere at PCC meetings and via email etc is always constructive, no doubt aided by the refreshments (when 'in-person'), provided beforehand by Barbara Millatt. Although a full range of opinions are voiced, when it comes to votes, these are almost always unanimous. Matters discussed have included: vision; safeguarding; financial position; treasurer appointment; banking review; dates/events for the year including the coronation weekend; *Loaves & Fishes*; Jubilee Garden; hall management; curacy; services; projects for replacing the church heating system and tea station; new sign for the church; barn development; hall development; hall rents. Correspondence or items for PCC consideration should be addressed to the PCC Secretary, Anne Wilkinson.

Deanery Synods

Our three reps (2 lay 1 clergy) on the Gravesend Deanery Synod (currently chaired by the Vicar as Area Dean) were joined officially by Mark on his ordination in September. The Synod met twice in 2023 several significant issues have been discussed, notably understanding and supporting church schools (and academy trusts), helping the homeless in Gravesend and training lay folk via Deanery courses.

The Revd Nigel Bourne
Vicar & Chairman PCC Chalk