

**SULHAMSTEAD ABBOTS & BANNISTER WITH UFTON NERVET PAROCHIAL CHURCH
COUNCIL - ANNUAL MEETING**

Held on Sunday 2nd April 2017 at 11.30am in the Parish Room

Present:

Revd Will Watts, Revd Anthony Peabody, Mr Keith Chopping, Mrs Penee Chopping, Mr David Smith, Mr Peter Hazelden, Mrs Angie Newall, Mr Peter Newall, Mrs Pat Willoughby, Mrs Nancy Beabey, Mrs Diana Bagshaw, Mrs Jean Barlow, Mr Ron Brobyn, Mrs Ann Gillis, Miss Irene Bokitko, Mrs Shirley Cullup, Mr Keith Cullup, Mr Gareth Price, Mrs Sheila Price, Mrs Shelagh Frost, Mrs Jill Brooks, Mrs Rosemary Sanders-Rose, Mr Peter Sanders-Rose, Mr Tony Holden, Mrs Dorcas Green, Mrs Jenny Peabody, Mrs Franny Hornblow, Miss Ros Coulson, Mrs Tess Watson-Smith

Apologies:

Mr Antony Aitken, Mrs Ursula Aitken, Mr John Steeds, Mrs Rosemary Wallace, Miss Julie Howell, Mr Peter Plant, Mrs Lotte Plant, Mrs Margaret Griffiths-Eyton, Mrs Felicity Holden

1. Election of Church Wardens.

Revd Will Watts opened the meeting with a prayer and expressed his thanks to Miss Ros Coulson and Mrs Dorcas Green, for all their work. Both were willing to stand again as Church Wardens for the next year and, there being no other candidates, were duly elected.

2. Appointment of Lay Vice Chair.

Miss Ros Coulson was willing to stand again and, there being no other nominations, was duly appointed.

Annual Church Meeting

3. Minutes of the APCM on 17 April 2016.

Miss Coulson thanked all for attending the meeting and asked for any comments on the previous minutes which had been circulated previously to the PCC and copies were available for all present. These were proposed by Mr Smith and seconded by Mr Holden. All present were in favour.

4. Election of PCC members.

Mr Antony Aitken and Mr Gareth Price had reached the end of their term and both were willing to stand for re-election. They were nominated by Mr Hazelden and seconded by Mr Chopping. All present were in favour.

Mrs Watson-Smith wished to stand down as PCC Secretary. Mrs Margaret Griffith-Eyton has very kindly agreed to stand for the PCC and take over the role with Mrs Watson-Smith continuing as Minutes Secretary. She was nominated by Mrs Watson-Smith and seconded Mrs Beaby. Miss Coulson recorded her thanks to Mrs Bagshaw who had put the PCC administration into such good order.

5. Election of Area Deanery Synod Representatives.

Each was willing to stand for re-election. Mrs Peabody was nominated by Mrs Frost and seconded by Mrs Beaby, Mr Hazelden was nominated by Mr Plant and seconded by Mrs Griffiths-Eyton and Mr Smith was nominated by Mrs Griffiths-Eyton and seconded by Mr Plant. All present were in favour. Miss Coulson thanked them for undertaking this important task, not just representing St Marys but also being part of the bigger family of the Deanery.

6. Future of the Parish.

Revd Watts updated those present that there had been no applicants for the vacancy for House for Duty Priest and had met with Bishop Andrew to discuss both re-advertising and whether the role could be combined with another post within the Deanery. Following his detailed explanation of possible next steps, Revd Watts invited questions from those present but there were none at that time. Miss Coulson thanked Revd Watts and said that we can go forward in confidence with the next advert: we are all prepared and hope to have a longer timeframe.

7. Report & Election of Sidesmen.

Mrs Willoughby thanked the sidesmen for their excellent service over the year, always very helpful, both on Sundays and other occasions. All have agreed to stand again and Mrs Willoughby nominated Mr Aitken, Mr Guy Betts, Miss Botkiko, Mrs Green, Mrs Griffiths-Eyton, Mr David Mott, Mr Hazenden, Mr Price, Mrs Price and Mr Roger Taylor to be re-elected, seconded by Mr Smith. All present were in favour. Miss Coulson thanked Mrs Willoughby for all her help with this very important role.

8. Annual Report.

This was prepared by Mr Plant but in his absence, a summary was given by Mrs Peabody. Church attendance has been stable throughout the year and in addition there were three weddings, six baptisms and 11 funerals, with some dear friends laid to rest in our churchyard. The pattern of services had been maintained, with the refurbished chandeliers and candles being used for the first time. Highlights included the Berkshire Music & Arts Festival which was held partly in the church in January, a successful and well attended Lent course, an excellent concert in March by the Bradfield College choir, the Rogation Service for Newbury & District Agricultural Society in May, the Parish Lunch in August, the Fete in September and the Community Harvest Home at Ufton Barn.

The report was nominated for acceptance by Mr Holden and seconded by Mrs Bagshaw. All those present were in favour. Miss Coulson gave grateful thanks to Mr Plant for producing the report and Mrs Willoughby expressed her delight that the oil filled candles did not leave wax on the carpet.

9. Financial Report.

Mrs Hornblow had circulated the accounts in advance and copies were available for those present. She summarised the financial position, reported expenditure of £27k to the Diocese for the Parish Share and £21k on improvements to the church recommended in the Quinquennial Inspection Report. This was covered in the main by very generous giving and fundraising, with the improvements to the fabric of the church coming from the Bell Fund. Mrs Peabody asked about the church running expenses and Mrs Hornblow agreed to present her with a breakdown of costs. There were no further questions from those present so the financial report was nominated for acceptance by Mrs Gillis and seconded by Mr Holden. All present were in favour.

Mrs Hornblow recommended the appointment of Samuel Elliott, Goringe Accountants Ltd as the independent examiner. This was nominated by Mr Smith and seconded by Mrs Green.

Miss Coulson thanked Mrs Hornblow for her work and welcomed the clarity of the accounts.

10. Electoral Roll report.

Mrs Barlow reported that the revision has been completed and a copy is held in the church. There have been several losses and gains, with 108 now on the roll, and she thanked Mrs Peabody and Mrs Willoughby for their help in compiling this. Miss Coulson thanked Mrs Barlow.

11. Parish Magazine report.

Mrs Watson-Smith reported that the magazine circulation remained steady, with 280 copies being printed each month. She thanked Mrs Peabody for managing the advertising and Mrs Bagshaw and her team of distributors for delivering the magazine.

Miss Coulson thanked Mrs Watson-Smith and Mrs Green for taking on the magazine and expressed sincere thanks to Mrs Felicity Holden, not only for her time spent during the period of her editorship of the magazine but also providing to the new editors a magazine in an excellent state and for valuable guidance during the transition period.

12. Report on Church Cleaning, Grounds and Flowers.

Mrs Price reported that there were 19 people on the church cleaning rota and thanked them for their help, and particularly to Mrs Peabody who, as Verger, is always tidying up. Miss Coulson thanked Mrs Price for her organisation of the rota.

Miss Coulson thanked those who did the grass cutting and for their vigilance over the church yards. She also expressed appreciation for the great help provided during the year by the two Scout Groups, including the cleaning of the two grade 2 listed tombs in the churchyard.

Mrs Beabey gave a report on the church flowers. She thanked all those that help with the flowers, particularly Mrs Brook and Mrs Pilkington who do the big arrangements and who took over in her absence, and those who donate towards the cost. There was a new flower list in church so that people could either do the flowers themselves or made a donation towards costs. For weddings, they try to match the colours to the bride's colour scheme and usually receive a donation. Miss Coulson thanked Mrs Beabey and her team for their work.

13. Report on Fabric of the Church.

The Quinquennial Inspection Report highlighted the damp in the vestry, which has been ongoing since it was built in the 1960s. This appears to have now been fixed and, when the vestry has dried out, it will be redecorated. All the interior woodwork was checked for woodworm infestation and the crack over the east end will be monitored and checked regularly.

The chandeliers have been completely refurbished and wax candles replaced with oil filled ones and the whole cost was met by donations. Miss Coulson expressed thanks to all those who had donated.

Mr Hazelden asked about the new west window. Miss Coulson said this will be covered in the 2017 report but updated those present on the progress to date and reminded those present that it is a memorial window and, if they wanted someone to be remembered, to contact Miss Coulson.

14. Clergy report.

The Revd Peabody thanked the large team of people who help him to make things much easier for him and for parishioners. Overall, we are in good health, spiritually with numbers in church being maintained and an increase in our interface with the children. We like to see children in church but we have to go to where children are: we go to school, we see them at Explorers Club in the Parish Room on Wednesdays and during the Retreat Day.

Revd Peabody reported that he has had valuable assistance from Miss Julie Howell, our Pastoral Assistant, who has reinforced relationships with the children and has managed the records and tidiness all three church yards. Miss Coulson expressed our thanks to Revd Peabody on behalf of the whole parish.

15. Church Wardens Report.

Mrs Green thanked Bishop Andrew, the Revd Watts and the Revd Peabody for their support and guidance through the year and asked all to continue to pray for Miss Howell on her path to achieving her ambitions in the church. The newly-crowned Verger, Mrs Peabody is a blur in a whirl of activities and has usually done "it" before anyone realises "it" needs doing! The congregations have been steady and seeing someone in every pew is a good sign: there has been growth in attendance at the 8.30 services. She also thanked the Children's Church team, particularly Mrs Tallett, Mrs Bagshaw and Miss Howell, and the Fund Raising team organised by Mrs Chopping. The new look harvest celebration was a particular highlight. Our outreach over the year includes charity donations, foodbank and shoeboxes, to name just a few. Some would say for a little church we do an awful lot.

Changes at St Mary's, Burghfield means our Rectory will be vacated in the summer and our search for a new vicar produced a hive of activity. This included a fabulous Parish Profile that, along with our excellent church website maintained by Mr Holden, showcases our Church and Community to be a positive and vibrant place. On behalf of the Churchwardens, Mrs Green thanked everyone for everything they do, great or small.

16. Deanery Synod Report

Mr Hazelden reported that the Synod met in June, October 2016 and February 2017. These meetings were attended by at least one representative from Sulhamstead and the next meetings take place in June and Oct 17. The meetings enable clergy and lay people across the Deanery, to get to know each other and exchange ideas. The main issue recently has been discussion around the possibility of dissolving the United Benefice of Theale and Englefield. Notably for our Parish, following negotiations with the Deanery, our Parish Share was considerably reduced. The Revd Watts is standing down as Area Dean and, although the Revd Becky Bevan is unable to take on the role as she is overcommitted with her Parishes at Aldermaston, she will assist whomever takes on the role. There was a workshop at the last meeting to look at communications, the Deanery website and the conduct of the Synod.

17. SUN School Report and Children's Church.

Mrs Bagshaw read Miss Howell's report, in her absence. There are two families in particular who are really supportive and two new leaders have come forward. The workshops at Easter and Christmas were well supported and the Nativity service was very busy, with thanks to Mrs Tallett for organising this. There are several members of the Parish in the SUN School every week and a strong relationship has been formed with the school governors. The Retreat Day is so important for the children, with the adult team getting a great deal out of it too.

Miss Coulson thanked the Children's Church team unreservedly for all their efforts and noted that there had been children in church earlier today and also last week: children in church really lifts our worship. As the themes are planned throughout the year, we will always have something available for children. The Revd Peabody reported that Foundation and PCC Governors are difficult to find and if anyone would like to discuss with him about becoming a school governor, please speak to him.

18. Lay Vice Chair Report.

Miss Coulson endorsed Mrs Green's Churchwardens' report and thanked PCC members for attending the four PCC meetings and other organised events. Also she thanked Mrs Watson-Smith for her duties as PCC Secretary and Mrs Hornblow for her work as PCC Treasurer. She also thanked Mrs Peabody and Mrs Griffiths-Eyton for organising the APCM meeting. She acknowledged the importance within the church of fund raising and our gratitude goes out to Mrs Chopping and her team for all their hard work. Miss Coulson asked for volunteers to assist Mrs Chopping in future. She reminded those present that it was the PCC's decision to go forward with Miss Howell's Pastoral Assistant role and felt that all present would agree that this is a great investment in both Julie's future and that of the Parish, and she has been a huge help.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 12.30pm.