

**THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING  
OF THE PARISH OF ST MARTIN OF TOURS, CHELSFIELD  
HELD ON SUNDAY, 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020 AT 3.15 PM  
AS A VIRTUAL MEETING BY ZOOM**

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was declared open.

**Attendees as above**

1. **Additional Apology for Absence:** Gordon Ireland

2. **Minutes of the Previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019**  
Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Steve McCann and seconded by Brian Kemp, and unanimously agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**  
There were no matters arising.

4. **Annual Reports**

**i) Electoral Roll**

The Rector noted that a major revision of the Roll had been undertaken in the 2018 and expressed his thanks to the Electoral Roll officer, Gillian Vernon, who reported that there were currently 104 members on the Roll. Membership numbers remained the same as the previous year, although only one third resided in the parish.

Gillian Vernon agreed to remain the Electoral Roll Officer until the next APCM, but wished to retire from the position then. The Rector expressed thanks for her work and hoped that a volunteer might be found to take over the task.

**ii) Annual Report of the PCC**

The report had been approved by the PCC at their May meeting. Acceptance of the report was proposed by Chris Mead and seconded by Anne Ireland. It was unanimously agreed. There were no questions about the Report.

**iii) Financial Reports and Presentation of Accounts**

Barry Foale reported that this had been approved by the PCC and independently audited.

**iv) Churchwardens' Fabric Report**

**Terrier and Logbooks** – These are to be available to view after the 9.30 am Service on the following Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October

The Churchwardens' Report was presented by both Wardens, who spoke particularly about the repair needed to the Clergy Vestry floor. It had been very difficult to make contact with the original contractor and a second quotation was very much higher.

**v) Deanery Synod Report**

The Rector reminded everyone that anyone is welcome to attend the meetings to hear visiting speakers.

**vi) Well Hill Report**

The Rector welcomed Gerry Walker to the meeting and reported that services had been held outdoors during the recent months with the inspiring backdrop of the Darenth Valley.

He expressed his thanks to Gerry Walker, Anne Ireland and Norman McDonnell for looking after the fabric of the church.

#### **vii) PCC Secretary's Report**

**No questions were raised**

#### **viii) Safeguarding Report**

Steve McCann, Safeguarding Officer, reported that Sidesmen are now requested to complete the online training. Safeguarding is a key priority for the Church of England. The Rector expressed his thanks for all the work done to ensure compliance with guidelines.

#### **ix) Group Reports**

Reports had been submitted by:

- The Bellringers
- The Churchyard Working Party
- The Focus Group
- The Ladies Group
- The Memory Cafe
- The Choir
- The Social Committee
- The Sacristan
- The Toddler Group

No comments were raised on any of the reports

### **5. Elections and Appointments**

#### **i) Deanery Synod**

As directed by the numbers on the Electoral Roll two Representatives will attend the Deanery Synod for the next three years.

**Steve McCann** and **Mary Tozer** were proposed, seconded and duly elected.

#### **ii) Parochial Church Council Members**

Four vacancies had arisen on the PCC. Nominations had been received as follows:

**Caroline Davis** - proposed by Mary Tozer and seconded by Susan Bennett

**Tony Hemmings** - proposed by Steve McCann and seconded by Val Hemmings

**Kenneth I'Anson** - proposed by Steve McCann and seconded by Jackie McCann

**Anne Ireland** - proposed by Steve McCann and seconded by Gordon Ireland

All were elected by unanimous vote.

#### **iii) Sidesmen**

##### **List of Sidesmen**

##### **8am**

Margaret Coppard

Jim Rooke

Stephen Curry

Paul Venton

##### **10am**

Paul Gramann

Jean Pemberton

Janet Tranter

Norman Bailey

##### **6.30pm**

Colin Heyes

Jackie McCann

Eileen Vassie

Tony Vernon expressed his wish to stand down from his duties as Sidesman.

The Rector thanked him for his long service to St Martin's which had included not only his time as Sidesman but also as Churchwarden and Member of the PCC.

#### **iv) Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Diane Lewis has confirmed that she is willing to continue in this capacity and the meeting agreed that she be appointed for 2020.

## **6. Minister's Report**

The Rector read out his Report, which is attached to these Minutes.

The Rector invited questions from those present. None had been received before the meeting.

Pam Ames said that she had not collected any Church Magazine subscriptions. It was explained that subscriptions are not being collected at the present time as since lockdown the Magazine has been produced online together with an online newsletter each week. Any recipients who inquire about subscriptions may be offered the opportunity to donate to general church funds

Brian Kemp thanked the Rector and Philippa Rooke for recording online services.

The Rector commented that he hoped to continue to open up the church for actual services as well by observing strict safety rules but was mindful that, having an elderly congregation who feel safer at home, he intended to continue to produce online Sunday services. He also thanked Philippa Rooke for her assistance and both Churchwardens for their help. The Rector added that the church may have to close again but at the present time services are permitted indoors. The outdoor recordings may have to discontinue during the Winter months and be recorded in the church.

## **7. Any Other Business**

i) The Rector announced that he is now planning to retire in the Spring of 2021.

ii) Angela Wilkins offered to host a Zoom Quiz early in the New Year. She suggested that individuals be asked for donations to church funds rather than making a charge for participating.

She reminded the meeting that it was the anniversary of John Barnes' death, who as a stalwart of the church, was very much missed.

iii) Margaret Warren-Axe thanked the Rector for all the services carried out throughout the year. She added that she felt that St Martin's had a lovely atmosphere.

The Rector regretted that numbers were limited because of the pandemic, and that there was no choral singing. He added that it was sad not to be able to comfort the bereaved as he would wish or to be able to make home visits except in exceptional circumstances so he would like to be informed of anyone who is ill or at the end of their lives. He recognized that these were strange times and that they were likely to continue throughout the winter. He understood the difficulties that many people were facing.

iv) Mary Tozer thanked Margaret Warren-Axe for organising the cleaning rotas.

v) Steve McCann added his thanks to the Rector recalling that his plans for retirement had been disrupted. The Rector said that he had enjoyed his time at St Martin's.

vi) The Rector thanked Philippa Rooke for hosting the Zoom meeting.

Everyone joined in The Grace, and the meeting ended at 4.15pm.

## **Rector's Report for Annual Parochial Meeting - Oct 2020**

It seems rather surreal that I have been writing this 'rectorial review' some months after my intended retirement date, and almost a full year after the events to which it relates.

2019 was very much a year of transition for St Martin's as we began to draw the strings of a new united benefice together. Working with Reverend Ruth Murfitt for the first 6 months of the year as we addressed the challenge of bringing St Martin's, St Mary's and All Souls into a closer working relationship and trying to identify and establish a sustainable pattern of worship, mission and ministry together that would bode well for the future.

During this time it was good to develop working links with the Ministry and Management teams of both parishes. A particular joy was in engaging with the diverse range of worship and activities across the three churches. Informal discussions in groups with church officers enabled us to explore the challenges that we would face as we grew together to closer working unity, whilst maintaining the individual character of each of our churches and communities. One of our successes was in running a Lent programme of study and worship together.

Following Ruth's retirement at the end of July, I found myself acting as Priest in charge of both parishes until a new incumbent was found who would become the new 'team leader of the United Benefice. I was delighted when the announcement of the appointment of the Reverend Susan Atkinson-Jones was announced, and a great delight to welcome her when she arrived in December. The plan was for me to stay in post for a further 6 months while Susan familiarised herself with the work of the churches, then to ride off into the sunset of retirement in Shropshire.

The issues highlighted in my report last year continue to challenge us, we are a small community and most of our congregation are non-resident and aging. The numbers of pastoral offices are at the lowest we have seen for many years, Baptism and Holy Matrimony no longer hold the place in society that they did in previous generations – and whilst those who attend these offices are welcomed and comment favourably on their experience, demand for them continues to decline. If we did not have burial ground, the demand for funerals and bereavement ministry would show a similar decline – and it is noticeable that at Crematoria more services are now taken by Civil; and Humanist celebrants than by clergy.

Our worship programme continues to offer a variety of 'Ancient & Modern' worship – as we seek to maintain our commitment to the Book of Common Prayer as well as offering more informal worship for the modern world. Our 'special' services continue to bring people to St Martin's on a seasonal basis – Christmas, Easter, Harvest, All Souls and Remembrance are now well established. Our numbers are slightly down on last year, but compared to the decline in many parts of the country we are holding our own at present.

But we must not be complacent – for too long we have relied on legacies and social events for fund and these have made up the difference between our committed giving and expenditure – but rising costs, 'planned' building work, will increase our spending, and declining membership and increasing physical frailty will threaten our income. The formation of a United Benefice should see some reduction on our

ministry costs to the Diocese, but we will need to explore different ways to grow membership and make the best use of our resources for fund raising.

Having handed over the Role of Area Dean last year, I found myself covering the role during a Sabbatical in the Spring, and have continued to enjoy representing the church in the wider community through engagement in Churches Together in Orpington, Transform Bromley Borough and 'Praxis'. The mission outreach 'The Turning' on September brought together Church members on a Borough wide street mission. Deanery Synod meetings have become more open and designed to keep us aware of issues facing the local church and community. Transform Bromley Borough brings together 80+ church leaders in prayer and engagement with the civic leaders and community projects across the borough. One thing that I have learned from these groups is that the church can achieve much more when it works corporately than when it operates alone.

As ever my work as your minister greatly helped by the love, support and dedication of a team of wonderful people who serve in various capacities, from churchwardens and PCC members to those who contribute to our regular worship and those who just turn up to help on special occasions. The upkeep of the church building and grounds; the supervision of our finances; the management of our social programme; and the provision of prayer, ministry and pastoral care are all in good hands. Though time prevents naming individuals I want to express my heartfelt thanks to you all. Thanks also to the love and support of my family who often sacrifice more to my ministry than they ought.

The old plough at the entrance to the churchyard bears the inscription 'rooted and grounded in love' – this is as I'm sure many of you will recognise a quote from St Paul's prayer to the church in Ephesus (Ephesians 3:16-21):

'I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'.

It has been a real privilege to have been your minister for the past six years and to lead you through a time of transformation. As I make what might be my last annual report, this is very much my prayer for you all as you move into a new and exciting future in an ever changing world..

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.'

Revd John, your 'Rector'