



THE ANNUAL MEETINGS

were held in St Mary's Church at 8pm on Thursday 4 April 2019
(to be signed at the APCM 2020, held on the same date as the APCM 2021 due
to the pandemic.)

The meeting opened with a prayer.

Peter Boyling explained that he, as vice chair of the PCC, would chair the meetings, as provided for under Church of England rules, in the absence of a Rector during the interregnum.

A. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners

for the purpose of electing two churchwardens to serve for the coming year:

- Phil Bladen, proposed by Judy Gowing, seconded by Paul Teverson
- Fouki Heller proposed by Claire Boyling, seconded by Helen Bladen

Both wardens were re-elected unanimously.

The chair thanked the Churchwardens very much for everything they have done and continue to do in the interregnum.

B. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Present: Peter Boyling (chair), 2 Churchwardens and 30 members of the congregation. Apologies were received from Cathy Putz, Brian & Celia Cleave

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 26 April 2018, were approved and signed as a true record.

2. Report on the Church Electoral Roll. The Electoral Roll Officer, Cheryl Cole, reported that the roll had just been renewed, as is required every six years. We now have 229 on the roll, compared with last year's figure of 204.

3. Elections

a) The election to the Parochial Church Council of five representatives to serve for three years;

- Joan Wheeler Bennett, proposed by William Heller, seconded by Patrick Findlater
 - Rachel Skilbeck proposed by Phil Bladen, seconded by Helen Bladen
 - Christabel Gairdner proposed by Geoffrey Barnett, seconded by Paul Teverson
 - Steve Cox proposed by Phil Bladen, seconded by Andrew Summers.
 - Cate Summers proposed by Phil Bladen & seconded by Rachel Skilbeck.
- All were elected unanimously.

b) The election of sidesmen for 2018/19:

Proposed were: David Barrie, Christine Butenuth, Rachel Elkington, Mark Harries, Desmond MacDermott, Jo MacDermott, Nigel Oakley, Dermot Trimble, David Blacklock, Claire Boyling, Brian Cleave, Sara Cox, Steve Cox, Anthony Figgis, Patrick Findlater, Ken George, Tiziana George, Jonathan Iremonger, Sarah Kearney, Paul Phillips, Peter Siddall, Cilla Snowball, Andrew Summers, Joan Wheeler-Bennett, Sally Copland, Paul Teverson. Francesca Wisdom, Wendy Kyrle-Pope, Linda Read.

All sidesmen were elected unanimously. Thanks were recorded to David Blacklock for organising the sidesmen so well for another year.

4. Report on proceedings of the PCC. The written report in the Annual Review was received, without question.

5. Report on the annual accounts

Patrick Findlater, the Treasurer, reported that results for 2018 were not quite as good as 2017 but give no grounds for serious concern. Giving generally held up, with a 2% improvement in the year, but there was reduced income from fairs and similar events, and some expenses were unexpectedly increased. Overall there was a deficit on the General Fund of £7,838, but we were able to offset this because of another record year from the Kitson Hall, where a surplus of £25,458 was achieved.

Of the above surplus, £15,000 was transferred by the PCC to the Youth Fund. Although Charlie Auton, our Youth and Children's Worker, left us at the end of March 2019, it is felt appropriate to maintain this properly funded pending the arrival of a new Rector. The Fund was reclassified as "designated" at the beginning of 2018, so it can if necessary be switched to another purpose if the PCC so desires.

The Friends' Fund remained somewhat depleted. Although other events contributed well, the annual Charity Ball recorded a surplus of only £23,858, compared with £45,402 in the previous year. There was further expenditure on the lighting, the Tudor tower and the sound system, and the fund also contributed £15,022 to help with the cost of utilities and the maintenance of the church and churchyard. The balance available for 2019 fell to £27,742. The Bells Fund, which has only recently become active, raised enough money (over £5,000) to pay for a new set of "dumb bells", without calling either on the Friends or the General Fund.

It is inevitable, especially given the high proportion of retired people in our congregation, that there is constant attrition of regular monthly giving. We will therefore be launching a fresh appeal for new and increased standing orders during 2019. We do also seek to be able to make regular increases in our annual Parish Share, to help less fortunate parts of the diocese.

Patrick added that every year he realised how lucky he was to be supported by such an efficient team to do all the work involved in keeping St. Mary's books in order. Tiziana George was coming up to 10 years as capable bookkeeper and Treasurer's minder, Richard du Parcq continues to deal with cash and cheques in his own effective way, and Michael Murison has settled into the role of Gift Aid Secretary. We all owe them gratitude for their largely unseen contribution.

The Treasurer was asked if we still get a grant from the Workhouse Fund? He replied that a grant is given to the Rector for distribution to the poor and needy. The grant has been received and is waiting for the new incumbent.

The meeting thanked Patrick for his considerable work, and Richard du Parcq and Tiziana George for their support work, and Michael Murison for his work processing Gift Aid.

6. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2019

On a proposal by Judy Gowing and seconded by Andrew Summers, Alastair Cameron was re-appointed the independent examiner.

7. The chair reported that the PCC was able to confirm to the annual meeting that St Mary's complies with the duty to have regard to the Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The PCC took this issue very seriously and the subject will be an item on all future PCC agendas. The meeting was referred to the safeguarding report in the Annual Review.

8. Report on the fabric of the church, and of the church hall. The written reports in the Annual Review were received. A new Parish Architect has been appointed. A question was asked about the availability of grants for the upkeep of historic buildings. As a grade II* listed building, we can reclaim VAT on maintenance invoices, but grants are not available. Credit was given to Cheryl Cole as Kitson Hall Administrator, and William Heller as Manager for another very successful year.

9. Report on the Team Council. The written report in the Annual Review was received. There was a question about money in the Team Council account (£30,000). The income obviously fluctuates; when there is no curate, the rental from the house accumulates and is spent when a curate is appointed. Another question followed up the announcement at the last APCM that Holy Trinity wished to dispose of their share of the Boileau Road house. The Diocese is still planning to buy that share of the house, and we await a decision on the timing. Holy Trinity are still very much part of the Team Ministry.

10. Report on the Deanery Synod. Judy Gowing reported that St Mary Barnes lies within the Deanery of Richmond and Barnes, in the Archdeaconry of Wandsworth, in the diocese of Southwark. The deanery follows the south bank of the Thames from Hammersmith Bridge to Ham, covering 15 parishes. St Mary's representatives are Phil Bladen, Annie Sullivan and Judy Gowing. Tom Ridley has served for four years but has just stepped down. The Synod meets three times a year and is a conduit between the parishes and the Diocese, and up the chain of the Church of England. The meetings are interesting and open to everybody. Discussions have recently concerned communications, safeguarding, dementia and environmental issues. There are many resources available to us from the Diocese.

Brief reports of the meetings are included in the pew sheets and more details are included in the PCC minutes, which can either be viewed in the porch or on the website.

11. Comments and questions from the congregation had been taken in each section.

12. Reflection: Hayley Argles-Grant spoke about her journey to ordination. (see Appendix 1). She was warmly thanked for her reflection, and for the time last year that she had spent with St Mary's.

13. Churchwardens' report. Fouki thanked Bishop Richard and Sister Margaret Anne, Christabel and Geoffrey for all their support with the services during the interregnum.

14. Any other business – none

15. Date of next annual meeting will be announced in due course.

The meeting concluded with the Grace.

APPENDIX 1

Hayley Argles-Grant address.

Thank you for inviting me to talk at your APCM

Although it has been suggested that I could talk on a topic of my choice, I have been wisely guided by Geoffrey to share some of my journey to Ordination

Journey to Ordination

One of the questions I get asked most frequently, when people find out I am training to be a vicar is: *'Have you always wanted to be one?'*

I must put my hand on my heart and say that it was not top of my dream or vision board as I was growing up! I also have to admit that if I had had a list, it would not have made it on there. I actually wanted to be either a lolly-pop lady or a long-distance lorry driver and I still toy with the idea, every now and again, of taking my HGV licence.

Growing up in a mixed faith house, God was ever present, an unspoken faith bound us together, but we just didn't do organised religion - even though the church was just over the road from where we lived.

Like many, my first introduction to church was through school. Our playground adjoined the church and every Friday morning we would enter the church through the side door and witness the presence of God in that place. I remember it was quite magical to watch, the brightness surrounding the altar from the gloom of the pews.

It would be a good few years and a few grey hairs before that imagery would catch up with me again. I was a bit slow on the uptake. I knew I was looking for something but couldn't quite describe to myself.

It's like the search for the perfect handbag, you search continuously, you think you've found it and then it's a bit of a false start and the search starts again.

And then I stumbled into St Mary's, Putney and I met our then curate. Someone you are all quite familiar with – Richard Sewell. It wasn't planned, it wasn't intentional but somehow, I stepped through the door and felt at home. The stark architecture and furniture grated - but there was something there that made me stay. Made me question which led me to confirmation at the age of 39.

I took on a number of roles to 'help out'. I became part of the DCC, PCC, was Church Warden, then Parish Warden, a sometimes Sacristan. They all followed in succession. All-important ministries in their own way – and yet, it wasn't quite what I was looking for. And then I woke up one morning with the notion that I was called to be a vicar.

To be honest, it took me a little by surprise - I tried to ignore it for some time – quite a bit of time. Was I having a crisis? Did I need to change my job? But it was like the itch that wouldn't be scratched, it was always there and I just had to talk to someone about it. And once I had opened up the idea, the more people I spoke to about it.

One of the challenges that you are asked to undertake in your preparation for vocations interview – is how other people respond when you tell them that this is what you think you are called to do.

Although most were surprised by this idea – none so more than my husband Rob. No one laughed, no one asked if I were crazy. Some even thought it was about time I opened the door to the possibility, and it started to become a reality.

How do you become an Ordinand?

There are vocation pathways to follow and once accepted by the Diocese you are put forward to be interviewed at a week-long residential.

It's fair to say that it's just like interviewing for a job and not all at the same time. You prepare for any eventuality and you really want your interviewer to like you. See the qualities that you might bring to the role. It's one of the most nerve-wracking job interviews I have ever undertaken.

And then waiting for the letter of acceptance is just like waiting for your A level results. Have I been accepted – will I get into the college of my choice? I wanted to stay and study in London for family reasons.

The Diocese supported me and St Augustine's College offered part-time training and the last few years – like Martin - have been a mixture of work, work, college, essays, long nights, long weekends in the worst hotel in Kent (Fawlty Towers has nothing on Larkfield Priory) and one of the most spiritual places I have encountered so far with the nuns at West Malling.

What's it like being an Ordinand?

The Diocese tend to move Ordinands to training churches and being a mere stone throw away in Putney, I found myself in Barnes and St Michaels, with Judith and Fr Stephen - and transported back to the church of my childhood although this time with incense, robed choir, processing and very long candles.

I was a little bit out of my depth and extremely outside of my comfort zone. Liturgical practices I did not understand and did not readily warm to. It made me question all sorts of things.

What was I doing? Could I embrace what was happening around me? Could I become a part of this? Would I at some point be found out?! A little bit of imposter syndrome BUT God has always been there to guide me.

A number of practical placements follow – mission (project in a church in Wimbledon), pastoral (Kingston Hospital). All designed to give an insight to your future role in ministry as a leader within the Church to challenge you to reflect in your gifts that might serve a community in the future. And that is how I came to be here at St Mary's.

You kindly offered and provided me with 10 weeks insight to working in a parish with a focus on Children and Youth Work with Charlie - even though there was the possibility, which became an eventuality, of an interregnum.

I thought I would find a tremendous church community to come to and become part of and I wasn't wrong.

The seamless way you all stepped into the breach to keep the church open and services running smoothly was so reassuring. Your complete acceptance of me being amongst you all, a stranger in your midst, the words of advice, the guidance, laughter and coffee that you have generously shared helped make this an enriching experience.

Some things I will take away with me. Persistence pays off and I have learned many things over the last three years - mostly about myself as it should be. I have discovered that; I quite like Choral Evensong and I get upset when people mess with the format of the Book of Common Prayer service.

I am proud that I haven't set fire to anyone or anything when Thurifer and I haven't tripped up, fallen over or dropped anything!

I have even realised that I like candles no matter how long or short they are. Because It's all about people – people on their journey with God. Learning to see the wonder of God working here, in all that you are and all that you do. It's been an immense privilege to have been here in Barnes and at St. Mary's.

In the book of Genesis, Jacob has a dream, and upon waking he declares: *'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!' ... 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'* (Genesis 28.16-17)

I would like to echo Jacob's words "how awesome is this place!"

James Hurley
29th April 2021