



PARISH OF ABINGDON

(St Helen's -- St Michael & All Angels' - St Nicolas')

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHONERS & ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

To be held on Thursday 20 April 2023

in the South Aisle, St Helen's Church

AGENDA

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 7:00pm

1. Minutes of the meeting on Thursday 28 April 2022 (*attached p2*)
2. Resolution:
To suspend, in the Parish of Abingdon on Thames, the automatic disqualification of a member for the office of Churchwarden following six consecutive years of service.
This resolution may be rescinded at any future Annual Meeting of Parishoners
3. Election of six churchwardens, noting nominations by the Annual District Church Meetings (ADCMs)

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM) 7:15pm

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the APCM held Thursday 28 April 2022 (*attached*)
4. Matters arising
5. Notification of any other business
6. Team Rector's Remarks
7. Report on the 2023 up-dating of the Electoral Roll (*Richard Kirby*)
8. Election of representatives of the laity (as nominated by ADCMs) to the PCC
9. Election of representatives (as nominated by ADCMs) to the role of Deanery Synod Representatives
10. Annual report on activities of the parish in 2022 (*written report available*)
11. Report of the financial affairs of the Parish (*written report available, Susan Read*)
12. Appointment of Auditor and Independent Examiner for 2023
13. Presentation of Church Inventories and Log Books and reports from the churches (*churchwardens*)
14. Any other business (as previously notified)



(St Helen's-- St Michael's --St Nicolas')

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
held on Thursday 28 April 2022
7.00 pm in the South Aisle, St Helen's Church

The Team Rector, led the opening devotions and welcomed those present

1. Approval of minutes from the Meeting of Parishioners for Thursday 29 April 2021

There being no changes proposed the minutes, circulated in advance, were approved.
Proposed: Margaret Horton, seconded: Sue Scott, passed nem con

2. Election of Church Wardens

The following nominations had been received from the Annual District Church meetings:

- St Helen's: Linda Hobbs proposed Norman Gee, seconded by Jeff Dale
Geoff Meen proposed Steve Thomas, seconded by Norman Gee
- St Michael's: Joyce Kelly proposed Peter Squire, seconded Ming Ng
Louise Heffernan proposed Laurence King, seconded Peter Squire
- St Nicolas': Eluned Hallas proposed: Jennifer Smith, seconded: Jennifer Fishpool

There being no further nominations from the floor the five Wardens were declared elected.

Meeting Closed at 7.05pm



(St Helen's-- St Michael's --St Nicolas')

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
held on Thursday 28 April 2022**

7.10 pm in the South Aisle, St Helen's Church

Present: The Revd Charles Miller (Chairman), Mary Anderson, Gwen Bevington, Keith Bowman, Hilary Clare, John Clare, Norman Gee, Hazel Glennie, Alexandra Green, Eluned Hallas, Louise Heffernan, Linda Hobbs, Sue Holligan, Patrick Holligan, Margaret Horton, Joyce Kelly, Richard Kirby, the Revd Canon Charles Masheder, Geoffrey Meen, Hildegard Nagel Hyde, Philippa Randles, Susan Read, Sue Scott, Catherine Scriven, Bishop Henry Scriven, the Revd Paul Smith, Jenny Smith, Roderick Smith, Steve Thomas.

Apologies: Carol Bowman, The Revd Jen Brown, Beryl Clements, Sue Cox, Roger Cox, Ken Jackman, Rosalind Rutherford, Alex Scott, Gill Squire, Peter Squire.

MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING of last meetings

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| 1 | <p>The minutes of the APCM on Thursday 29 April 2021 were agreed with one correction:
Item 3 the Paris ERO is Richard (<i>not Peter</i>) Kirby</p> <p>Proposed Joyce Kelly, seconded Linda Hobbs.</p> <p>The Team Rector reported that since the last APCM Dr Andrew Birks health had declined, such that he was unable to be present. Nevertheless he asked that the Minutes record grateful appreciation and thanks for his years of service, and that a card be sent to him on behalf of the Parish.</p> |
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ANY OTHER BUSINESS – one matter raised to be taken later in the meeting (paragraph 13).

TEAM RECTORS ADDRESS (full report attached as Appendix 1)

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| 2 | <p>The Team Rector read out a statement (Appendix 1) concerning the establishment of 'The St Nicolas School and Education Trust, Abingdon', a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the broad aims of education in service of the Church of England, as a development of a former Trust with links to both St Nicolas Church and School.</p> <p>Summing up, the Rector commended this exciting and important development to the Parish, inviting those present to start 'thinking outside the box'. He especially thanked former St Nic's Warden Andrew Coker and Diocesan Officer Caroline Dyer (former Secretary to the ODBF) for help in getting this far.</p> <p>During the subsequent discussions the following points were made:</p> <p>The scope of the new Trust extended beyond support to St Nicolas School.</p> <p>There was no age restriction on beneficiaries so learning opportunities supported could be life long.</p> <p>The definition of 'education' was wide in scope, but could include Christian formation and character, spiritual growth, education about the Christian faith, 'new expressions' and other initiatives. (It was noted that the Diocesan Greenhouse Initiative could provide resources to help determine the way forward).</p> <p>During the next year the founding ex-officio Trustees (Team Rector, Team Vicar at St Nicolas, and the St Nicolas Church Wardens) would be looking to expand the Trustee Board. One Trustee would be appointed with the agreement of the Diocese, and two by agreement of the PCC.</p> |
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Trustees could be drawn from outside the PCC - invited due to the skills they could bring to the Trust.

The Constitution of the Trust gives wide discretion over activities. The more focused day-to-day scope – eg in terms of activities (whether direct initiatives or as a grant making body) and geographical area – would be governed by a series of ‘operational protocols’ determined by the Trustees.

Parish initiatives would be eligible for consideration for support by the Trust, and could lead to exciting developments at St Nicolas and in the Parish.

The Trust has a capital of around £2m, which invested with care, could bring in an income (after recoupment charges) of about £35k. The purchase of a house / other property was allowed by the constitution, but Trustees could decide to maintain the capital and spend only the income.

Work on the project would be resource intensive and would be taken at an appropriate pace.

3 The Team Rector confirmed that the Report of the Abingdon Team Review 2021 conducted by Rev Canon David Tyler, Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester, had been received and shared with Team Clergy, the PCC and the DCCs.

Recommendations arising from the Review were being implemented.

It was agreed that the report could be made more widely available, through the Parish Office. It had not been possible for the Parish to make copies available to contributors to the discussion as there was no published list of contributors.

ELECTORAL ROLL

4 Richard Kirby, Parish Electoral Roll Officer, presented the Electoral Roll figures for 2022 showing no net change.

Electoral Roll Numbers 2021 to 2022

	2021	2022				
	roll	deletions	additions	change	roll	% change
St Helen	218	9	5	-4	214	-2%
St Michael	66	1	3	2	68	3%
St Nicolas	62	0	2	2	64	3%
Abingdon on Thames	346	10	10	0	346	0%

He thanked the individual Church EROs for their support, making special reference to Gill Titcombe who had died during the year.

Thanking him, the Team Rector noted that numbers were lower than in 2018 (before the last complete revision) but appeared stable, and perhaps gave a more realistic picture of the congregations.

ELECTION of LAITY to the PCC

5 St Helen: Hazel Glennie proposed Margaret Horton, seconded Gwen Bevington
 St Nicolas: Jenny Fishpool proposed Hildegard Nagel-Hyde, seconded Jennifer Smith

There being no further nominees from the floor, both were declared elected.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES of the PARISH

6 The Rector thanked all contributors to the Annual Report which had been made available in advance via the church websites, and invited questions or comments.

None forthcoming

FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS for the year to December 2021

7 A set of Parish Accounts had been made available in advance of the meeting.

Susan Read, Parish Treasurer, noted that the accounts showed the continued impact of Covid restrictions (reduced events income, fewer church weddings / funerals, loss of loose plate /

	<p>collection income etc) with the final outturn being a deficit on unrestricted funds (before adjustments) of £8.9k.</p> <p>Major income streams were pledged giving plus gift aid; an Historic England Grant for works to the St Nicolas' tower; the Blacknall Grant to St Nicolas; the Friends of St Helen's donation to St Helens; and a major donation at St Michael's.</p> <p>She thanked the fundraising teams at the three churches for their efforts.</p> <p>The major items of expenditure were on Parish Share, maintenance and utilities.</p> <p>The new online approach to financial recording, with all three churches using the same systems and codes, but operating independently appeared to be working well, and should result in lower accountancy charges.</p>
8	<p>2022 could also be a difficult year financially, and the PCC had adopted a deficit budget for the year.</p> <p>Utility bills were likely to rise, and the three Quinquennial Inspections (item 12) likely to identify works to be done.</p> <p>She encouraged members present to consider their giving.</p>
9	<p>It was hoped that the formation of a Finance Group, consisting of Church Treasurers and representatives of all three churches, would provide strategic financial oversight and constructive input to planning.</p>
10	<p>Susan was thanked for all her work as Parish Treasurer and in preparing the accounts.</p>
<p><i>APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS for 2022</i></p>	
11	<p>That Mr Andrew Churchill Stone (of Mercer Lewin Chartered Accountants, Oxford) be appointed as auditor/examiner of accounts for the parish until the conclusion of the next APCM</p> <p>was proposed: the Revd P T C Masheder seconded: Alexandra Green and passed nem con.</p>
<p><i>REPORTS FROM THE CHURCHES</i></p>	
12	<p>The Reports from the churches, previously circulated as part of the Parish Report were noted. There were no questions.</p> <p>The Inventories and Log Books of St Helen's, St Michael's and St Nicolas' were presented to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that St Michael's & St Nicolas' had had Quinquennial inspections in 2021, with no major issues identified. The St Helen's Quinquennial was due in 2022.</p>
<p><i>COMMUNICATIONS</i></p>	
13	<p>The completion of the new parish website was appreciated, but it was important that this was used effectively to communicate both internally and externally. For this the pages needed to be kept up to date.</p> <p>Steve Thomas, website manager, said that volunteers in each of the churches would be trained in updating various sections. Updating the diary, events, and pewslip / service sheet sections would be made as simple as possible.</p> <p>For more complex changes support would be provided.</p>

The meeting closed, with prayer, at 8:20pm.

Appendix 1

The Team Rectors Address

1. At the end of my remarks I will take questions and comments of my written report.
2. The substance of remarks tonight concerns an exciting new development in our parish, already shared with the PCC and at the St Nicolas Church ADCM.
3. At the end of 2021 the Charity Commissions approved the establishment of 'The St Nicolas School and Education Trust, Abingdon'. So I want to explain the establishment of this Trust and why it is a significant for our common life and witness. I will do that in precis form with
 - a. History
 - b. Steps since 2019
 - c. Key aspects of the Trust
 - d. Where we are today
 - e. Questions/comments

A. HISTORY

My predecessor as Vicar of Abingdon in the 1920s took the important step of establishing St Nicolas Primary School under the aegis of what was first called 'Abingdon St Nicolas – School and Land Trust'. The trust's purposes were chiefly to establish the school, to provide teachers and to use the school for religious purposes congruent with the doctrine and aims of the CoE. Over the decades the status of church schools changed, but the first trust has remained the legal owners of the land on which both St Nicolas School and the St Nicolas Pre-School stand.

A substantial sum of capital was added to the trust by the sale of land within the benefice of the Vicar of St Helen's and the Wardens of St Nicolas and that 'nest-egg' was the basis of a portfolio of investments of which the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance were the custodial trustees for the managing trustees, *viz.*, the then Vicar and the successive church wardens of St Nicolas.

The accruing portfolio was sizable enough so that in the first decade of this millennium the trust borrowed from itself to help underwrite a major capital development of the school premises. (Since then a 'recoupment' scheme has been in place by which the trust paid itself back each year so that over a fixed term the sum paid-out is retrieved for the investment portfolio.)

Since the last such pay-out to the school shortly before I came as Team Rector (May 2006) there have been no significant draw-downs on available income or principal so that the portfolio has continued to grow. Occasional small yearly disbursements have been made to the school in the form of Bibles for the leavers. The trustees still manage the rental of land and space for the St Nicolas Pre-School who rent the facility for a small annual sum.

B. 2019 ONWARD – BRINGING THE TRUST’S ASSETS INTO THE PARISH

Previous warden Andrew Coker foresightfully recognized that there was wider scope for the trust as first established both in terms of a more productive approach to managing its investments and of applicability of the trust’s resources. In 2019 began a period of discussion between the then St Nicolas wardens and me as trustees, and the Team Vicar, about bringing the trust into complete control within the parish. On legal advice from the firm of the Diocesan Registrar (Winckworth Sherwood) it was agreed to establish a **Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO)** with trustees who would exercise complete control over the received assets and property of the original trust and oversee the trust’s charitable purposes. That decision was then approved both by the Diocesan Board of Education and, on their advice, the Oxford Diocesan Trustees in 2021. They worked from a draft constitution for the CIO which then (with their in-put) achieved final form in the same year. Key changes to the original trust document include:

- A somewhat wider definition of ‘education’ which extends such work beyond St Nicolas School into the parish and town;
- Enlargement of the number of trustees to a maximum of 7: 4 *ex officio* trustees, 2 *appointed* trustees, and 1 *nominated* trustee.
- Full responsibility for care and use of the investments and property of the CIO to the local trustees.
- Trustee links with the PCC and the ODBE through the appointed and nominated trustees.

The aims of the CIO are consistent, though somewhat broader, than those of the original trust. The basic theme of the new purposes is, like those of the original trust, *educational in service of the Church of England* (as anchored in the Apostles Creed); and while St Nicolas School remains of key interest to the trust, that is complemented by wider interests that can serve the spiritual formational and educative interests of the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames in its ministry and mission.

C. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The CIO is now registered with the Charity Commissioners, and the three *ex officio* trustees are beginning to take forward ‘internal’ issue related to how the trust will function. That includes ‘by-laws’ or operational protocols and decision about how the investment portfolio will be handled for maximum yield in the service of the CIO’s charitable purposes. Once the trustees have a provisional formulation of protocols, which will include guide-lines for auctioning its charitable work then the trustees will seek to build the wider trustee membership.

D. KEY ASPECTS OF THE TRUST

The Trust will begin its new life with an investment portfolio which at the end of January 2022 was valued at £ 2,024,330.61. So the trustees will not wish to bury that talent but make it work for them in the service of education in and to our parish, town and wider area.

The origin of the first trust and its subsequent history is unquestionable linked to St Nicolas Church. The fact that St Nicolas’ wardens are *ex officio* trustees witnesses to that; and, as many know, there is an established link of school governorship and pastoral care with St Nicolas and its Vicar. The new trust underlines that by bringing the Team Vicar of St Nicolas on as an *ex officio* trustee in his own right. That is important since it is imagined that the Team Vicar will of course have a key part in formulating initiative in with and around St Nicolas Church which might receive material support from the new trust.

E. WHERE ARE WE TODAY? AND LOOKING AHEAD

In light of the Team Ministry and the role of the Team Rector in guiding parish-wide strategies, the new trust ensures that there is a clear perspective and voice from the PCC in thinking through *how* the trust can work to further that whole parish’s strategic aims.

Obviously this has the potential to put St Nicolas Church – the Church ‘in the market square’ – in a new, creative posture regarding the witness of our parish in and to the town, its schools and its visitors. In my view that potential will strengthen the life and witness of the congregation but *will also enable St Nicolas to embrace other, new forms of witness and ministry which are not those of a traditional congregation but have something of the character of what used to be called a ‘mission station’*. What that might look like, its many possible guises in years to come I can’t predict. But with resources such as the trust might provide there are exciting reasons to “think outside the box” and to have the insights and voices of parish and diocese in so doing.

To end, I wish to express my thanks to two people who have had a key role in getting matters to this point, one of the long term and the other over a shorter period. The first is Caroline Dyer (now retired) who as secretary to the DBF was efficiently supportive time and again in helping me “get my head around” the finances and aims of the original trust. The second is Andrew Coker who, as warden at St Nicolas, mustered both vision and energy to put this plan ‘on the table’ and to drive it in its early stages. What Bp. John Pritchard used to call “the tyranny of the immediate” gets in my way more and more, so the energetic single-mindedness of Andrew was a necessary shovel to turn-over and fertilize the soil of what is now beginning to blossom. As with all husbandry, strong and healthy growth takes time and attention. Looking ahead, this particular endeavour will occupy my attention more and more in partnership with the other trustees. And who knows, one or more of you may be among them to share in this exciting new phase in the life of our parish.

However that may be, I hope you are as encouraged and excited as I am by the prospects for our parish offered by this development.

The Revd Dr Charles Miller, Team Rector