



St HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

**Minutes of Annual District Church Meeting
held on Passion Sunday, 6 April 2025,
in the nave aisle of St Helen's, beginning at 11.45am.**

- 1) **Present:** Geoff Meen (in the chair) and 40 lay parishioners in person, with three others joining by zoom. Revd Professor J Barton, Revd Dr J Brown, Revd Canon Richard Pyke, Revd Canon Ruth Pyke, Revd R Rutherford and Revd D Bevington were also in attendance.
- 2) Geoff opened the meeting with **prayer**.
- 3) **Apologies:** Norman and Elizabeth Dawson, Susan Gee, Alexandra Green, Nick Hearn, Elizabeth Irving, Chris and Heather Jefferis.
- 4) **Minutes of the ADCM** held on 17 March, 2024.
Acceptance prop. N Gee, sec. M Horton, carried unanimously.
- 5) **Matters Arising.** There were some queries about the reports, to be addressed later.
- 6) **Electoral Roll.** GM pointed out that the ER is important, for financial reasons among others. Kate Burland said there had been 229 names on the 2024 roll. This year we start again from scratch with a completely new roll; numbers will probably go down initially. GM said there has been a Covid effect.
- 7) **Elections.**
 - i. Nominations for **two churchwardens:** David Pope is willing to continue and has been duly proposed C Jefferis, sec Rob Bough. Margaret Horton is also willing to continue, prop. Jeanette Thomas, sec N Gee. There were no other nominations, so David and Margaret's names were duly put forward for approval at the Annual Parish Meeting.
 - ii. Nominations for **pro-wardens:** Chris Jefferis (prop. M Horton, sec. R. Bough), Sarah Jones (prop. C Jefferis, sec. K Cook) and Rob Bough (prop. M Horton, sec. E Chukwuma) are all willing to continue. Again, there were no other nominations and these three were duly elected.
 - iii. **DCC members** include ex-officio wardens, pro-wardens, PCC members and deanery synod reps. Those additionally elected to the DCC: Katherine Cook, Peter Foster, Norman Gee, Pat Hudson, Elizabeth Irving, Geoff Meen, Sue Pemberton, Elizabeth Simpson. All had been duly proposed and seconded.

M Anderson suggested it could in future make more sense to elect PCC members before DCC members.
 - iv. **PCC:** Mary Anderson and Kate Burland continue. In addition, Matthew Cady from the 8am congregation is willing to stand (prop D Pope, sec J Lawrence). Matthew's name was put forward for approval at the Annual Parish Church Meeting.
 - v. **Sidespeople:** In addition to the existing team, two new sidespeople were nominated for approval at the APCM:

Alexandra Green (prop. K Cook, sec. G Bevington) and
Matthew Cady (prop. D Pope, sec. J Lawrence)

8) **Financial Report.**

In S Read's absence, GM spoke to the annual report and accounts which she had sent. The surplus (over £9k) shown for 2024 in the General Fund is not quite as good as it seems. The SOFA (Statement of Financial Accounts) shows results in the restricted funds. In recent years we have been using restricted funds for certain large permissible items, such as insuring the church (£10k). But the bad news on the restricted funds (showing a loss) is not as bad as it might seem. The truth may lie somewhere between General and Restricted results. Given that we were budgeting for a large deficit, this is overall very encouraging. The income generated by the Events Team has been significant in achieving this; Geoff acknowledged their outstanding work. DP then proposed a vote of thanks to them.

Rob Rutherford asked how many pledges have been received in the Stewardship Campaign. Jeff Dale said there are between 120 and 130. It is rather early to say how many will be returned this year. GM said we would benefit from more forms being returned, year on year.

- 9) **There being no Rector's Report this year, Margaret Horton as warden** took a question from Anne Dodd about the process to appoint a new Rector. The profile being now completed, the PCC is to meet with the Archdeacon this week under "Section 12". The advertisement will appear after Easter; the hope is to shortlist in early June, interview on 26 June and receive a new incumbent in the autumn... but a second round of everything could be necessary.
- 10) In the absence of C Jefferis, Geoff gave an update on the **lighting scheme**. Key church members met last week with Geraldine O'Farrell, the diocesan lighting adviser. The meeting felt positive, although her report is yet to be seen. A few more details have to be submitted before we receive approval and can launch a major fund-raising campaign. We are blessed to have N Gee and S Thomas in the congregation who can offer much technical help.

11) **Any Other Business:**

- i. M Anderson/S Joinson asked about the poorly functioning loop system. This matter has been raised and is in hand.
- ii. E Simpson asked if the Report could be available sooner before this meeting. MH explained that we have recently been short of office cover and did not quite reach our target for publishing the Report. It can be emailed in advance to all those who complete GDPR forms.

M Horton presented a pot-plant to the Secretary and had a (very deserved, hopefully much larger) plant for the Treasurer, who puts in many hours on our behalf every week.

S Pemberton very appropriately expressed, for us all, thanks to the Wardens for their work too, always demanding and currently increased during the vacancy.

The meeting closed at 12.20pm with the praying together of the Grace.

GB, 6.4.25