

St. John the Evangelist, Milford

Annual Vestry Meeting

Sunday 6th April 2025

25 members of the Church, including officials, attended the above meeting.

Welcome by Revd. Chris Bessant, Area Dean and Rector of Haslemere, who had agreed to chair the meeting.

Chris thanked Peter and Barbara for everything they had done to hold the Church together during the Vacancy. Peter had done an amazing job in arranging cover for services and getting in clergy to preside at services. He also thanked everyone who had helped out.

Chris also mentioned that it was great that St John's and All Saints, Witley had a good working relationship and it should continue. Amy Webb is being licensed at Witley on 22nd April and Jo Lamberth at St John's on 19th June.

Chris then opened the meeting with prayers.

Appointment of Miranda O'Brien to act as Clerk for both meetings was agreed.

Apologies for absence:

Chris Boynton; Liz Burrows; Judy Downing; Maddie Murray.

Minutes of Vestry meeting 2024

Minutes were approved and signed by Revd. Chris Bessant as a true record.

Matters arising

None

Election of Churchwardens

Chris explained that the Churchwardens play a vital role in the Church and thanked them for all they have done and do. He especially thanked Judy, in her absence, for her 6 years' service. The meeting went on to elect: -

Jackie Hills – proposed by Nick O'Brien and seconded by Miranda O'Brien.

Madeline Murray - proposed by Miranda O'Brien and seconded by Nick O'Brien.

Both elected unanimously.

Annual Parochial Meeting

Apologies for absence:

As above.

Minutes of Annual Meeting 2024

Approved and signed by Revd. Chris Bessant as a true record.

Matters arising

Nothing further to add.

Report of the Churchwardens

As read in the report pack.

Jackie presented the Church Log and Terrier which were signed off by Chris.

Jackie said that she and Judy had reviewed the inventory and nothing was missing.

Jackie explained to the meeting what the Church Log and Terrier were. The Log contains things that have been done during the year, such as servicing the organ and an annual service of the fire extinguishers.

The Glass Doors project, thanks to a generous donation, now has enough money in the fund for us to proceed. Peter has asked the architect who did the Quinquennial Inspection to start the planning process.

The roof repairs, asked for in the Quinquennial Inspection, have been done.

Also, we bought some new chairs for the Church Centre, mostly covered by a donation. Agreed last year but paid for in this year.

Jackie also handed out the annual return highlights which Judy had done before she stepped down.

Presentation of Accounts

As read in the report pack.

Nick highlighted some key points.

Our Parish Share was due to rise by £9,675 to £82,839 in 2024. The decision by the PCC to go for a part-time post (0.5 FTE) meant that our Parish Share was reduced to £63,286. At the start of the year, we owed £8,024 in unpaid Parish Share left over from 2023 and this increased by £11,686 during 2024. This meant that we had to sell off a £30,000 portion of the restricted Miss Price Bequest in order to cover this debt by the appointment of a new incumbent.

This can be seen on the SOFA which showed our General Fund Deficit of £22,174 which, with the transfer of the £30,000, led to an apparent increase in the General Fund by £7,826 from £11,685 to £19,511.

The Balance Sheet shows this General Fund total of £19,511 while the Unrestricted Legacy Fund was unchanged at £1,000 and the Fabric Fund decreased by £145 from £20,494 to £20,349.

The Glass Door Fund increased by £14,386 from £3,297 to £17,683. This was due to a generous donation and means that we can now set the wheels in motion. Any extra costs we will hope to cover by further donations.

The Discretionary Fund was unchanged at £2,250 while the Flower Fund went up by £369 to £1,219 due to the Easter Lilies campaign. Thanks to Pam and her team for the lovely arrangements.

The Restricted Bequest Fund increased by £4,860 but we also withdrew £30,000 so it went from £195,388 to £170,248.

Incoming Resources showed that General Fund Planned Giving was down by about a couple of thousand to £28,628. Wedding and Funeral fees were about the same as last year even though we had had only one wedding and fewer funerals but, in a vacancy, we are allowed to keep the Diocesan portion of all fees.

Sundry Expenses covered the costs of a new fridge for the Church Centre kitchen and a collection for Sylvia (both covered by donations). We made a contribution towards a faculty charge for the Parish Council to check out the grave stones in our closed Churchyard. The big item was the Church Times advertisement for a new incumbent where we paid extra to avoid paying more for repeat ads which we needed since the first round yielded no suitable candidate.

The Fabric Fund has £20,349 in it but the initial quote for the stonework repairs required by the Quinquennial Inspection has come in at £11,383 including VAT so that will make a big hole.

Suzy Vincent asked about the Flower Fund. This is funded by the Easter Lilies campaign and pays out for the Church flowers but a lot of the flower arrangers do not ask to be reimbursed so the fund keeps growing.

Bill Braid thanked Nick for doing the finances once again in a tough year when we had such a large deficit.

Fiona Stevenson asked why note 6 Debtors sum did not match the balance sheet. This was a drop-off missed in review as it did not show the £20,000 currently in the CBF Investment Funds which has not yet been cashed in to pay off our Parish Share debt.

Chris reminded the meeting that Jo's main purpose was to keep to mission mode and not stay in admin mode. The Diocese will provide finance for capital projects, such as a 3-year project for a youth-worker.

St John's needs to grow and we must all help Jo. Chris said that Haslemere had instigated a legacies project, persuading people to leave money to the Church in their wills.

Nick then asked the meeting to accept and adopt the financial statements which was done. Proposed by Nick O'Brien and seconded by Miranda O'Brien.

They were accepted unanimously.

Appointment of an Independent Examiner

Nick said that Alison Sanderson, from St Andrew's Church, Goldsworth Park, Woking has been our Independent Examiner again this year as part of a circle of independent examiners with Nick acting as independent examiner for another church. Alison has agreed to continue for 2025. He asked the meeting for a formal vote of thanks to Alison and a vote to re-appoint her which was unanimously given.

Jackie thanked Nick for all the work he does as Treasurer.

Electoral Roll

As read in the report pack.

There has to be a new Electoral Roll every 6 years and we have just done a new one which now stands at 92. The Roll has to be held in abeyance for 2 weeks up till the APCM and a list of the names of those on it has been put on the Church noticeboard.

Report of the Proceedings of the PCC:

As read in report pack.

This year we have held 7 meetings, plus a special meeting which was convened for us to decide what sort of minister we wanted.

Election of PCC members:

We have several vacancies and the Churchwardens have asked 3 people if they will serve, as well as electing Suzy Vincent who was co-opted last year.

Chris Denton. Proposed by Jackie Hills and seconded by Penny Clark.

Luisa Mason. Proposed by Jackie Hills and seconded by Penny Clark.

Fiona Stevenson. Proposed by Judy Downing and seconded by Jackie Hills.

Suzy Vincent. Proposed by Jackie Hills and seconded by Judy Downing.

They were all elected unanimously.

Election of Deputy Churchwardens

Peter mentioned that there were 5 deputy Churchwardens:

- John Sandy
- Tricia Boynton
- Bill Braid
- Penny Clark
- Judy Downing

Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

Maddie Murray is our Deanery Synod Representative and has done 2 years.

There was a discussion as to how many we could have.

Reports from the organisations (as published)

These are all in the pack but Nick went through them briefly.

Under Building and Maintenance there was raised the issue of the bell ropes, one of which has broken. We have had someone in to look at them but the cost of repairing the whole system was too prohibitive at the moment. Chris mentioned that the Diocese has a bells fund. He will talk to Paul Bagshaw, who is a Haslemere bell-ringer, for advice. Jackie will send Chris an email reminding him.

Chandler School. Peter mentioned that they need two new St John's approved governors. They don't have to be on the PCC or even a member of the congregation.

Flower rota. The meeting thanked Pam and her team for the lovely arrangements they do. Pam mentioned that a lot of the time the arrangers pay themselves for the flowers and don't claim for them. She also bought some artificial flowers a few years ago to use during winter months when fresh flowers are expensive and hard to come by.

Liz Burrows has stepped down as Bookings Secretary for the Church Centre and Bill has kindly agreed to take it over for the time being.

Nick also thanked Carol for taking over as our organist. As she has not played for 30 years it has been a steep learning curve but the effort, she puts in is very much appreciated.

The Village Hall had a few issues but they seem to have sorted out the heating. There is still the ongoing problem with the lease. The Diocese have refused to do anything until Jo comes, which is very tiresome.

The meeting thanked Peter and Barbara for all that they do.

The meeting closed at 1.07pm with the Grace.