

## DRAFT

### South Petherton with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks

#### Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held Monday 24 April 2017

**Present:** There were 53 present: Geoff and Jenny Abery, Patricia and Phil Andrews, Sarah Armstrong, Robin and Sheila Ballard, Gill and Jim Beveridge, Rob Boulter, Ray Catling, Carolyn Davage, Judith Deegan, David Dunning, Ruth Eden, Malcolm and Priscilla Flower-Smith, Alan and Sheila Frost, Alistair Fyfe, Jo Goldie, Chris Gough, the Revd Tom Handy, Steve and Sue Harrison, Brian and Daphne Holden, Amanda Jaggars, Vivien Jewsbury, Brenda Joynes, Debbie and Newton Jones, Angela Laing, Julia Lear, Amanda Maggs, Cathie and Laurence Meering, Anna Novy, Susan Ogilby, Ann and Rod Page, Tom Poole, Hazel Ricketts, John and Sandra Roberts, Anne Shaw, Carol Talbot, Ruth Taylor, Peggy Vaux, Jane Ward, Paddy Ward, Jean Willings and Daphne Woodhouse.

**Apologies** were received from Michael Armstrong, Tim Deegan, Ann Dexter, Sheelagh Dunning, Clifford and Elizabeth Jobson, Mary Sidwell and David Ward.

**1. (a) Welcome and opening prayers:** The Revd Tom Handy welcomed those able to attend, and opened the meeting with prayer.

**1. (b) Apologies:** Apologies were received from Michael Armstrong, Tim Deegan, Ann Dexter, Sheelagh Dunning, Elizabeth and Clifford Jobson, Mary Sidwell and David Ward.

**1. (c) Minutes of Annual Vestry Meeting held Monday 25 April 2016:** These were approved as a true record.

**2. Election of churchwardens for 2017-2018:** Susan Ogilvy (proposed by Priscilla Flower-Smith and seconded by Malcolm Flower-Smith), Steve Harrison (proposed by Jim Beveridge and seconded by Rob Boulter), Manda Jaggars (proposed by Carol Talbot and seconded by Anne Shaw), Anne Shaw (proposed by Carol Talbot and seconded by Steve Harrison) and Cathie Meering (proposed by Steve Harrison and seconded by Jim Beveridge) were elected *en masse*, with no abstentions. Anne will replace Carol Talbot as churchwarden with responsibility for St Michael's. Carol was warmly thanked for her (at least) twelve years of service, at St. Michael's and in the benefice, and Tom particularly expressed his thanks for her great support and friendship. The election of Cathie Meering as the second churchwarden with responsibility for Ss Peter and Paul was a source of great relief and celebration.



#### Minutes of the Annual Parish Church Meeting held Monday 24 April 2017

**Present and Apologies:** as above.

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Monday 25 April 2016:** The Minutes were approved as a true record.

**Matters arising:** There were none.

**Reflections on the Year:** The Revd Tom Handy started by thanking the PCC and everyone for all that so many people do and are in the benefice. He mentioned Chris Gough for providing the church memorial spotlights, Brian Holden for maintaining the website. He also thanked the clergy and worship leaders, and mentioned the fact that Andrew Callon will be returning to the Royal Navy for six months, and how we will look forward to having him back after that.

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He reflected on a topic that had come up during a deanery day last month (with both bishops), looking at the diocesan vision and sharing stories. When talking about what people found challenging about church, it is often the label “The Church” – as espoused by the media and others – which was a real barrier. However, ironically the best antidote to this is by *being* the church: the local churchgoers and the actual local church building are seen as OK even though “The Church” is the baddie. Tom commented that he felt that our benefice was being blessed with a sense of renewal, and with green shoots, and said that we are regarded as a very active, alive, diverse parish, especially in the use of our buildings (including St. James, the café, schoolroom, etc.) Events have fallen to the “fundraising team”, which is a small group of four who meet every couple of months. Although they are very hard-working, we need more help with organisation and ideas, and for the ownership of events to be spread more widely. New people to help with established events, or to hold new ones, would be great, and we were encouraged to look at and sign up on the new notice board at the back of Ss Peter and Paul’s church. It would also be great to be able to expand to the Lambrooks and the Seavingtons.

**Annual report of the PCC for 2016:** Steve Harrison started his report by echoing Tom's call for volunteers to take on leadership and ownership of the church's life – don't wait to be asked! The church finances are concerning; conversely, it has proved remarkably difficult to spend money on necessary projects. He introduced a new section of the annual report, on safeguarding. Bishop Peter is the national lead in the Church of England for safeguarding, so we should not be surprised that it is taken very seriously in this diocese, and several new initiatives are starting. One of these will be a new diocesan policy on safeguarding, which the PCC will have to customise for our benefice. The members of the PCC were commended for all of their hard work this year, and the annual report was praised as first-rate.

**Annual accounts for the year 1 January-31 December 2016:** Our Treasurer, Jim Beveridge, introduced the accounts, starting by thanking Tim Farley of Goffey Accountants for his care in auditing the accounts as our Independent Examiner. The fundraising team has raised over £9,300, and we have benefited from several large bequests. Jim warned that, although the accounts look healthy on paper, we are expecting a deficit of £16,000 this year. The main reason for this deficit is the increase in our parish share. Church funds rely heavily on regular giving (through regular bank payments and the envelope scheme); however, this fell by 7% last year, and by more than that the previous year. We did gain £13,000 in reclaimed tax through the Gift Aid system, which is quick and straightforward to set up; everyone who could is highly recommended to sign up for Gift Aid.

Jim corrected the printed account sheets which, due to a mysterious computer error, had overwritten some fields with the words, “Page 7”. On page 2 of the accounts, the “Page 7” can be ignored; on page 4 the words should be replaced by the column heading, “Unrestricted”; on page 5 by “VAT recovered” and on page 6 by “Fees”.

Jim was thanked for his hard work, week in and week out, as well as compiling the annual accounts. His report was followed by a lively discussion. It was commented that the parish share has risen by nearly £20,000 since 2015, and the reasons for this were asked. It was explained that it is partly because we are now paying the full amount for East Lambrook; this has been phased in gradually since the parish joined the benefice, so we may have had a few years of paying less than we might have been. Several people expressed concern as to how we could raise enough money to plug the gap in our finances. Regular giving, donations, events, etc., can help, but we do expect a deficit.

It was also commented that our own expenses have also gone up – for example, the church running expenses are up by £2,000 this year. Julia Lear, the Planned Giving co-ordinator [is there a job title?] explained that regular giving is not going up with inflation – in fact, it is falling. She

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also commented that donating by standing order is better than via the envelope scheme, as weeks aren't missed and it is more economical to run. (We have to pay fees for paying cash into the bank.) A suggestion was made that extra donations from regular givers could always be made by putting money into a collections bag during the service!

A leaflet which has been recently produced was pointed out: this explains how much it costs to run the benefice for a week, and asks for financial support; it is aimed at members of the congregation and visitors.

**Other reports:** Representatives from the various church groups were given the opportunity to add to the written reports circulated before the meeting.

**Churchwardens' fabric reports:** Sue Ogilvy reported on St James. She thanked Malcolm Flower-Smith for standing in for her for three months, and asked for an official deputy. She also said that Nicola, who has played the organ there for 40 years, is stepping down, and that a replacement needs to be found urgently. Any organists or those with contacts and the powers of persuasion were urged to get in touch.

Steve Harrison reported on Ss Peter and Paul. As the meeting today showed, the sound system is getting more and more unreliable. The faculty for its replacement had to be submitted online – a new way of applying – in September, but he is still waiting for a response. Despite much chasing, no action was taken on the faculty between September and February. It was supposed to be heard at the March meeting; however, the consultant who was to present the report was ill. He is still not well, but has written a paper in the last few days, which it is sincerely hoped will be considered at the May meeting. Various suggestions were made by members of the congregation on how a sense of urgency might be installed in the minds of the decision-makers. The other major project waiting to start is the redecoration of the Lady Chapel. This awaits a comment from the archdeacon (it may not need a faculty). On the positive side, we do now have a flagpole; Steve thanked the Friends who funded it. Steve also sadly had to report on continued thefts in church. The tea and coffee supplies are now kept locked away, but now the toilet paper is being stolen. It was suggested that we apply 'smart paint' to the top of the vestry panels as a deterrent.

**Bells and bell-ringing:** Comments were made on how lovely it is to hear the bells. We were also reminded that our bells featured on Radio 4's 'Bells on Sunday' after the early news at 5.45am on Palm Sunday.

**Choir:** Ruth Eden welcomed anyone who would like to join the choir, especially any altos.

**Electoral Roll:** Rod Page stated that the electoral roll currently stood at 215. Two people have recently moved away, and two have just come onto the roll. A wider discussion about the individuals on the electoral roll and the church's finances followed. Not everybody on the electoral roll contributes financially at present. Some people felt that those who did not should be requested to consider their level of giving, although it was also pointed out that not everybody is necessarily in a position where they are able to give money, and that some help in other ways. Steve Harrison clarified the link between the number on the electoral roll and the parish share. There is no direct correlation – the parish share is based on the number of regular attendants instead.

**Fundraising Group:** Tom and Steve's earlier comments were reiterated: the events held are not only about raising funds, but also to bring people in contact with the church and to contribute to the social life of the villages.

**Seekers:** Judy Deegan confirmed that Seekers will be able to split into two age groups on a Sunday, and that another room at the school has been made available for this. She reminded us that four years ago, there were only two children who regularly came to church; now there are fifteen. The congregation was thanked for their support and encouragement, particularly at the

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end of the service when the children at Seekers share what they have learned. Any ideas for how Seekers can further develop are welcomed; please speak to Judy or Fran Cripps.

**Small groups:** Cathie Meering reported that an Alpha Course was starting on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April, attracting eight candidates so far. The Open House on the third Wednesday of each month in church was working well as outreach, and some very interesting conversations had taken place with people who do not regularly come to church.

**Mothers' Union:** Hazel Ricketts reported that a new member has been admitted this month.

**Election of Deanery Synod representatives:** Three candidates put their names forward for the three vacancies: Phil Andrews, Mandy Maggs and Daphne Woodhouse. These were elected unanimously.

**Election of PCC members:** Four lay representatives were needed, including at least one from St James' church and one from St. Michael's. Four candidates were nominated: Richard Brooks, Ray Catling, Carol Talbot and Jane Ward. These were also elected unanimously.

### **Any Other Business:**

**Parish magazine:** A question was asked about whether or not we are required to print the civic Parish Council meeting minutes in the parish magazine, seeing as the official minutes appear in TA13. Some felt that this was a waste of paper, others that it helped to make the magazine appeal to a wider readership and be outward facing. Julia Lear, the magazine's advertising rep, pointed out that the Parish Council pay us £50 a year to include the minutes. Tom Handy suggested that if there were strong feelings or ideas on how the magazine could develop, he would be happy to start a magazine group to take things forward.

**Memorial floodlight:** Chris Gough thanked memorial light supporters, and reported that over £5,000 has been raised so far through the scheme. He reminded us that people were welcome to pay more than the £15 suggested donation as a further contribution to church funds.

**Phil Andrews' sponsored walk:** Phil thanked all supporters, confirmed and potential, for sponsoring his walk along part of the South West Coast Path.

**Church directory:** Daphne Woodhouse introduced the idea of having a voluntary church directory, so that members of the congregation can get in touch with each other outside services. This was welcomed, and it was commented that church directories can be a useful pastoral tool and can be used to pray through names. This idea will be taken forward in the near future.

The meeting concluded with the Grace, at 8.20pm.