

**Hertingfordbury St Mary with St John Parochial Church Council.
Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 28 November 2024 at 7.30 pm at the
Fobury, Hertingfordbury and on Zoom**

Present: Robin Bishop (Robin B) (chair), Rev Alan Stewart (Alan), Barry Wade Simkins (Barry), Robin Densem, (Robin D), David Gorton (David), Kath Oates (Kath), Alastair Curry (Alastair), Rachel Carter (Rachel) (Secretary) Jean Skinner (Jean) (on Zoom)

Rev Alan Stewart opened the meeting with a prayer.

Items are recorded in the order they were taken at the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Philip Juniper (Philip), Ritchie Copues (Ritchie), Rev Bill Church (Bill), Stephane McCarthy (Stephane).

2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 The minutes were deemed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Item 3.3 Helen Harris had been duly commissioned as Pastoral Visitor.

3.2 Item 3.7 Environment Sunday with Creation Compline had taken place on the first Sunday in October.

3.3 Item 5.1 Tracy had led her last collective worship on 10 December. She would continue as a mentor to Lynsey for a time.

Christmas cards with the printer

3.4 Item 5.6 Kath said that it would be good to deliver Christmas cards to Blakemore Manor. Alan noted that he had contacted Doug Brown for a mock up and was waiting on a response.

4. Correspondence

4.1 An email had been received regarding the state of the Roll of Honour. David had agreed to inspect and clean it, and would reply to the sender.

5. Priests' Report

5.1 Alan thanked everyone who was able to attend the Zoom meeting about combining St Andrew's and Hertingfordbury into a single parish on the dissolution of the Hertford Team. A response had been circulated to PCC members and sent to the Diocese. No response had been received as yet.

5.2 Alan reported that St Andrew's PCC had also discussed the proposals and raised concerns about the proposal and about what would happen when Bill stepped back.

5.3 Other points made were that St Andrew's had scope to develop and would want priest to be available, however, the clergy were already very stretched. The demographics and culture of the two churches were quite different, meaning that it could be difficult to recruit.

5.4 There was some discussion of the history and cost of combining these two parishes.

5.5 A New Year's Day walk between Hertford and Hertingfordbury, beginning at the Golden Griffin was planned.

5.6 Lynsey and Alan were planning to hold Teddy Bear's picnic/toddler service possibly on 18 January at 11.00 am at St Mary's where they could have some conversations with families.

5.7 The Exploring Faith course, joint with St Andrew's, would begin at 6.00 pm Tuesday January 28 in the Brace Room. Alan would be leading with Maria. It could be advertised further at the Christmas services.

6. Reaching New People

6.1 Kath noted that she planned to contact Stephane regarding Christmas cards.

7. Friends of St Mary's

7.1 Helen was thanked for her report on Friends' Activities.

Members noted that the events had been very successful and raised a good amount of money. Bike and Hike had also raised a good amount. Helen had requested ideas for stalls.

8. Events

8.1 All events were now covered by the Friends.

9. Churchwardens' Report

9.1 David reported that the delayed Quinquennial inspection had taken place in November. The report had not yet been received. There was a new architect, though already known to David.

9.2 No drastic issues had come up, but quite a few minor maintenance items had been highlighted, mainly redecoration.

9.3 The boilers had been serviced and were in good order considering – they had been upgraded and refurbished 6 years ago. They might last until they couldn't be replaced with gas.

9.4 Plasterwork was under way and hopefully would be done before 7 December to avoid deep clean before Christmas.

9.5 David had got some quotes to deal with damage in ringing chamber from a blocked downpipe and soakaway.

9.6 Other issues being looked at were redecoration for Brace Room; the soil pipe valve (booked to be sorted); the lightning conductor test (booked) and a new contractor for fire extinguisher servicing. It was suggested that St Andrew's and Geoff could be asked for suggestions.

10. Churchyard Manager's Report

10.1 David reported that the Churchyard was in fairly good order for winter. The south boundary hedge had been cut. There was a lot of mole activity which would be attended to. The machinery was being serviced.

10.2 Members thanked David for all his work.

11. Monuments Sub-Committee Report

11.1 There was nothing to report.

12. Treasurer's Report

12.1 Robin introduced his report, which had already been circulated. Finances were marginally ahead at this point and would more or less break even. The Friends would put in some money to cover costs.

12.2 David clarified that the purpose of the Friends was to support the fabric of the church rather than general costs. There were restricted funds left over from the Brace Room for maintenance.

13. Fees

13.1 Fees for next year were discussed and agreed as follows:

Weddings

Verger - £70

Organist £150

Organist with video £175

Bells £150

Funerals

Verger £60

Organist £100

Families who wanted recorded music/slideshows would need to find someone to do this. Alan and Karen would discuss this with the families.

14. Deanery Synod

14.1 Robin reported that there had been a useful presentation for treasurers on legacies and fundraising. As a result, he was planning to write to the congregation about this. Alan noted that St Andrew's was preparing a legacy leaflet. Kath noted that there was a need to thank people already giving including those making a contribution in non financial ways.

14.2 The Rural Dean Mark Dunstan had set up series of online groups (no meetings) to exchange views, for example, on helping people, running eco groups, Fresh Expressions and social action. More information was available on the Deanery synod website.

15. Safeguarding

15.1 Robin noted that this was very high on the Church of England's agenda. There was some discussion of the measures that were in place and whether this was still continuing today. Members stressed the importance of vigilance and a need to be curious and follow up.

15.2 Safeguarding Code of Practice and accompanying policies

Barry proposed that the 20 policies already circulated should be adopted. David seconded the proposal and it was passed nem. con.

16. Any other business

16.1 Parish Magazine and communications

Philip was thanked for his work putting the magazine together.

Kath noted that posting the link to St Andrew's parish magazine on Next Door had resulted in a lot of hits.

16.2 Eco Church

There was nothing to report just now. The next meeting was planned for February.

16.3 Christmas cards

Members were content with the list which had been circulated.

David was thanked for writing the cards.

16.4 Sharing the Peace

Ways of sharing the peace were discussed and it was agreed that this should be left to personal choice.

16.5 Beer and carols in churchyard

Kath suggested that mulled wine could be offered at this event and agreed to investigate.

The Village breakfast would take place on 3 May.

It was felt that the carols and handbellringing at the White Horse had been a little too early this year.

17. Dates of the next meeting

17.1 These were scheduled for 23 January and 20 March. Following that Alan would be away from May for three months. The APCM was scheduled for 27 April.