

**Hertingfordbury St Mary with St John Parochial Church Council.
Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 7 March 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Brace
Room and on Zoom**

Present: Rev Alan Stewart (Alan), Robin Bishop (Robin B)(chair), David Gorton (David), Philip Juniper (Philip), Paul Attridge (Paul), Rachel Carter (Rachel) (Secretary)

Attending via Zoom: Stephane McCarthy (Stephane), Jean Skinner (Jean)

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

Robin Densem (Robin D), Ritchie Copues (Ritchie), Rev Bill Church (Bill), Kath Oates (Kath)

2. Minutes of 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: Alan confirmed that there would be no change to the times of the Crib Services.

3.2 Item 12: it was noted that this item referred to amended fees for 2024. As last year's wedding fees had already been circulated, it was agreed to keep the wedding fees at last year's level. Other fees would increase as agreed.

4. Correspondence

4.1 A letter from the Archdeacon's PA regarding Visitations and the Election of Churchwardens had been received.

5. Priests' Report

5.1 Alan reported that there had been no further communication on the Vacancy at All Saints. Janet Bird was currently putting together a Parish profile and there might be an interview in the middle of the year.

5.2 Forest church had been evaluated. It had been decided to pause and experiment with Soulful Walks. The first one would take place on Palm Sunday, meeting at St Mary's. Those assembled would walk to Panshanger, stopping to reflect from time to time. Dogs would be welcome. The hope was that this would provide a connection for those who were spiritual not religious.

5.3 A fourth advert for the joint Children and Families worker had gone out. There had been one query so far.

5.4 Rachel had agreed to become a PCC member.

5.5 A course on prayer was scheduled to begin on Tuesday 9 April at St Andrew's.

5.6 Alan was planning to visit the Youth group TMM to explore the possibility of confirmation. If a group of young people were up for it, he would start course. He noted that there were unconfirmed folk in our own congregation and would see if they were open to being confirmed.

5.7 At Eastertide there would be the usual Dawn service at St Mary's.

It was agreed that everyone was happy to have breakfast in Brace Room. At the 9.15 service it was suggested that there would be Easter egg hunts for those over 10 and those under. Or find an egg and a second one to give to someone.

5.8 St Joseph in the Park was to be the Awayday venue. Hot food provided by Jean's daughter, Sharon. Four workshops were planned. Arrive 10.15 for coffee. There would be different activities for the afternoon. Anyone not coming for the whole day could be invited to the Eucharist.

Hertingfordbury Cowper recently had a SIAMS inspection and came through with flying colours. It was agreed that Rachel would write to Lorraine Gold on behalf of PCC and congratulate her and all the staff. It should also be included in the magazine.

6. Reaching New People

6.1 Stephane reported that there was nothing new to report since the last meeting. He noted that some residents of Blakemore Manor had begun to attend St Mary's.

7. Friends of St Mary's

7.1 Robin reported that Standing Orders could now be set up. Membership forms could be available at weddings and baptisms etc. Race Night had raised £1000, not for the General Fund. There was some discussion about projects which the Friends might like to support in the future such as a reflective space, or improvements to the church path.

8. Churchwardens' Reports

8.1 David reported that there was a current problem with drainage in the north west corner. He was asking Lodge for advice and possible costs. They would be checking the soakaways and drainage. He would report to the PCC when he had more information.

8.2 It was noted that despite the recent heavy rain, there had been no further issues with the Brace Room roof.

9. Churchyard Manager's Report

9.1 David reported that some tree work was planned to be done. The cutting season was about to start and the new churchyard management team had already enquired about when they would be needed.

10. Monuments Sub-Committee Report

10.1 Nothing to report.

11. Treasurer's Report

11.1 Robin had previously circulated his report. He noted that St Mary's was just about breaking even.

11.2 On the accounts no donations to charities were listed for this year because the PCC was in a transition phase towards a new system of charitable giving.

12. Fees

12.1 These had been confirmed.

13. Charitable giving

13.1 Philip as chair of the Charitable Giving Working Group outlined the background for a change in policy. It was noted that the majority of churches make charitable donations. In the past, St Mary's had given the proceeds from Race Night and Carol Service. It was felt that a more structured approach was needed, and proposed to move to a system of giving a percentage of income. After some discussion it was agreed to give 5% of income each year. This could be reviewed on a yearly basis. Details of the change would be published in the Parish Magazine.

13.2 Guidelines as to which charities to choose were discussed. It was noted that in the past, two out of three were local, while the other one was national or international. It was felt that charities should share the ethos of the church.

13.3 The two charities chosen for the year were Warrenwood Riding for the Disabled and Mercy ships.

14. Deanery Synod

14.1 The next Deanery Synod would take place in 10 days' time. Nothing to report at the current moment.

15. Safeguarding

15.1 The wardens were waiting to be offered a C2 course. There was only one outstanding DBS.

16. Events

16.1 It was agreed to delete this item, as most of the business was covered by the Friends of Hertingfordbury St Mary.

17. Any other business

17.1 APCM

Rachel noted that this would take place on 28 April. Elizabeth had decided to step down as Electoral Roll officer, so a new volunteer would need to be found. Elizabeth was thanked for all her work on over the past few years.

17.2 Parish Magazine Philip reported that this had been printed by the new machine at St Andrews so printing was better. With regard to circulation, Robin B agreed to ask for a new contact at St Joseph's in the Park to improve communication. It was suggested that a QR code with a link could be put on a poster. Posters/flyers could be put on the village noticeboards and perhaps a flyer saying they were available at the

Four Rivers cafe etc.

17.3 PCC Membership

17.3.1 It was reported that Paul was stepping down now that his three year term was ending. He was thanked for all his work during his term.

17.3.2 Kath Oates had agreed to join the PCC.

17.4 Eco Church

Rachel reported that she had had a number of conversations with members of the congregation and that there was particular interest in energy use and the possibility of infra red panels from some people. St Andrew's had an Eco Church meeting in May which she was hoping to attend.

17.5 Mayflower Hall – It was reported that Helen Bishop had made contact with new person managing it.

18. Dates of the next meetings

These were confirmed for May 23, July 25, Sept 19 and Nov 21, APCM 28 April.