

Hertingfordbury St Mary with St John Parochial Church Council.

Minutes of the meeting held 23rd January 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Brace Room and via Zoom.

Present:

Rev. Alan Stewart (Chair), David Gorton, Kath Oates, Robin Densem, Jean Skinner (on Zoom), and Alastair Curry

1. Apologies

Received from Rachel Carter, Philip Juniper, Barry Wade-Simkins and Robin Bishop.
Alan Stewart agreed to take minutes.

2. Minutes of last meeting

These were approved with amendment to 5.7 The Exploring Faith Course starts at 7.30pm.

3. Matters arising

5.5 The New Years Day walk took place on 2nd January due to poor weather on the 1st.

5.6 The Teddy Bear Picnic has been postponed until the Spring.

13.1 Choir Fee will now be £130

4. Correspondence

David has received a letter regarding a sculpture in the Cowper Chapel from Matteo Ciani

5. Priests' report

The PCC reviewed the Christmas Services.

The pros and cons of holding the Carol service on a weekday were discussed. This works best for Alan. It was felt that Beer and Carols worked well inside at the back of church but something was lost in not being outside. It was proposed that we start outside next year (weather permitting) and move inside for the Toast and final carols. We discussed the possibility of rebranding this as 'Beer, Mulled Wine and Carols'. It was felt that the Crib services and Christmas Day went well and were very well attended.

Sabbatical arrangements. Bill and Scott Martin will be available to help with Eucharistic services. Bill will cover funerals and offer on Sunday per month for baptisms at both churches. Weddings will be covered by Bill and Rev Simon Cutmore. Mindfulness will be led by Melanie Seward. All Age services will be non-Eucharistic and led by Geoff Oates, Melanie and others. Lindsey will offer fortnightly Collective Worship at our three schools.

An Exploring Faith Course starts on Tuesday 28th January.

A Confirmation service is booked for Monday 17th March at 7.30pm.

A schools workshop Experience Easter is scheduled at church for Hertingfordbury Cowper on Wednesday 26th March.

6. Reaching New People

Nothing to report.

7. Friends of St Mary

The WGC Male Voice Choir raised £600. Thanks were expressed to Kay and Philip Juniper. Future events include the Race Night, MVC return in March and Village Breakfast. The first donation from the Friends has helped to pay for the internal wall re-plastering.

8. Churchwardens' report

David gave the following report on the Fabric of the Church

Plasterwork repair to south wall of the nave and north side of the chancel has been completed. Please note this repair was paid by the Friends of St Mary's account.

The Lightning Conductor has been tested and the certificate issued.

There was a significant amount of redundant metal trunking around the walls of the ringing chamber, it had been to run cables to condemned wall heaters that have long since been removed. This has now all been removed prior to the plan to redecorate the chamber following the staining to the walls resulting from the previously blocked tower downpipe (now resolved).

We plan to redecorate the ringing chamber and the Brace Room, quotations are being obtained for both.

The report for the Quinquennial Inspection has not been received yet, the architect had suggested it would take some time to prepare everything. However, I did accompany the inspector on the 3 hour visit and whilst there are a number of things on the "to do" list, he told me there are no priority issues and I don't expect any surprises!

9. Churchyard Managers Report

David gave the following report on the Churchyard:

The excessive mole activity of the last few weeks has been dealt with and is now under control. The churchyard team are now having their winter break, but most is in good order and will remain so for the rest of the winter period. Basic tidying is always underway and remaining Christmas wreaths and tributes will be removed after Candlemas.

10. Monuments Sub-Committee Report

There was nothing to report on monuments.

11. Treasurer's report

Robin reported that the estimated income for 2024 is £62,832 and expenditure £67,250. The gap can more or less be explained by work on the Brace Room.

12. Deanery Synod

Has not met.

13. Safeguarding

Robin will give his attention to some updates from the Diocese upon his return from holiday. Quite a lot of the three year course renewals are coming up and Robin will inform those who need to complete these.

14. Any other business

14.1 Parish Magazine and Communications. Kath has been posting the magazine on Next Door and it has been receiving lots of hits.

14.2 Eco Church. Nothing to report.

14.3 Kath Oates was unanimously proposed as a PCC appointed governor to Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School.

15. Date & time of next meeting: 20th March 7.30pm

The meeting closed with a prayer.