**The United Benefice of St Mary’s Goudhurst with Christ Church, Kilndown**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary’s Church held on Sunday 25 April via Zoom**

**Meeting of the Parishioners**

Rev Rachel Robertson welcomed Parishioners and opened the meeting with prayer.

1. No apologies were received.
2. The meeting appointed Rev Rachel as chairperson for this meeting.
3. The meeting appointed Becky Addis as clerk for this meeting.
4. Election of Churchwardens

The current churchwardens, Ali Williams and Simon Taurins, have agreed to stand again and were unanimously re-elected. Rachel gave thanks for these two extraordinary Churchwardens and prayers of thanks were said. Simon alerted the meeting to the fact that this will be Ali and Simon’s last year as wardens, and we will need to start praying people into the roles as ideally there would be a period of transition and handover.

This meeting was then formally closed.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

The meeting opened with prayer.

1. **Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

1. **Minutes of the APCM held on 11 October 2020**

Barney Mayhew proposed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting, this was seconded by Sonja Drew. It was therefore accepted that these were a true record.

1. **Election of Parochial Church Councillors**

Rachel advised that Barney Mayhew would be standing again and his appointment was unanimously approved.

Rachel also advised that Caroline Davis had stepped down from the PCC and she thanked Caroline for her service. She also reminded the church that Caroline Turvey will shortly be leaving and so will no longer attend the PCC.

Rachel thanked the members of the PCC for their hard work, for the good mix that they provide, and she also encouraged others to continue discerning whether they might be interested in serving the church in this way in the future.

1. **To Appoint Independent Examiner**

John Tapper is the current Independent Examiner and David Lodge thanked him for his work. It was agreed unanimously to re-appoint him. David raised that given John's increased involvement with St Mary's it would be best practice to appoint a new independent examiner for future years.

1. **To receive reports**
2. Changes in the electoral roll since the last APCM

Becky reported that the current number of people on the Electoral Roll is 202, down from 203 in October 2020.

1. The life of the parish generally and the activities of the PCC

There were no questions on the Book of Reports for the period October 2020 to April 2021, which has been published on the church website. Rachel noted that not everything we are as church is written about in a Book of Reports but it is a good way of capturing something of the life of the church and she thanked all those who had contributed.

1. Financial statements of the PCC for the year ending 31 December 2020

David Lodge provided a summary of the current financial situation (see attachment to the minutes).

Sam Davis asked if the pots of money listed, e.g. Church Rooms, were exclusively for Church Rooms or could they be used for other purposes. David explained that some funds are restricted, e.g. Weald Family Hub, so cannot be touched for anything else, but it is permitted to use the Church Room fund for other purposes. This is very much a plan B though.

Donald Sargeant asked why the money raised in the collection when the Archbishop of Canterbury visited has not been sent to Christians Against Poverty yet. Ali Williams explained that the plan at the time was to look into the possibility of employing a local rural CAP advisor and that the discussions that had been started pre-covid had to be put on hold as CAP was overwhelmed with demand during the pandemic, but that now things were easing, the discussions with CAP are opening up again.

Catherine Lloyd asked about the reserves and whether it was a mandatory requirement to have a year’s worth of the parish share in reserves. David explained that it is not a requirement but is a prudent amount to have in reserve.

Rachel thanked David for his ongoing work and prayed specifically for our finances.

1. Fabric, goods and ornaments of the church

Ali Williams encouraged people to read the section on Property and Fabric in the Book of Reports and also Rachel’s letter of last week. She wanted to point out a couple of matters:

The Churchyard wall repairs. There have been meetings with various interested parties to gather opinion on the best way forward, specifically looking at a new design which was less likely to be hit by passing lorries. Detailed drawings are needed and no timeframe at the moment, but updates would be provided in the GK Church weekly news.

On the QI repairs. The Tower works have been completed and the scaffolding is now being put in on the north and south side of the church. We will continually be called to look after our building but this can sometimes be an expensive and protracted process when permissions are needed. Ali wished to thank the Friends of St. Mary’s for partnering with the church to complete the QI works – and she also thanked Jo Alsop for giving her services as Principal Designer free of charge. The hope is that these works will be completed in the summer and Ali encouraged people to look up at the work that has been done already on the Tower and whilst looking up, maybe get a sense of what God is saying whilst looking up.

Wendy Loy asked whether there is any chance of claiming insurance back from the lorries that hit the wall. Ali explained that she passes any information on to our insurers and it is for them to pursue the lorry companies.

Rachel thanked Ali for all the incredible work that she does on the property, on top of all the other work that she does in her role as Churchwarden.

1. Deanery Synod proceedings

Kat Ogden provided a brief summary of the work of the Weald Deanery. She said there was a good mix of churches, with some new clergy joining, and lay members. They were all very supportive of one another and they have seen those relationships growing whilst working on the deanery plan. Kat suggested that the deanery plan should be made more available for others.

Rachel thanked Kat and Sue, our representatives, for the work with the deanery and led us in prayer.

1. **Questions on the report or other matters, and discussion**

Rachel thanked the church family for each time we put God first in our lives. She recognised that last year had been challenging and commended the church for being faithful in continuing to worship our Almighty God, and being flexible about how to do so. She thanked Louise, Caroline, Becky, the Churchwardens, the PCC, the clergy team that are so much part of the life of the church at St. Mary’s and the lay worship team that meet on Monday. She said it was amazing to be part of such an awesome, vibrant church and she looked forward to going deeper in all sorts of ways as we invest in our people and church building.

Louise Ross asked whether there was any potential for two further breakout rooms in the church for our young people – could this be part of our potential vision. Rachel said that we may have reached the limit of how the building can be changed, though there may perhaps be potential for some more development in the church and she welcomed visionary ways of using our building.

Donald Sargeant asked why the PCC minutes were no longer on the church website. Barney Mayhew explained that the Church of England rules (the Church Representation Rules 2020) state that PCC minutes should be available for anyone on the church’s Electoral Roll to view. The minutes can be viewed by contacting the Church Office. The PCC is in the process of considering other options, for example placing the minutes in a file at the back of church.  The need is to balance maximum transparency to those on the electoral roll and entitled to see the minutes, with the wisdom that there may be in the rules given that the PCC may sometimes have to discuss sensitive topics.

Ali Williams thanked Rachel for all her work so far – Ali pointed out that Rachel arrived at a very challenging time and that Rachel has worked with such grace, skill, wisdom and love – and to be encouraged.

Simon closed in prayer.