



Draft minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in the Priory on Wednesday 24th April 2024 at 7.45pm

PRESENT: Revd Rod Corke (Vicar and Chairman), Alistair Sawers (Secretary) and 81 others, whose names are listed separately with these minutes. Apologies for absence had been received from 17 people, whose names have been recorded with these minutes.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 3rd May 2023 had been accepted by the PCC at its meeting on 20th May 2023, and had subsequently been on view in the church porch and available on the Priory website. Gill Munro proposed that these should now be adopted formally. Seconded by Glenda Pocock. All agreed.

2. PCC REPORTS

The booklet of reports to the Annual Meeting had been made available on the Priory website and hard copies had been distributed at the services on the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

It contained:

- The Electoral Roll Officer's report
- The PCC Secretary's report
- A statement on safeguarding
- Reports from PCC Committees and Groups
- A summary of the audited accounts for 2023
- The Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments
- A report on proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Rod invited any comments or questions relating to the reports.

- Dorothy Knights drew people's attention to the Churches Together in Malvern (CTM) report on page 25 of the booklet. She and Sarah Bevan have been the Priory's representatives on CTM but Sarah has now stood down. She made a plea for someone to replace her. Rod commented that the current Chairman of CTM is Geoff Richardson (formerly dean at Regent's

College) who he felt had a lot of good ideas for the future of CTM. He suggested that anyone who felt that they could serve in this capacity should make contact with Dorothy in the first instance.

- A question had been submitted in advance of the meeting concerning the amount of practical involvement we have with Malvern Parish Primary School.

Rod said that our involvement with the school was always welcomed. He takes an assembly once per month. About once per fortnight he takes an Open the Book session at lunchtime. When requested, the school benefits from lessons from Adam, our curate. The school holds its end of term services in the Priory and participates in Lifepath. Peter O'Neill is the PCC Foundation Governor at the school. Rod himself is not a governor. When he was Rural (now Area) Dean he was invited to be a governor at Dyson Perrins School and he had subsequently decided to continue there in that capacity rather than become a governor at the Parish School as well. He did however feel that we could be more involved with the school.

- Laurence Oldfield expressed disappointment that we were still not livestreaming services.

Neil commented that a lot of work had been done and we had drawn up guidelines to ensure that we could livestream services legally (complying with GDPR law). Many churches are ignoring the law in this respect. It had been decided that we would only do private livestreaming of services – i.e. access to the livestream would only be available to members of the congregation. Robin La Fontaine was dealing with a few technical issues to enable this to be implemented.

- Chris Little asked if other churches within the diocese were livestreaming services to the general public. Rod said that they were, but in many instances they were ignoring GDPR rules. He gave an example of where problems can arise in the case of estranged couples, where one of the couple has been shown on a publicly available livestreamed service and the other has then been able to track them down. A lot of livestreaming of services had been set up at the time of the Covid pandemic and had just been continued without due regard to the potential problems of not seeking individual consent to videoing.
- Rachel Huntley asked if it would be possible just to video those taking part in the running of the service e.g the service leader, the reader, the preacher, the choir etc and not show any of the congregation. Neil, said that because of the geography of the Priory building that would be difficult – e.g. filming the preacher and choir could inadvertently include those sitting in the chancel. *(Our guidelines for streaming of services includes some areas of the Priory which would be designated as 'safe areas' where those members of the congregation not willing to run the risk of being filmed could sit – Secy)*
- Gill Munro raised the fact that crematoria often streamed services nowadays. Rod agreed but said that access to these was only available to those to whom the required link had been sent.

- Charles Hines raised the issue of potential breach of copyright if we recorded music being played or sung in church. This issue had been addressed, and the necessary licences had been purchased.

3. VICAR'S PRESENTATION

Rod thought that this was probably the 30th APCM which he had chaired – and it would be his last.

He and Rita had spent tremendously happy years with us but he wanted to take the opportunity to look to the future of the Priory rather than reflecting on the past.

He prayed that those who were on the selection panel for his successor as vicar would look for someone who feels that God is calling them to come here.

Rita and he have been called into retirement. He related two incidents which had dispelled any doubts that they had had. One that triggered the search for a retirement property and the other when the estate agent dealing with the purchase of their new home in Uffculme had visited them specifically to welcome them into the Christian community in that area. This had felt like the alpha and omega of a strong calling to retire. He believed that God was calling a vicar to the Priory and asked us to pray for our church leaders and those involved in the appointment.

We shouldn't expect the new incumbent to be a saint! They won't be good at everything. We should look out for God's sense of humour – after all, he, with his deep flat tuneless voice had been put in legal charge of two of the finest parish church choirs in the country, at Taunton Minster and the Priory!

He reminded us to remember that God will want a minister who will encourage us and look forward to bringing God's Kingdom to Malvern. Sometimes it's right to be cautious, but we shouldn't let practices that have outlived their usefulness, or any negativity strangle the church's mission and the Holy Spirit's work.

He encouraged us not to let the pastoral work in the Priory fade. PALs, the Prayer Vine, Home Communion and phone calls to the sick are important parts of church life. He said how exceptional Rita had been in helping him with 'the cure of souls' and thanked her for all the support she had given him.

He commented that the Priory is often identified as being 'open evangelical'. We are open to all, regardless of their previous experience of Christianity, which is one of our strengths. Being evangelical means that we should preach the Gospel and share the good news. He prayed that the Priory would continue to strengthen and grow in the Lord.

Finally, he hoped that the Priory would always be a place where mistakes make us laugh rather than cry. We all fall short of perfection as human beings. He reminded us of the occasion many years ago when he usurped the bishop by sitting in the bishop's chair at a licensing service and leaving him standing. If he managed to recover from that, there was hope for us all!

In signing off he felt that the Priory's future was bright. It was a happy, Godly place. He left us with a challenge to ensure that the Priory Development Plan reached completion before he and Rita became too ancient and immobile to see it. The day that they could enter the building with the medieval glass fully conserved and new toilets and a kitchen in place would be one of the happiest of their lives!

He sat down to prolonged applause.

4. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS AND APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Thrishia John, our Treasurer, was unable to attend the meeting and had asked Derek Valentine, Chairman of the Finance Committee to speak to this item. The accounts for the calendar year 2023 had been agreed by the auditor, accepted by the PCC in April 2024 and were now received by the Annual Meeting. A summary of the accounts was in the booklet of reports. The full 42 page-long version was available on the website.

Derek began by explaining that the Charity Commission requires us to report our accounts using the Fund Accounting method, which can make them difficult to understand at times. He explained the different categories of Funds: General Unrestricted, Designated Unrestricted, Restricted, and Endowment.

- Total general income for 2023 was £341,691 (£355,938 in 2022). The reduction was largely due to a drop in facility fees and general donations
- Around two thirds of General Income came from Stewardship and resulting Gift Aid
- Total restricted income for 2023 was £217,179 (£174,641 in 2022). The increase was largely due to grants from The Friends for the Creation window and St Anne's Chapel roof
- The Friends of Malvern Priory has given over £160,000 in grants over the last 2 years

Robin La Fontaine, Planned Giving Coordinator, thanked the 160 members of the congregation who give regularly in this way, and those who had recently increased their giving.

- Total General Expenditure in 2023 was £337,276 (£337,564 in 2022)
- We continue to give 10% of Stewardship Income (c £18k) to support external mission partners and societies
- Principal (Restricted) project spending in 2023 was £209,000 –
 - Creation Window £119k
 - St Anne's Chapel Roof £59k
 - Floor Project £13k
 - Priory Development Plan £18k

The values of the various Funds were as follows on 31st December 2023:

- ❖ General Unrestricted £142,873 (£101,143 in 2022). Improvement largely due to increased value of investments.
- ❖ Designated Unrestricted £290,250. Principally in Legacy fund. PCC has agreed to designate £100k of this for the Floor Project, and £100k for PDP preparatory work
- ❖ Restricted £194,417. Includes Floor Project and residual spend on other projects (AV system, St Anne's roof, Creation window plus Fabric Fund and Choir Scholarships)
- ❖ Endowment £76,148

Funds are invested in a mixture of long term CofE CCLA managed investments and shorter term deposit funds.

Derek went on to elaborate specifically on the finances of the Floor Project. This has been spread over 3 years and it is difficult to give final figures as some invoices and donations have yet to be received, but the best 'guesstimate' at present is that the cost will be around £326.5k with a project income (donations, fundraising, Gift Aid, grants and VAT refunds) of just over £200k. We have received a total of £26k in grants from 5 Trusts. Just over £130k from PCC reserves (largely legacies) had been allocated to the project, but at present the final project deficit is some £6.5k less than anticipated and we should therefore hopefully be able to return that saving to the legacy fund.

Thrishia was thanked for all her work as Treasurer.

Rod invited questions on the finances.

- Chris Little asked for clarification of where the stewardship income appeared in the accounts in the Reports booklet. Derek said that it was included in 'Voluntary Income'
- A question was raised concerning assets in our Funds which were invested. Derek confirmed that the value of our assets held by the Fund Managers (CCLA) at the end of the year was £513,534. We were free to change Fund Managers if we wished.
- Another questioner enquired if we could expect our heating bill to fall now that we had installed underfloor heating in the nave. Robin La Fontaine said that we were hoping that would be the case. The aim is to install an Air Source Heat Pump for the heating, which will reduce our carbon footprint and hopefully also the costs, but the problem is the volatility of gas and electricity prices.
- Anne Eglinton felt that visitors attending church services were often uncertain how to contribute to the collection and requested that we consider reverting to our former practice of passing round collection plates. Alistair would raise the matter with the Management Team.
- A comment was made that difficulty had been experienced in trying to make a donation online using the website. Robin expressed surprise. There is a

'Donate here' button under the 'Support the Priory' tab on the website which enables you to set up regular giving or make a one-off donation. He also mentioned that the introduction of card readers in the church had been very successful.

Derek explained that we had to appoint auditors of our accounts for this current calendar year. He proposed that we re-appoint Kendall Wadley as auditors of our accounts for 2024. Seconded by Robin La Fontaine. All agreed.

5. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Elections to the PCC

Alistair said that seven nominations for election to the PCC had been received. There were normally five vacancies to be filled, each with a 3 year term of office, but this year we also had four vacancies for members with a 1 year term of office. The nominees were Rachel Aldis, Chris Boulton, Rebecca McLaverty-Head, Ann Oldfield, Ros Ponting, Helen Wall and Howard Wells.

Since there were fewer nominees than the number of vacancies available, Rod proposed that, unless there was any objection, they should be elected to serve on the PCC. Seconded by Nick Jackson. All agreed.

Alistair said that he had discussed the allocation of the vacancies with the nominees in the event that they were elected and that Rachel, Rebecca, Ann and Helen would serve for 3 years and Chris, Ros and Howard would serve for 1 year. Our rules are that an ordinary PCC member cannot serve for longer than 3 years and can only stand for re-election 12 months after standing down. Those who have been appointed for 1 year on this occasion would be eligible to stand for re-election to the PCC for another two years at next year's APCM.

Notification of Service Wardens

Mary Campbell, Anthea Horne, Glenda Pocock, Jeremy Tudge and Helen Wall have been chosen again by the Churchwardens to act as Service Wardens for this year. On behalf of the Churchwardens, Neil thanked them for all their work. They were warmly applauded.

Notification of Sidespeople

David Guy listed the names of 20 people (appended to these minutes) which will be submitted to the PCC for approval. Only one sidesperson attends 8am Sunday Services (along with a Service Warden) but we could do with more sidespeople for the 10.30am and 6.30pm Sunday services and he encouraged people to volunteer. He expressed his appreciation for all the work that the sidespeople team did. He drew attention to the fact that we now have a member of the Junior Choir acting as

a sidesperson at Altogether Worship services and asked everyone to encourage her. All concerned were roundly applauded by those present.

6. PROCEDURE FOR FILLING THE VACANCY

Neil talked us through the sequence of events necessary for the appointment of a new incumbent. The procedure is a little easier since Rod is retiring rather than moving to another charge.

- A Preliminary Vacancy Meeting has already been held (on 18th April), attended by members of the PCC, the archdeacon (the bishop's representative) and the area dean
- We will now be developing the Parish Profile, with the aim of having a PCC-approved draft for sending to the archdeacon for comment on 17th July, the day after Rod officially retires.
The style of the document will be more contemporary than previously, following that of our website. We will use the previous 2017 Parish Profile as a starting point, seek input from across the church community and will develop the Person Specification (i.e. what we are seeking in a new incumbent)
- When Rod retires, the bishop will issue an official Notice of Vacancy and once the archdeacon and area dean have approved the Parish Profile an advert is drafted and a date is set for the Final Vacancy Meeting, chaired by the area dean, at which the PCC gives final approval to the Profile and appoints two PCC representatives for the selection process
- The vacancy is advertised in the church press. We would hope to be in a position to do so by early Autumn
- Applicants are shortlisted and interviewed by a panel comprising the archdeacon, area dean, deanery lay chair (or representative) and the two PCC representatives
- If there is a suitable candidate, an appointment is made, subject to the usual checks

Rachel Huntley asked how the input from the congregation would be obtained. Neil said that this was still to be discussed at present.

7. LIVING CHURCH: A PRIORY YEAR IN PICTURES

Philippa Lowe delivered an entertaining slide presentation documenting the life of the Priory from Easter 2023 until Easter 2024. More than 200 slides were shown. At the end there was prolonged applause from all and Rod expressed our gratitude to Philippa for her photographic activities throughout the year and the work involved in preparing the presentation.

Rod took the opportunity to show the new nave altar cloth, executed by Bill Butler, which would be reserved for use at the 8am BCP Communion Services. He expressed his appreciation of Bill's expertise and there was a round of applause.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nave altar cloth

Sarah Guy asked for an explanation of the symbol on the new cloth. Rod said that it was a medieval image, copied from one of the Priory's tiles, depicting a pelican plucking its breast to make it bleed in order to feed its chicks in the nest beneath it, representing Christ's self-sacrifice for his people.

9. VOTE OF THANKS

Nick Jackson delivered a vote of thanks to the clergy. He had delivered the vote of thanks to Rod at his first Priory APCM and now sadly he was delivering it at his last. He thanked him for his ministry. He had brought to us thought, vision and leadership, preaching and prayer, social concern, care for those who are ill and the bereaved, and had made a special place for our children. He and Rita had formed strong relationships with existing church members, new people coming into our community and visitors. We wished to thank him for all that he is and for all that God has given to him and to Rita. He also thanked our curate Adam, our retired clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers and those training for ordination and Lay Ministry for their leadership of our worship, and expressed gratitude for the support they received from their husbands, wives and families.

Nick's comments were supported by prolonged applause from all.

10. CLOSING REMARKS AND PRAYER

Rod thanked everyone for their contributions to the evening's proceedings and led us in prayer.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

.....
Chair

.....
Date