



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS,
RECTORY LANE, STEVENAGE



In the United Benefice of St Nicholas with Graveley
Meeting of the Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 14th May 2023 at 11.00 am

1. Opening Prayers

2. Meeting of the Parishioners

(All those whose names are on the Electoral Roll and all those who reside in the Parish, whether on the Electoral Roll or not, are eligible to vote in this election)

2.1 Election of Churchwardens

2.2 Election of Deputy Wardens

3. Annual Parochial Church Meeting

3.1 Apologies for Absence

3.2 Minutes of the 2022 APCM

3.3 Matters Arising

3.4 Electoral Roll Officer's Report

3.5 Elections: (only those on the Electoral Roll are entitled to vote)

- ❖ Electoral Roll Officer
- ❖ Deanery Synod Representatives
- ❖ Parochial Church Council Members
- ❖ Independent Examiner

3.6 Reports:

- ❖ Fabric Report, Terrier and Inventory Report, and the Church Log Book
- ❖ Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts
- ❖ Deanery Synod Report
- ❖ Safeguarding Report
- ❖ CTiS
- ❖ Mission Giving
- ❖ S Club
- ❖ Churchwardens' Report

3.7 Any Other Business and Questions

4. Closing Prayers



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS,
RECTORY LANE, STEVENAGE



In the United Benefice of St Nicholas with Graveley

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 24th April 2022 at 11.00 am

1. **Opening Prayers** – Mike Wilton opened the meetings with prayer as Revd Dave Brown was unable to attend as he was ill with Covid-19.

2. **Meeting of the Parishioners**

2.1 Mike proposed that Anthony Taylor stand in for Dave as Chair of the meetings – all agreed. Anthony opened the meeting by thanking the Churchwardens for their dedication over the past year.

Election of Churchwardens –

There were two nominations for Churchwarden: Karen Walker, nominated by Evelyn Wilton and seconded by Jayne Hale, and Mike Wilton, nominated by Alison Hare and seconded by Anthony Taylor. All agreed, and Anthony declared that Mike and Karen be duly elected as Churchwardens.

3. **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

3.1 Apologies for Absence – Cathy Bibby, Martin and Sue Bailey, Paul and Jacqui Drakes, Peter Gordon, John and Elaine Forster, Amanda Steele, Jane Luff, Christine Chambers, Irina Teoh, Robin Bailey, Margaret Cooper, Kate Casey. There were 27 members present.

3.2 Minutes of the 2021 APCM - The minutes of the last APCM on 18th April 2021 had been circulated before the meeting and were agreed as a true and correct record. Anthony declared them accepted and signed the file copy.

3.3 Matters Arising - there were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3.4 Electoral Roll Officer's Report – Karen Walker read Elaine Forster's report in her absence. The Electoral Roll now contains 84 names in total, (41 being residents in the parish, and 43 non-residents.) Anthony thanked Elaine for her work on the Electoral Roll this year.

3.5 Elections:

Electoral Roll Officer – Mike Wilton proposed, seconded by Sandy Taylor, and all agreed that Elaine Forster be re-elected as the Electoral Roll Officer for the next year.

Parochial Church Council Members – There were three nominations for three vacancies:

Chris Taplin, proposed by Amanda Steele, seconded by Bernie Matthews;

Kate Casey, proposed by Steve Bamford, seconded by Judy Brown:

Edward Kaahwa, proposed by Martin Bailey, seconded by Mark Parker;

for election to the PCC for three years 2022 – 2025. All agreed. Further members may be co-opted to the PCC if required.

Independent Examiner – The PCC has elected to subject the financial statements to independent examination and it proposed to renew the appointment of Barker Wilkinson as independent examiner until the next APCM. Sandy Taylor proposed, seconded by Jason Cox, and all agreed.

3.6 Reports:

Churchwardens Report – Mike gave his Fabric Report to the meeting. The Terrier and Inventory, and the Church Log Book have been updated and signed off by the Rector, and Churchwardens. They were available for inspection in the vestry after the meeting.

There is an outstanding faculty to renew the path through the churchyard, which is to be completed by Stevenage Borough Council in the next few months.

Mike thanked Steve Bamford for his continued support and back-up; Paul Drakes, Bernie Matthews and the maintenance team for their continuing work maintaining the church, and the cleaning team and all who help keep the church building running smoothly. Karen thanked the welcomers, readers and prayers, and church-sitters, flower arrangers, sound and audio team for all they do to help keep services running. Mike especially thanked Dave for all he has done over the last 11 years, highlighting especially Dave's faithfulness to the Gospel. He thanked both Dave and Judy for their ready willingness to share in their gifts and talents. Mike and Karen prayed for Dave and Judy as they prepare to leave the Benefice to take up a new position in Newton Abbot.

Anthony thanked Mike and Karen for their work.

Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts – Jason Cox gave a PowerPoint presentation of the financial situation covering the last financial year and position to date in 2022. Jason noted the bills for the building work have been paid in full.

Jason thanked all those who are committed to regular giving at St Nicholas and also thanked those who help with the background tasks involved with the finance of the church. Anthony thanked Jason for his work on the accounts over the year.

Qu. Was the drop in planned giving during 2021 due to the building work? No, the building work was accounted for separately, so the drop was purely down to less planned giving.

Qu. Will the Parish Share be lowered during the Interegnum? – yes, it will be reduced.

Qu. Does the planned expenditure graph take into account the rise in the cost of living for expenses to the church and to those giving to the church? There will be added income from donations from several concert bookings planned for 2022 which should offset some of the increases.

Deanery Synod Report – this had been circulated with the Reports Pack prior to the meeting.

Safeguarding Report - this had been circulated with the Reports Pack prior to the meeting. John Knight, who is responsible for Safeguarding Training, noted that if people are requested to complete training for their role in the church, please can they do so swiftly.

Churches Together in Stevenage Report - this had been circulated with the Reports Pack prior to the meeting.

Mission Giving Report - this had been circulated with the Reports Pack prior to the meeting.

Rector's Report – Mike read Dave's report in his absence. Anthony thanked Dave for his leadership over the last 11 years, especially over the last few particularly challenging ones. He also thanked Judy for her leadership of the music and for supporting Dave throughout their time here. Mike thanked Evelyn and Philip for their support of the Churchwardens over the past year.

3.7 Any Other Business and Questions – none

4. **Closing Prayers** – Anthony closed the meeting at 11.50 am with the Grace.

The APCM Reports Pack 2022, Rector's Report 2022 and the Trustees' Annual Return for 2021 can be found on the website at:

<https://saintnicholaschurch.org.uk/pcc/>

St Nicholas PCC: Charity Registration Number – 1161229



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS, RECTORY LANE, STEVENAGE



Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Elections Sunday 14th May 2023 at 11.00 am

Electoral Roll Officer: Elaine Forster has served in this capacity for 2022 – 2023.

Deanery Synod: In Sept 2020, 2 lay representatives to Deanery Synod were elected to serve a term of 3 years, 2020 to 2023. Therefore, this year 2 candidates need to be elected for the new term of 2023 to 2026. Deanery Synod representatives appointed from 2020 onwards can only serve for two successive 3-year terms unless the APCM passes a resolution dis-applying this limit.

PCC members: Members are elected for a term of 3 years and may serve for 2 consecutive terms. People may be re-elected after taking a year-off.

For the last year (since Sept 2022) our elected representatives have been:

Christine Chambers	2020 – 2023	(2 nd term)
Martin Bailey	2020 – 2023	(2 nd term)
Edward Kaahwa	2022 – 2025	(2 nd term)
Chris Taplin	2022 – 2025	(2 nd term)
Jason Cox	2020 – 2023	(1 st term)
Mark Parker	2020 – 2023	(1 st term)
Irina Teoh	2021 – 2024	(1 st term)
Matthew Isaac	2021 – 2024	(1 st term)
Kate Casey	2022 – 2025	(1 st term)
Alison Hare	(co-opted)	

Deanery Reps:

Cathy Bibby	2020 – 2023	(1 st term)
Stuart Marshall	2020 – 2023	(1 st term)

In accordance with the policy approved at the 2017 APCM, the PCC may include up to 9 elected representatives of the laity. Chris Chambers and Martin Bailey are both due to finish their 2nd terms, so will not be standing for re-election. However, the new PCC could co-opt them at their first meeting after the APCM (if they wish to remain on the PCC) to allow for continuity during the interregnum. Martin will be handing over the role of Safeguarding Lead to Christine Chambers.

Alison Hare will be standing down as PCC Secretary.

The PCC hope to elect 2 new candidates, and Mark Parker and Jason Cox will be standing for re-election, along with the 2 Churchwardens, and 2 Deputy Wardens.

Independent Examiner: Barker Wilkinson have served again as the independent examiner for the 2022 accounts. The PCC has elected to subject the financial statements to independent examination and, therefore, having made appropriate enquiries, propose to renew the appointment of Barker Wilkinson as independent examiner until the next APCM.

Welcome Team: Sidespeople may now be elected by the PCC rather than the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2020.

The welcome team does not need to be re-elected. The following people have served on the welcome team for part or all of the last year:

Sidespeople: Cathy Bibby, Steve Bamford, Karen Walker, Amanda Steele, Alison Hare, Philip Walker, Chris Taplin, Doreen Johnson, Bernie Matthews and Jayne Hale.

Lead Welcomer / Duty Wardens: Steve Bamford, Karen Walker, Jane Luff and Amanda Steele.

Safeguarding Officer: The safeguarding appointments are made by the PCC. We have a safeguarding team at St Nicholas helping us to comply with all legislation and, most importantly, to ensure we are doing all we can to keep our children and any vulnerable people amongst us safe. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Whilst the Rector has the overall responsibility:

- **Martin Bailey** is currently our safeguarding lead. With the PCC he sets our policies and makes sure we keep to what we say we will do. He also makes sure the PCC gets regular reports. He will be handing over this responsibility to Christine Chambers from May 2023.
- **John Knight** is currently safeguarding deputy and in charge of training.
- **Jacky Swanson** is currently in charge of DBS checks and recruitment.



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS,
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May 2023

ANNUAL FABRIC REPORT

This report covers the period April 2022 to March 2023.

General maintenance

During the year the PCC formed a Building group, to assist in the maintenance and planning the works to the fabric of the Church, the group is led by Anthony Taylor with the members being Paul Drakes, Bernie Mathews, Chris Taplin and Mike Wilton

The PCC via the Churchwardens and the building group maintains a schedule for the upkeep of the church, with regular inspections of critical items such as the lightning conductor, electrics, cess pit, boiler, safety, fire equipment, CCTV, security lights, alarms etc. The schedule is detailed on the church calendar which can be found on the website and is monitored and implemented by the maintenance team, and the results of the service and scheduling of work is managed electronically.

Since the refurbishment contract have we have a more complicated building to manage. Therefore we are using specialist contractors where necessary to maintain and comply with legislation and our insurer's requirement on such items as the fire equipment and the heating system. The maintenance team meet on a Thursday morning to undertake the scheduled activities, including fire alarm testing, light bulb replacement, rubbish clearing, security checks and safety checks, ground level drain checks, and general inspection and carry out minor repairs

Another essential contribution in maintaining the building is made by the cleaning team, who clean the church on a weekly basis.

Our portable appliance testing has been carried out by Stuart Marshall to whom we give our thanks, and any equipment used in the Church should be tested before it is used.

Churchyard maintenance is the responsibility of the Stevenage Borough Council. They undertook the refurbishment of the path from the lychgate to Weston Road cemetery, we obtained a faculty for the works, but the full cost was met by SBC.

Notwithstanding works by SBC, the maintenance team also contribute some churchyard activities, i.e., rose pruning, light path maintenance, drain clearing, tidying up, etc. as required.

The PCC and the wardens thank all those who contribute to the regular upkeep of the church, in particular the cleaning and the maintenance teams.

Fabric

Every 5 years a full inspection (Quinquennial Report) of the building is carried out by a nominated architect which identifies areas of the church structure that need works carried out or regular inspection. Our current church architect is Mark Eddison who was the architect for the revitalisation project, the inspection took place in November 2020. The report identifies the works to the fabric which are likely to be needed over the next 5 years plus some specialised inspections, which are a report on the bell frame and a general timber report.

Additional to the fabric report there was also a Crime Prevention Report carried out in December 2020, the recommendations from both these reports are being used to construct a 5 year plan for the PCC to agree. There are no significantly urgent items in either report which would lead to damage or loss to the building.

Roof & Spire

The roof was inspected as part of the Quinquennial and there were no significant works required. However, it did suggest that a closer inspection of the spire be carried out using a drone.

Lightning conductor

This period the lightning conductor met requirements, there is a missing clip that needs to be replaced later in the year when the weather improves, it does not require immediate replacement.

Walls, Tower and floor.

The quinquennial report listed a number of areas on the external walls which need monitoring and repair. These issues will be addressed in the 5 year maintenance plan.

There has been a problematic issue of water ingress in the south aisle which has been occurring over many years, depending on the amount of rain and wind direction. It is hoped to look at possible work to eradicate the ingress later in the year.

Heating

The boiler was not replaced as part of the revitalisation project. The main area of the church now has underfloor heating, with the parish rooms, vestry and tower being a conventional radiator type of system.

We had an issue with the underfloor section of the heating, which has required the system to be power flushed to remove the sludge in the system that was preventing the water flow, we also took the opportunity to fit a safety valve in the boiler room

It is anticipated to look at the heating controls in the summer to enhance their effectiveness.

The boiler is serviced regularly and a gas safety certificate is maintained for the boiler.

Live Streaming CCTV and Roof Alarm

We continue to live stream our services and some funerals and weddings, and the PCC are currently undertaking a review of CCTV installation, and will revise the Policy and Procedures for both. Our insurers required us to install a roof alarm, which needed to be installed by a certified installer and the system to be monitored 24/7. This work has been carried out and all roof areas are covered by motion sensing cameras, so that in the event of an intruder on the roof the monitoring station are able to identify the presence of an intruder and call the police and members of the maintenance team. The lead to the roof was also marked with 'Smart Water'

This work has enabled the Church to be full insured against any metal theft and damage caused.

Fire Equipment

The fire alarms are serviced twice a year by Efire to maintain compliance, however the building group carry out a test to the fire alarms and a flick test to the emergency lighting each week and record the results.

We had two false alarms during the year both to the smoke detector in the bell tower, we have now replaced the smoke detector in the bell tower.

Additionally, we have fitted an auto dialler to the fire alarm, so that in the event of an activation of the fire alarm, the auto dialler will phone a member of the building group to advise activation, it does not contact the fire brigade.

Cess tank

The Church is not on the main drainage system and is served by a cess pit which requires emptying on a regular basis, and is being regularly inspected during Thursday morning maintenance.

Graves & memorials

Every year a number of queries are received from interested parties regarding grave locations and history etc. In response to this it is proposed to further organise the records of the memorials and graves, to map numbers and names to graves, many thanks to Bernie Mathews who normally manages the queries.

Property Register and Log Book

The property register and log book are kept in the vestry and were presented for inspection to the PCC meeting prior to the APCM, both documents are available for inspection, and the wardens will be happy to facilitate the inspection. An electronic copy of the property register along with supporting descriptions is also stored electronically.

Should there be any queries with regard to this report please do not hesitate to contact either of the churchwardens.

Mike Wilton & Karen Walker
Churchwardens
April 2023



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Stevenage Deanery Synod Report APCM May 2023

The Deanery Synod met three times during the year:

16th June 2022 at St Hugh & St John's Church

20th October 2022 at Holy Trinity Church

16th February 2023 at Christ the King Church

The subject for the meetings were:

16th June – we enjoyed food and wine together.

20th October – we had a talk from Gary Bentley, Chair of the Hertfordshire Christian Police Association. Gary talked about his own Christian journey and how his faith had helped him deal with issues within his personal life, but also with the stresses and strains of being in the police force. He also spoke about his ministry to his colleagues in the force, those of faith and those of none.

16th February – a talk was given by Theresa Britt from The Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust. Theresa spoke about the Trust and how it exists to make grants available to public churches to maintain the fabric.

At each church an introduction is given, and members take part in the type of worship in that congregation.

Reports are given from General Synod, Diocesan Synod, Rural Dean's notices, Treasurer's Report, Mission and Pastoral Committee and CTIS.

If you would like to read any minutes from the meetings above, please contact Stuart Marshall or myself.

Cathy Bibby

Deanery Synod Representative

April 2023



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS, RECTORY LANE, STEVENAGE



Safeguarding Report APCM May 2023

The safeguarding team is made up of:

- PCC Lead: Martin Bailey (to be handed over to Christine Chambers)
- Training: John Knight
- DBS and recruitment: Jacky Swanson

Diocese: The Diocese continues to improve the portal (Dashboard) which helps us to meet all our requirements and report to PCC regularly. The Diocese are now offering monthly zoom support sessions for PSO (Leads) and a new mentoring programme will start soon. The Diocese has also updated its website and added a Safeguarding hub to help too.

Management: PCC meetings have regular reports and updates about our safeguarding responsibilities and practice and re-approve aspects of our policy regularly.

Policy: We have regularly reviewed and updated our safeguarding policy- which is on our website and can be accessed by clicking here <https://saintnicholaschurch.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Training and DBS: First and foremost, thank you to everyone who has undertaken training and DBS applications this year. Our records show we are up to date on all aspects. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and helps keep everyone safer.

Changes in the team and leader.

- Martin has now completed his 6 years on the PCC and as PSO (Safeguarding Lead). Christine Chambers has kindly agreed to take on this role and we are thankful to God and to Christine for this.
- Sarah Metcalf handed on the role of DBS lead to Jacky Swanson and we thank both for all their hard work and time on this.
- We are also thankful to John Knight for his ongoing help, time and hard work in ensuring we are all trained to the required levels.
- Karen Walker remains as our Church Warden with special interest in Safeguarding because of the overlaps with Pastoral work.

Martin Bailey
May 2023



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Churches Together in Stevenage Report for APCM May 2023

This year I have been forwarding the CTiS Monthly Newsletter to Alison for distribution to the church members by email.

Apart from organising the Walk of Witness last Easter and the online Advent Calendar and the Carol Singing at the Forum in December the CTiS has been a source of communicating what other churches in Stevenage have been doing to help and support people in their local communities. This year, the CTiS again organised the Walk of Witness in the town for Good Friday and once information is available hope to get involved with the Stevenage Day.

Stuart Marshall,
CTiS Representative

April 2023



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS,
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Report of Mission Giving Committee APCM May 2023

It was agreed at the end of 2019 to review our mission organisations currently supported by St Nicholas Church. We reduced the number of partner organisations to four allowing us to focus more closely on them.

From 1st January 2020 our mission partners have been:

CMS – with our mission link Katia Rocks in Florianopolis, Brazil. We receive regular link letters with their news which are sent out via email to the congregation.

The Barnabas Fund – the main ministry of Barnabas Fund is to send financial support to projects which help Christians where they suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution as a consequence of their faith. The projects aim to strengthen Christian individuals, churches and their communities by providing material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Bridge Builders – our local partner working with primary schools to give opportunities for children to explore the Christian faith and class visits to local churches for themed events such as The Easter Journey and the Christmas Journey.

Crosslinks – with a particular link to Rachael Muluuta working in Kampala, Uganda. Rachel supports churches across Uganda by providing bible teaching, training and discipleship for women, children, youth and their leaders.

CMS, The Barnabas Fund and Crosslinks each receive 20% of our giving and Bridge Builders receive 40%.

The support for these mission organisations will be reviewed in 2024.

Cathy Bibby
Mission Giving Group



The PARISH CHURCH of ST NICHOLAS,
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S-Club Report for APCM May 2023

Since September 2022, the running of S-Club has been somewhat challenging.

Pre-COVID, at the Leys School, we were able to run three groups:

- Minis – Children in Year 1 and below
- Bell Tower (BT) – Children in Year 2 to Year 5 (NB: The group was named to reflect the area in the church where the group met)
- Max – Children in Year 6 and above

Post-COVID, back at St Nicholas, we were able to run the three groups:

- Minis in the Parish Room
- BT in the new room above the Parish Room
- Max in the Bell Tower

For much of the time, the Max group had only one leader and the children would join the BT group when that leader was not present or remained within the service. In addition, since returning to St Nicholas, the Max group children would join the BT group:

- To study the same material if there was only one member of the Max group present
- To do the Max group study but participate with BT group games in order to reduce the onus on helpers, as there would be two leaders present.

Unfortunately, since September 2022 we have been reduced to only two leaders – myself and Mark Parker. This has resulted in being able to run only one combined group, covering a large age range with a few occasions when there was no S-Club session:

- No S-Club leader available due to other commitments
- Available S-Club leader taking a break in order to gain spiritual refreshment from the day's service – an approach adopted from November 2022.

The planning for S-Club sessions attempts to maximise the number of sessions that are run, noting that, historically, sessions are not run on Easter Sunday or Christmas Day.

Looking forward, Mark Parker has decided to take a break from S-Club from the end of July. The future of the S-Club activities will be a key subject to address with the new Rector.

The studies have continued to be based on the Mustard Seeds material from TNT Ministries, for which St Nicholas pays an annual subscription. The specific material used is aimed at the 3 – 11 age range and provides scope to adapt the study to the age of the children present. The leader selects the craft activity and study sheet for the session, printing what is considered to be an appropriate number of copies. As yet, we have always had sufficient copies, noting that the number of children has varied between zero (requiring the teaching programme to slip by one week) and nine children with a potential age range from 3 to 12 years old.

I would like to thank all those that have acted as leaders over the last year, particularly Mark Parker. We are very grateful for the support of our wonderful group of helpers. Jeannette Parker is noted specifically for standing in as leader when husband Mark had other commitments and for being Mark's helper for a number of sessions.

Also, I would like to thank parents / guardians for trusting us with the Christian growth of the children.

John Knight
S-Club Leader

May 2023