

Anna Benefice

St Mary's, Abbotts Ann, St Peter's, Goodworth Clatford and
All Saints', Upper Clatford

**Minutes of the Abbotts Ann Annual Meeting of Parishioners
and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Wednesday 28th October
at 7.30 pm via Zoom**

Present:

Revd Katrina Dykes (chairwoman)	Mr Chris Burson	Mr Graham Platford
Mr Brian Asbee	Mrs Sylvia Burson	Mrs Alex Pugh
Mrs Vivien Asbee	Mrs Jenny Gorski (Treasurer)	Mr Michael Pugh
Ms Kate Bennett	Mrs Rosemary ????	Mr Tim Tayler
Mrs Jane Benson	Mrs Elizabeth Howard	Mrs Di Wilson
Mr John Benson	Mr Gordon Howard	Mrs Judith Gammon (secretary)
Mr Julian Benson	Revd Nicky Judd	

Apologies:

Mrs Jo Brookes	Revd Peter Eastwood	Mrs Pat Greenway
Mrs Sally Dashwood	Mr David Greenway	

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
Item 1: Welcome and Prayers
The Revd K Dykes opened the meeting by reminding those present that this was the delayed APM from Spring 2020. She included a reading from Jude v24.
Item 2: Apologies
These were noted.
Item 3: Agree the minutes of the previous meeting (on 11 March 2019)
A proposal by Mrs Wilson that the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners (Enclosure 1) be accepted as a true record of the meeting was seconded by Mr Platford and carried unanimously.
Item 4: Elect Churchwardens
Kate Bennett and Graham Platford were nominated as Churchwardens and elected by a unanimous vote. The Chair thanked them for standing.
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
Item 1: Agree the minutes of the previous meeting (on 11 March 2019)

Mrs Wilson proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting (Enclosure 1) be accepted as correct. This was seconded by Mrs Asbee and carried unanimously.

Item 2: Elect two members to the Deanery Synod

The Chair explained that there were two vacancies, which had previously been filled by Mrs Di Wilson and Sally Dashwood. Di Wilson had agreed to stand again and was elected unanimously. Sally Dashwood had decided not to stand again and the Chair thanked her and commented on how grateful and appreciative we were for her service. There being no other nominations, this means that there is a vacancy on the Deanery Synod, but the Chair commented that the benefice was well represented by ministry team members as well and the vacancy would remain available for anyone who wished to take on this important work.

Item 3: Elect two members of the Laity to the Parochial Church Council

There were two nominations, Kate Bennett and Judith Gammon. Kate Bennett had already filled one vacancy with her appointment as Churchwarden. Judith Gammon was duly elected to the second vacancy.

Item 4: Appoint the Independent Examiner to the Council

Mrs Gorski confirmed that Mr Mike Taylor, who had undertaken this role for a number of years, was standing down. John Jarvis, a member of St Peter's, was already carrying out their Independent Examiner role and had agreed to act as Independent Examiner for St Mary's as well. Mr Platford proposed his appointment, and Mrs Wilson seconded it. All were in favour.

Item 5: Consider the Parochial Church Council's Annual Report

The Chair introduced the report, which the PCC had adopted on 17 Sep 20. She thanked Tim Talyer for his work, which had made it a very easy and enjoyable to read document and invited comments. John Benson asked about the design for the replacement fencing outside the Church. Graham Platford explained that replacing the current fencing with identical wrought iron fencing was not possible. The problem was that wrought iron was difficult to get, very expensive and vulnerable to the elements. As the Parish Council was liable for the cost, this was not a viable option and decision had been made to continue the 'estate fencing' that bounds the burial ground. The meeting also voted on the Annual Trustees Report as a true record of the activities of the Parish. This was proposed by John Benson, seconded by Chris Burson and carried unanimously.

Item 6: Consider a report on the Electoral Roll

The Chair thanked Mrs Howard for her work on the Electoral Roll and invited her to comment on the report. Mrs Howard explained that there were 69 names on the new report - 59 residents and 10 non-residents.

Item 7: Consider the financial statement of the PCC for the year ending 31 Dec 2018

The Chair thanked Mrs Gorski for her work as Treasurer and commented that the financial statement, was very clear and easy to follow. Mrs Gorski explained that finances for the Parish had not been easy last year and were even less easy this year. She was asked by Mr Pugh for a view on how the Parish was coping financially this year. Mrs Gorski highlighted that an appeal had gone out to church members asking for an increase in giving. This had achieved some response and that, to date, we were 'holding our own'. The deficit in the

Common Mission Fund had been reduced to about £3,000 by going into reserves. There has also been less expense on the Benefice account this year in comparison with last year. We are paying the Diocese more this year than last year, but not as much as they would like. The PCC adopted the statement on 17 Sep 20. Adoption of the statement by the APCM was proposed by Kate Bennett, seconded by Gordon Howard and carried unanimously.

Item 8: Receive a report on the funds and property of the Council and the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church

Asked by John Benson, Mr Platford gave more detail about the current status of the projects to replace the Church fencing and the path, commenting that there had been some delay. Co-operation with the new Parish Council was good. The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard and paying for the work and had asked the PCC/Fabric Committee to get the necessary permissions for the work. These faculties had been achieved through the diocese Consistory court. However, a change in law in 2015 means that work on the churchyard and paths now falls outside permitted development and needs planning permission. This has been achieved for the fence and work was just about to start to gain permission for the path. Mr Platford was grateful for the expertise and work that, in particular, Mr Ray Lucas from the Parish Council had given to the project. The new path will be very similar to the existing one, but a full metre width, a tarmac surface with metal edging and with bridging over the bigger roots. Mr Tayler added to the report by commenting on how grateful he was for those that contribute to other activities in the Church, especially Mrs Burson and those who arrange flowers for services, Mrs Howell and the 'Holy Dusters' and those that make refreshments after services. The Chair echoed this, thanking 'so many who contribute to the life of the Church unseen.'

Item 9: Consider a report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Revd Peter Eastwood has contributed a report on the activities of the Synod to the Annual Report. The Chair commented that many activities had, sadly, been shelved or put on hold as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Item 10: Consider other matters of parochial or general church interest

The chair began her report by looking back, using photographs depicting the large range of activities that had taken place across the Benefice in 2019. She reflected that this seemed 'a world away' in the current circumstances and that whilst some things in the Mission Area Plan created in 2019 had 'stormed ahead', others had faltered. She likened the situation to the experience of the disciples in the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4 vv 35-41) – a situation out of our immediate control – but not abandoned by Christ. The experiences of the disciples may have been frightening at the time, but perhaps they looked back with pleasure and affection as everything made sense in the end and that may be the same for us. She commented that some things had not been able to function during the pandemic, for example, the toddler group has not met since March. However, other things have moved forward using new skills and experience. At the start, all three Benefice churches were unable to hold services in their buildings, but throughout, there have been, weekly, two services on line and Evening Prayer every night since Holy Week that have brought comfort and reassurance to many. Worship has gone in a direction not anticipated. Separated families and those who have been housebound have been able to come together to worship via Zoom! She recognised that there has been some hardship and there have been losses. It has not been possible to commemorate lives and she reinforced that there needs to be a time, when through the pandemic, to grieve together. She commented on the challenges faced by the wider Church. Redundancies and church closures are inevitable, and more will be known by Summer 2021.

However, this has also been a time for learning and the Benefice has fared well, thanks in no small way due to the efforts of the strong and dedicated ministry team. She said that Lockdown had hit suddenly, but that Revd Nicky Judd, Revd Peter Eastwood and Tim Tayler had proved adaptable and which thanked the many groups that support the church's work: bell ringers, choir and organists and instrumentalists, clock winder, fabric committee, flower arrangers, Fun Club leaders, fund raisers, holy dusters, magazine team and distributors, Messy Church organisers, the ministry team, Open the Book team, pastoral visitors, the PCC and sidesmen. Then, using the War Memorial Hall's new overhead projector she presented a visual presentation of activities in the benefice in the last year.

Looking forward she reminded the meeting of the benefice Mission Action Plan that was being developed and distributed a short questionnaire inviting people to provide suggestions or comments on how we might improve the ministry we offer on discipleship and to the community. In the conversation that followed she mentioned the paid assistant (funded by a donation) who would assist in youth work for a year. She described the adults and children who attended the new monthly Messy Church and who were becoming a regular congregation. They found Saturday a more convenient day to worship than Sunday so if they were going to be made to feel part of the wider congregation of St Mary's then longer established members would need somehow to connect with Messy Church. Mr Platford announced that the magazine had investigated and discounted a proposal to provide it free to all households. The need to re-order St Mary's pews in order to support more flexible forms of worship was discussed. Revd Katrina assured the meeting that if our aim is to increase revenue we shall fail but if we plan to improve our ministry we shall succeed.

Item 11: Any other business

No further business was raised.

Item 12: Close the meeting with a prayer

The chairwoman thanked closed the meeting with a prayer.

T TAYLER

Hon Sec

Abbotts Ann PCC

Enclosures:

1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and APCM 24 Apr 2018.
2. Activities Report for Abbotts Ann APCM 11 Mar 2019.
3. Abbotts Ann Parochial Church Council Report 2019
4. PCC of Abbotts Ann Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2018.