

Steve Newbold (Vicar), welcomed everyone to the meetings and thanked them for coming.

With 39 people in attendance, the proceedings were opened at 6.30pm. After sung worship, Caroline Newbold (Associate Vicar), read Hebrews 10:19-25 and prayed.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

This meeting opened at 6.41pm, chaired by Steve Newbold.

Steve began by noting some practical points for the meeting.

Steve offered thanks to both churchwardens, Mary Ann Auckland (MAA) and Ann Toley (AT) for being a great partnership and for their hard work. Between them, apart from their formal Churchwarden responsibilities, they also support all sorts of different areas of ministry from TeaTimers to Shining Stars, Connect Groups to Live streaming and a whole host of other areas. MAA has also been key in the Entrance Improvement Project.

MAA has indicated that this will be the final year she stands for Churchwarden. It is good to know a year in advance so we can think who to encourage.

Election of 2 Churchwardens

There were two nominations: Mary Ann Auckland and Ann Toley

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Mary Ann Auckland	Morgen Edwards	Linda Rivans
Ann Toley	Mary Ridgeon	Geoff Thomas

There being no other nominations, Mary Ann and Ann were declared elected for a one-year term.

This first meeting closed at 6.44pm.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Steve Newbold was Chair of this meeting which opened at 6.44pm.

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from the following members of the congregation: Flo Barnes, Tim Edwards, Jane and Peter Devereux, Ian and Jane Maffett and Janet Sehgal.

2) Minutes of Meeting held on Sunday 15th May 2022

Proposal to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 15th May 2022

Proposed by Ann Toley; Seconded by John Anniss.

The meeting agreed unanimously. They were signed by the Vicar as an accurate record of that meeting.

3) Matters Arising

None.

4) Report of Electoral Roll Officer

(verbal update provided by Morgen Edwards, Electoral Roll Officer)

At the 2022 meeting the Electoral Roll was 191. After 18 removals and 11 additions our total is now 184.

5) Written Annual Church Report

A DRAFT of The Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the year ending 31st December 2022 was received. The Annual Report, draft wording having already been agreed by the PCC, cannot yet be approved because the accounts have not yet been returned by the Independent Examiner (IE). Therefore, this meeting noted the report and received comments.

No Comments

All in attendance agreed that the PCC should sign off the report once the accounts are returned by the IE.

6) Report on Church Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

The Annual Report on the Church fabric, goods and ornaments, prepared by the Churchwardens, which had been approved at the last PCC meeting, was noted.

MAA highlighted:

Gordon Nunn's retirement and Jack Cahill's appointment as the new Premises Manager.

The Entrance Improvement Project has moved slower than first thought but we now think we will get Planning approval in the coming months.

Thanks to Fred Eaves who has done as much work as possible to get us prepared to start the works as soon as we can.

No questions or comments

Proposed by Mary Ann Auckland, seconded by Chris Irwin-Childs and all agreed.

7) Elections to the PCC

Steve thanked the Church Council, particularly those retiring: **James Morrow and John Anniss**

This year there were 3 full term vacancies to the Deanery Synod. The following people were proposed as new members of the Deanery Synod:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
James Morrow	Morgen Edwards	Tina Yarrall
Liz Cooper	Nicki Cassidy	Sally Anniss
David Gillingham	Geoff Thomas	Barbara Luland

There being no other nominations, James Morrow, Liz Cooper and David Gillingham were declared elected to the Deanery Synod.

This year there were 3 full term vacancies to the PCC. The following people were proposed as new members of the PCC:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded
Linda Rivans	Mary Ann Auckland	Caroline Jamieson
Ewen McKinnon	Sue Charlton	Jane Maffett

There being no other nominations, Linda Rivans and Ewen McKinnon were declared elected to the PCC. One vacant post remains.

8) Finance Report

2022

Sanjay has been Treasurer for 8 years. Several things have happened during that time including the global pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine. This could have affected our accounts dramatically. As it happens we had a positive outcome in 2022.

Key Points:

Income up

Spending up – the Cottage/Drayton Gardens/Church maintenance

Overall we had a surplus of over £27,000.

Total Income has risen over the last 12 months. Mainly due to Stewardship. Since 2012 our Stewardship has almost doubled.

Rental income went up in 2022 as we passed on the inflation increase. Again, higher than 2012.

Mission Giving/Diocese Fund

Mission Giving has gone up each year. The Diocese Fund was at £96,000 – we are the third highest contributor in the Deanery. Our 6 core mission partners received £2,800 each.

The Grove received ~£11,000 (including the proceeds of the 2022 Christmas Fair).

Tearfund, Ealing Foodbank and Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter also received funds from special collections.

Expenditure

Restricted reserves are approximately £50,000 – much of that is due to SLRF and not having had a Worship Leader or Youth Leader. This will decrease when those posts are filled.

Designated Funds are approximately £40,000 – there is a lot of upkeep and projects, and these funds will be used on those.

Budgets – many budgets have underspent.

Summary – even during worrying times Stewardship went up, income went up and Mission Giving went up.

Thanks to Helen and Chris Irwin-Childs, our Giving Co-ordinators.

Thanks to Jane Maffett for her help in working through queries in the accounts.

Thanks to Steve for his leadership and the congregation for their generous giving.

Questions:

Q. There are a lot of reserves. Our reserves policy talks about two months' worth of unrestricted. Why is there so much more?

A. The restricted funds are from SLRF and not being able to hire the staff we want to. If not, the money could be transferred to another reserve. In terms of designated funds, we have been deliberately building those up as there is always something that needs to be fixed (e.g. car park replacement). Also, costings on projects have been rising so good to have reserves in place.

Q. Hall lettings are quite lucrative. When the Entrance Improvement Project (EIP) starts will we be able to continue using the hall?

A. Firstly one of the reasons why the hall lettings have gone up so much is because of

NHEHS using our facilities whilst they have building works done. That is due to end in December 2023. Secondly when the EIP starts the front entrance will be inaccessible for quite a long time – many months. However, we hope the hall can still be accessed from another entrance, but the function of the building will change short term as there will be no access to the Vestry, office or kitchen.

Q. The accounts mention a third instalment to The Grove Missional Community is that the final instalment of the third of many? Will it cease after that instalment?

A. It's a rolling decision. The PCC agree it for three years and then reassess as we do with our Mission Partners.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner

We need to elect our independent examiner each year and our current examiner, Val Steward has agreed to hold this role again for the next 12 months.

Proposal that Valerie Steward continue as our Independent Examiner.

Proposed by Sanjay Joshi; Seconded by James Barron and agreed unanimously.

Steve Newbold expressed thanks to Sanjay Joshi for all his hard work. He has been our Treasurer for seven years. Sanjay is willing to carry on as Treasurer. Thanks also to Chris and Helen Irwin-Childs our Giving Co-Ordinators.

Thanks and applause given to Sanjay Joshi for all his hard work.

9) Vicar's Report

- Steve started by thanking several people:
 - the Leadership Team for their hard work – we have lots of fun and work well together. We recently attended the Leadership Conference at the Albert Hall and it's good to have a group of people who share a common vision of the Kingdom of God.
 - Morgen Edwards who holds the dual roles of Communications Manager and Children's Worker and Jack Cahill who manages our Church Centre. They do a lot of work behind the scenes. Jack has made a huge impact since his arrival. Jack and Morgen work well together and are the first points of contact.
 - Sanjay Joshi our Treasurer and Chris and Helen Irwin-Childs our Giving Coordinators for all their hard work in challenging times as well as all who have helped with our Sunday services.
 - Pastoral Care Team and Connect Group leaders have worked hard throughout the year.
 - The Mission Team for their efforts in keeping us informed about our mission partners.
- Steve stated that last year he said at this meeting that we were in a season of **restoration, renewal and rebuilding** and that process is still ongoing. He then highlighted some of the issues.
- Numbers – as a church we are now about 20% smaller than we were pre-pandemic. Although a good number of people have joined us, we also have said goodbye to some long-standing members over the course of 2022/23 including George Hore, Nancy Nolan and Maisie Poulton who died and some others who have moved away.
- He added that we feel this loss but are not alone as many churches are experiencing the wider societal changes that have occurred.
- Volunteers – our volunteer base has been impacted as not only are there fewer people to do the things we used to do others have reassessed how they spend their time and volunteer less than they once did.
- Fewer committed volunteers and a smaller church means that we continue to have to do less whether here on a Sunday morning, in our mission and service and not hold big events like the Community Fete.

- Staffing – We've seen two new staff members join us – Ruth Robinson, our curate in July and Jack Cahill, our Premises Manager in November.
- But we have continued to carry two vacant posts which are having a huge impact in our life together.
- We've advertised for a new **Worship Pastor** on 5 occasions and a new Youth Pastor 3 times. Not having a WP means it is difficult to cover a rota each Sunday. We have been fortunate so far but looking into the summer there are some significant gaps. There are a smaller number of congregation members who are confident to lead and of those Jo Leeds still volunteers but is planning to move away. Mark Tate and Jason Johnson still play here but are committed to the Sunday service on The Grove.
- He stated that there is a more positive situation at gam service where we now have 3 volunteer keyboard players being available to accompany hymns.
- We are grateful that Caroline Newbold continues to cover some of the duties of the **Youth Work** post.

Why has it been so difficult to recruit? – The PCC were discussing this at the last meeting and there is a recognition that this is a national problem. There are fewer people going into Youth Work. This has affected all types of Youth Work not just churches. The PCC also accepted that Ealing is not a cheap place to live/move to. Steve asked everyone to pray that this would be resolved.

- Church Planting – we continue to invest in our plant on the Gurnell Grove estate and Mark Tate the Leader is both a member of this church and our Leadership Team.
- A weekly Sunday service was started there in Easter 2022 supported by about 10 members of our Church who play a full part. Establishing a new service takes time but one year on it is firmly established and slowly beginning to bear fruit.
- But giving always involves a cost and having 10 people helping every Sunday has impacted our own Sunday morning resources.

Entrance Improvement Project – this will be funded by the St Luke's Trust, and everyone had sight of the plans that were displayed last year.

Why are we doing this? – even though this building has been a church for 40 years we still find regularly people go to the wrong place – not helped by being next to a building that looks like a church. We will never overcome that, but we do want to do something to make us have a more noticeable presence. We want to make the foyer lighter and brighter, and we need to replace the roof. We also want to introduce environmental and energy saving improvements.

- Sadly, we have had ongoing delays with the Ealing Planning Department and so have not been able to proceed as we had hoped. The PCC are hoping and praying that things will get sorted and moving as soon as is possible.

Once we have planning permission we can begin to move ahead. All this work will be done at the same time as we sort out the Car Park. The reason this hasn't been done yet, is there is no point in digging up the car park twice.

- The last year has given us much to celebrate too:
 - We ran an in-person Alpha course for the first time in 3 years and although numbers attending were small, the attendees have grown into a new weekly Connect Group.
 - We have seen baptisms and dedications and just today 5 young people were baptised sharing stories of God working in their lives.
 - We had two weddings and a wedding blessing in Church.
 - Enid Barron stepped back from her role on the leadership team but is still involved in many areas of Church life as an LLM Emeritus. It was a lovely day last November as we celebrated her ministry here and had a church shared lunch together.
 - In the past year we have had two Welcome Teas at the Vicarage and welcomed 41 adults and children most of who are still associated with St Stephen's.
 - We hosted the Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter over 4 Fridays nights in February.
 - Both Christmas and Easter saw good numbers of visitors as our patterns of services returned to normal.

So what of the future as we seek to continue to rebuild, renew and restore?

- Firstly, we want to strengthen our staff team with new Worship/Youth staff
- Secondly, we need to grow deeper in our individual journeys of prayer and discipleship.
- Thirdly, we are called to serve our Community through initiatives such as the Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter and the Ealing Soup Kitchen.
- Fourthly we have a lot of people who are on the fringes of church life – often coming infrequently and we need to encourage them to come more and get more involved.

Conclusion

Steve concluded that, in many ways, we are a very comfortable church to belong to. We are relatively wealthy and can support and fund others. We have a good size congregation that many other churches would love to have. But those good things can hide some of the deeper issues that we are facing that he had outlined. Steve prayed that with God's help through the power of the Holy Spirit we would see change and move forward.

Questions and comments on the above

Judy Cradock mentioned that we should share/write more about Christian ideas. We don't have a magazine anymore. Be good to have a group to meet and discuss them and want to write about them.

Steve said it would be good to have volunteers to do this.

Enid Barron commented that perhaps we could rename the Worship Minister/Pastor post as the title may be off putting for some people. Perhaps co-ordinator or director.

SN replied that we have had a wide range of applicants – none of them suitable – from all over the world. The title and job description will be revisited and re-branded with fewer words.

John Annis raised the cost of living/housing may be off putting for anyone applying for these roles. Is there anyone amongst us we can encourage and raise up to fill in/take on the role.

John further stated he finds it encouraging to see the number of young families, credit to the children's team. To see the children dancing in that service, which is an issue for some, is encouraging. They are dancing with the Spirit.

Steve said it is great to see the young families and children come. It is also great that we have two different services so there is a place for us all. We are all children of God.

Sanjai Joshi offered thanks to Steve and Caroline for all their hard work and guidance. Applause was given.

The meeting closed with a song and the Grace at 7:49pm.

Signed as record..... Date.....