

Holy Trinity & St James Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Parochial Church

Council Meeting Minutes

Monday 24 April 2023 at Arrow Village Hall – 7.30 pm

Chair: Rector – Katie Cross

Attendees: 14

Annual Parish Meeting

	Election of Churchwardens	Jane Cornwall re-elected for St James Weethley and Holy Trinity Arrow. Proposed by Gill Laughlin and seconded by Mike Dean. Rector thanked Jane for all her hard work over the past year and stated it is not good to just have one Churchwarden which calls into question sustainability of church and the Bishop will need to be informed. Giil L asked if the new system might make the role easier but Rector said it depends on scheme chosen by each parish but two wardens still needed. Bill and Carolyn were thanked for all their hard work done at Holy Trinity, despite stepping down as Warden last year. Bill and Carolyn confirmed they are happy to continue to help.
		Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting
1	Attendees	Katie Cross, Jane Cornwall, Noreen Dean, Carolyn Baldwin, Bill Baldwin, Gill Laughlin, Kelvin Cornwall, Mike Dean, Becky Shepherd, Chris Baker, Jane Baker, Leisha Pennells, Nick Daniels, Tony Turner
2	Apologies for Absence	Rev Steve Kelly, Rev Daniel Corlett, Blanche Surman
3	Approval of 2022 Minutes	The minutes were approved and signed by Katie Cross
4	Matters arising from the minutes	None
5	Electoral Roll Report	Kelvin Conwall gave the revised roll 2023 as follows: Removals. 3 Additions. 2 Residents. 15 Non residents.32 Total. 46 Copies of the revised roll are displayed at both churches Anyone wishing to be enrolled may do so at any time. Application forms are available from both churches
6	Reports:	

	Finance	<p>Another difficult year where expenditure slightly exceeded income despite a reduction in church maintenance costs, the receipt of a large legacy from J Hancox and the gift of funeral collections from J Hancox and A Madge. As a result the Bank Account and CBF Deposit Funds reduced by £368.47 at 31/12/22</p> <p>Blanche Surman Treasurer</p> <p>Independent Examiner's Report</p> <p>Holy Trinity, Arrow and St James, Weethley Parish Churches</p> <p>I have carried out an independent examination of the papers and documents provided and received satisfactory answers to any questions raised in the process.</p> <p>I have no concerns as to the accounts and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.</p> <p>C A Partridge</p> <p>2 Holly Orchard, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6RJ</p>
	Church-warden's Report	<p>In my role as churchwarden for the parish of Arrow and Weethley I would like to thank all the willing and enthusiastic helpers within the two churches who do so much to maintain the building and the worship within the parish.</p> <p>I wish to thank the volunteers who give of their time and efforts to clean, repair and restore broken items, the grounds people who keep our churchyards in such beautiful condition, the flower arrangers who enhance the aesthetic beauty of our churches. All contribute in so many ways. They are the bedrock of our church community; without them I could not carry out my role without their support.</p> <p>We continue to hold a service each month in the churches, alternating between Holy Communion and Morning Worship. The congregations have largely returned to pre-pandemic numbers, with St James particularly thriving currently. 2022 has been very much a time of restoration and renewal of our church family. In September, we held our first social gathering since 2019, the quiz and harvest supper, which was a hugely enjoyable occasion for all. We are looking to repeat this Autumn and to welcome many more to come together and celebrate friendship.</p> <p>The two churches have been maintained in relatively good order, with only minor practical internal and external repairs needing to be carried out this past year. At Holy Trinity, roof repairs were conducted to replace missing tiles, re-bed ridge tiles and repair the stone parapet.</p> <p>We are grateful for the volunteers who maintain the churchyards in such good order. Last year, the parish council kindly donated two ornamental trees which were planted at the two churches to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.</p> <p>Like many rural churches, we have had visitors who are not always welcome, such as mice taking up residence in the organ at Weethley and moths, or possibly mice, damaging the kneelers at Holy Trinity. The insect life at St James requires ongoing pest control management each year. The resident wren at St James leaves evidence of its presence upon the wooden cross, its favourite perch, which requires regular cleaning of carpets and cushions. The Bat Society representative also visited last year, to inform us that we do not have a residing bat population but</p>

		<p>intermittent visitors who come to also enjoy the sanctuary of St James and the food source of insects.</p> <p>Last year, we liaised with Lord Hertford and Ragley Estate regarding the pond next to Weethley Church to have the pond cleared of the bullrushes that had overwhelmed the water and in effect created a bog. The pond has been restored to its former glory and the ducks and moorhens are now enjoying their new swimming pool. Thank you to Lord Hertford and his team for organising and funding this venture.</p> <p>The outside light at St James was also repaired last year, which enabled the church to be floodlit throughout the month of December, as a beacon of light to the community and a reminder of God in the world and the coming of the Christ child. A great deal of practical work and effort is put into making the physical spaces of St James and Holy Trinity a welcoming spiritual place to worship, pray or merely visit and enjoy the peace and calm of God's presence.</p> <p>The PCC members work very hard to maintain the practical upkeep of both churches in excellent order. However, we do need your help. The vacancy for churchwarden at Holy Trinity remains open and the current position remains unsustainable. I cannot oversee both churches and I ask each one of you to consider and to pray whether it may be a role you could undertake.</p> <p>We look forward to 2023 with hope and trust that God will continue to guide us in the future direction of our parish.</p> <p>Jane Cornwall – Church Warden</p>
	Rector's Report	<p>2022 has been a year of starting to get things sorted out. We haven't completed the job, but we are well on our way.</p> <p>One of our biggest achievements was to begin our journey towards a joint PCC. We held two PCC away days where we discussed the implications of changing the way the PCCs currently operate, to hopefully streamlining various activities, ease the administrative burden on the parishes, and in doing so to reduce the workload. We are still working through the various options and will aim to bring a proposal to an extraordinary APCM later this year for your approval. We ask that you talk to your PCC members about the suggested proposals so you can be confident when we come to vote. Alongside this huge piece of work, we have adopted a vision statement and mission action plan.</p> <p>Our vision of L.I.F.E. will help us grow closer to God and become the scaffolding for our activities and decision making.</p> <p>L – Loving God wholeheartedly I - Investing in our Christian journey F - Flourishing in our community E -Everyone is welcome</p> <p>We have been delighted to welcome three new people into our Minster team, Rev Daniel Corlett arriving in July to take up the post of Associate Minister for the Rural Mission Hub, Jen Hopkins, our new part-time children and families worker who began in October and Rev Steve Kelly who was licensed at the end of November as our new House of Duty Associate Minister. We also said goodbye to Pat Newbold, as she and Roger move to a new area and thanking her for all she has done with us.</p>

I would like to say a huge **thank you** to all the volunteers and staff we have working across our Minster Churches. We are ever grateful to our churchwardens who keep things moving on the ground, our diligent treasurers, secretaries, PCC members, and all those who offer music, prayer, leading worship, preaching and visiting in our localities, amongst many other roles. So many of you give so much in time energy and financially, that we really couldn't continue without you.

We are excited that God is working in our midst and give thanks for his many blessings.

It is testament to God's blessing on us that all our parishes have been able to pay their **Parish Share in full**, as well as their contribution to the Minster pot and general running costs. We are by no means complacent and will keep letting you know of our financial position throughout the year.

We have seen numerical growth in the start of a new **Messy Church** which has begun to see children and families coming in to church and beginning to hear the story of God. Our mid-week communion service has grown too with more people finding a Wednesday morning a helpful punctuation to their week. Many of our services have now mostly recovered those who were hesitant through the pandemic giving us a stable congregation in most churches. We began a weekly Morning Prayer service on Mondays, adding to our prayer life in the Minster. We were delighted to welcome so many of our local communities to celebrate Christmas with us and hope their experience will encourage them to cross our threshold more frequently.

We have celebrated with five couples as they got married, we gave thanks as seventeen children and one parent was baptised and we comforted and supported over sixty families as they faced the death of a loved one.

We celebrated with our local communities for **HM Queen Elizabeth's** platinum Jubilee and gathered to reflect and remember at her death. We have relaunched lunches and fetes and published 'Around the Minster'. We have partnered with other denominations to walk on Good Friday, pray for Ukraine, worship and pray together as well as send Christmas greetings to the community.

Our local **primary schools** have continued to benefit from our support over this year. St Nicholas Primary school sent children from different year groups to engage more deeply with their R.E. topics in the church building, and all the schools were supported through Leavers services, Harvest and Christmas. The schools were able to open their doors to Open the Book and the staff team, to support their collective worship from September and we are enjoying getting to know the children once again. We supported the Grammar school around the tragic death of one of their pupils and hosted Alcester Academy and St Benedict's Christmas services. Our Church of England schools also continue to be well supported by our foundation governors, who give their time and expertise willingly.

As ever, our **buildings** continue to be a source of delight and frustration with growing maintenance needs and limited resources. We continue to move towards becoming net zero carbon in our churches.

We have much to be thankful for this year, we are beginning to see the green shoots of new things and although we know we continue to face **challenges** ahead, we know that God is with us, he loves us and our neighbourhoods and His

Good News is transformational for us all. Let us journey together aiming to live life in all its fullness, as Jesus promised.

Rev Katie Cross Rector

Minster Reports

Children and Families Worker Report - Children's Ministry 2022. Between October and the end of 2022 much happened in children's ministry in the benefice and we saw the Holy Spirit moving and guiding us in many ways – some unexpected!

Initially, plans had been that I would immediately start working in schools and taking Collective Worship but, we found, that with Christmas rapidly approaching, I was needed elsewhere and building trusting relationships with schools, families and the community was prioritised. As well as becoming a Foodbank referrer, connecting with Acts435 and taking seats on both the Alcester Health & Wellbeing Working Group and Children & Families Partnership, I felt it essential that we moved towards the community rather than hoping for them to find us.

A huge part of this has been building on how we come across in the community and I was keen to develop our reputation as a family friendly and welcoming church that is in the heart of the Minster and there to help people. I used social media to build on this and share all the wonderful things we do and, as a result of doing so and feeling the “mood” of the town, we have been well received and have welcomed many new families into St Nicholas' church through things like “Give a Gift”, the St Nicholas' Patronal Festival and Messy Church.

These events have all been successful in promoting our loving nature and growing bonds that may not have been there before. Give a Gift brought the church and wider community together to provide gifts to 131 children from families who were struggling financially across the benefice. Incredibly, thanks to the wonderful generosity shown, we were still able to send offerings to Coventry City Mission as in previous years. As a project it opened up lines of communication between the community, schools, donors and recipients and it led to a deeper relationship building with some of these families which has meant they've started to trust us and some have started coming to Messy Church and Sunday Worship.

Positive relationship building in the community also meant that Messy Church grew and we had an average attendance of approximately 85 people excluding our team of volunteers (there were over 130 people in December).

Of course, Children's Ministry has also grown within the schools with all schools benefiting from Harvest Festivals, Christmas Carol services and lessons in our churches and these events have all strengthened our relationships with the children and their families.

		<p>On a more solemn note when a Year 7 pupil from Alcester Grammar School died suddenly, we were able to provide a service for her friends and teachers to come together and remember her.</p> <p>2022 was a real year of growth for Children's Ministry in the Alcester Minster and I am excited to see how we can develop on this in 2023.</p> <p>Jen Hopkins – Children and Families Worker</p> <p>Hub report</p> <p>The Alcester Minster Rural Mission Hub is a programme funded by the Diocese of Coventry for a period of five years, to help the Minster and other rural churches grow, particularly through the creation of 'New Worshipping Communities' (NWCs). An NWC is any group that meets regularly for worship and draws to itself a new 'congregation' of people. It can meet any time, in any place and in a variety of ways. Messy Church is a good example of a NWC and since it began in early 2022 has grown significantly in size, with around 150 adults and children meeting together for the Christmas session.</p> <p>We are exploring and experimenting with a range of other new activities, some that might meet in church buildings, and others which may be in cafes, pubs, schools, or the outdoors. Daniel Corlett joined the Minster in July 2022, to share the ministry of the churches here, so that he and Katie can between them work on new projects both within the benefice, and also across the Deanery and the Diocese.</p> <p>Hub activities include: training, coaching and networking for clergy and lay people who want to explore mission in their context; creating case studies and sharing best practice; providing support to other churches, especially during clergy vacancies.</p> <p>The hub is one of six in the Diocese, which are geographically spread, but Alcester is the only one with a particular focus on Rural, Multi-Parish church groups.</p>
7	Deanery Synod	<p>The Deanery acts as the conduit between individual parishes and the larger organisations, passing information downwards and carrying views and requests upwards. Deanery Synod meetings are divided into two halves; the first section being a visiting speaker and the second half deals with Deanery business.</p> <p>This year speakers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Sue Jacques and Rev Peter Walker presenting the Deanery Plan. • Neil Masih the Diocesan Intercultural Mission enabler speaking about his work. • Revd Clive Hicks the Diocesan Healthy Churches Development Enabler speaking about being a healthy church. <p>The next Deanery Synod meeting will be held in July at St Nicholas Alcester</p>
8	Election of Deanery Synod Representative	<p>Every 3 years</p> <p>We can have two reps on Deanery Synod. Chris Baker can stand for another year and was duly elected.</p>

9	Appointment of the Independent Examiner of Accounts	Post Meeting – Blanche Surman confirmed that C A Partridge will audit the Accounts next year.
10	Election of PCC Members	Chris Baker (Deanery Synod representative)
11	[Election of Deanery Synod Representative	Every 3 years We can have two reps on Deanery Synod. Chris Baker can stand for another year and was duly elected.
12	Election of PCC Members	Gill Laughlin, Leisha Pennells
13	Appointment of Sidespeople	List of Sidespeople read out and approved
14	AOB	<p>Carbon church discussed and churches should be carbon neutral n 2030. Alcester Deanery has more people registered for green journey. LED bulbs fitted. Heating not on every day and no of trees in churchyard should offset.</p> <p>Mission Hub – Kelvin Cornwall asked about the Hub. Katie said the scheme launched in 2022 and the Diocese has 6 hubs. Daniel appointed in July and our hub responsible for rural issues, .supporting churches locally on their spiritual journey. PCC transfers which currently a work in progress. Mike Dean said there should be more communication re hub.</p> <p>Postal Voting – Katie mentioned Postal voting for PCC members and after discussion re the need for this plus cost of postage. Whilst unlikely we will ever need to do this a vote took place with the majority in agreement although there were 2 abstentions and one vote against. Proposed by Katie and seconded by Bill Baldwin</p> <p>Minutes of PCC Meetings – It was agreed that draft Minutes would be available in the churches, ensuring that nothing confidential included.</p>
A short meeting of the New PCC:		
1	Election of Vice Chairperson	Jane Cornwall
2	Election of Treasurer Secretary Safeguarding Electoral Roll Officer	Blanche Surman kindly agreed to continue Noreen Dean Becky Shepherd Kelvin Cornwall kindly volunteered.
3	Appointment of Sidespeople	List of people not confirmed at meeting and will be forwarded to Jane Cornwall.
4	AOB	None

