



The Parish of Ewhurst
with Okewood & Forest Green

Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Tuesday 25th April 2023 8pm, in the Ark.

The welcome was given by Clive Ward, followed by an opening prayer by Area Dean Roy Woodhams.

Clive gave a brief report about our current parish situation and thanked all the 'unsung heroes' who work behind the scenes in our parish to keep it running. These unseen helpers make our community work and we have over 50 of them!

Roy Woodhams read out the apologies for absence – Jan Moir, Alison Morton, Rosie Smy, Jane Harry, Mary McMath, Sally Thompson, Mike Brady, Sheila Brown, Tony Brimelow, Helen Brimelow, Bob Foley, Liz Foley. Apologies were also given for Pam and Graham Childs, Colin and Ro Stewart, Cary and Amber Devereux, Peter Bennett.

As our parish is currently in Vacancy, Area Dean Roy Woodhams chaired the following meetings.

Meeting of Parishioners

Election of two churchwardens for St Peter and St Paul, Ewhurst

Nomination – Martin Lockwood, proposed by Connie Watson, seconded by Jane Harry

Nomination – Liz Tingley, proposed by Martin Lockwood, seconded by Michelle Matthews

There being no other nominations Martin and Liz were duly elected.

Election of two churchwardens for St John the Baptist, Okewood

Nomination – Tom Murphy, proposed by Elizabeth Coleman, seconded by Clare Harding

There being no other nominations Tom was duly elected.

Roy pointed out that although the new churchwardens had been elected they would not take up their posts officially until after the Archdeacon's Visitation Service on 13 June.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 16th May 2022 were agreed as a true record.

Proposed by Michelle Matthews, seconded by John White. All were in favour.

The Chairman subsequently signed the minutes.

A report on the updated church Electoral Roll as printed in the Annual Reports was received.

The total number of people on the Electoral Roll is 158 (last year 162)

This is made up of 97 people at St Peter and St Paul, Ewhurst (last year 99)

53 people at St John the Baptist, Okewood (last year 55)

8 people at Holy Trinity, Forest Green (last year 8)

This year we were required to hold elections for 3 Deanery Synod representatives.

Nomination – Mike Brady, proposed by Peter Bradley, seconded by Peter Bennett

Nomination – Janet Templeman, proposed by Elizabeth Tingley, seconded by Rosemary Mason

Nomination – Liz Tingley, proposed by Sheila Brown, seconded by Dianna Benoy

There being no other nominations Mike, Janet and Liz were duly elected.

Members on the Electoral Roll and present at the meeting were required to elect to the Parochial Church Council five representatives to serve for a term of three years, and three representatives to serve for a period of two years.

There were eight nominees for eight places.

Jan Jesson, proposed by Elizabeth Tingley, seconded by Rosie Smy – a term of 3 years
Jan Moir, proposed by Elizabeth Coleman, seconded by Tom Murphy – a term of 3 years
Angie Thomas, proposed by Shirley Dighton, seconded by John White – a term of 3 years
Graham Childs, proposed by Jackie Avery, seconded by Chris Owen – a term of 3 years
Clare Harding, proposed by Eileen Bennett, seconded by Peter Bennett – a term of 3 years
Chris Owen, proposed by Val Henry, seconded by Rosemary Mason – a term of 2 years
Clive Ward, proposed by Martin Lockwood, seconded by Malcolm McGill – a term of 2 years
Amber Wood, proposed by Elizabeth Tingley, seconded by Joanna Cadman – a term of 2 years

Other current PCC members are Shirley Dighton and Val Henry. There is currently one space on the PCC. Roy noted that there are no representatives on the PCC from Forest Green and reminded everyone that the PCC can co-opt members.

A written report on the proceedings of the PCC during the previous year was received.

Michelle Matthews gave the following report on the Parish finances:

Through careful management of our finances we were able to restrict our annual deficit in 2022 to £21,000. The legacy money from last year is being used up very fast. As a parish we have cut costs but we are missing substantial fundraising and having cash collections during services.

We have a projected deficit of £52,000 for this coming year which will be covered by the legacy and gift aid. The combined amount of our Parish share and the expense of running the parish is £165,000.

If everyone on the Electoral Roll gave £20 a week we would cover this cost.

Please do join the Parish Giving Scheme, there are forms at the back of our three churches or you can sign up online.

Bella Matthews then read from 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8.

We are incredibly grateful to our Independent Examiner Jill Wright FCCA Hon. Treasurer at Frensham PCC.

This parish has joined a small group of churches in the diocese whose treasurers are examining each other's accounts for free. I examine the accounts for Goldsworth Park PCC.

Michelle proposed that we elect Jill Wright as Independent Examiner for the year ending 31 December 2023. Seconded by Amber Wood. All were in favour.

Michelle confirmed that our 2021 Accounts are now filed with the Charity Commission.

Written reports on the fabric of the churches, the proceedings of Deanery Synod and many of the groups within our churches were received by the meeting. Clive stated that the Reports booklet really is a celebration of the life of our parish.

There were no items of AOB.

Roy proceeded to talk about the future of our parish. Our present situation is tenuous; the future is about affordability. It is important to have good quality ministry but we if we are to have a full-time incumbent in the future we will need to raise serious funds.

There are other options to having a full time incumbent;

A house-for-duty priest works 3 days a week and lives in the Rectory with no stipend.

A part time clergy person could work 4 days a week for half a stipend.

A full-time priest may not necessarily live in the Rectory.

All of these options will reduce our Parish share.

A newsletter from the Archdeacon regarding the vacancy and our current position will be sent out to all households in our parish.

Roy pointed out that our Parish holds a very large number of restricted funds and it may be worth having the PCC explore this to see if we can release some money. He said our parish is not alone in this situation. It is now more common to not be a full-time vicar with a house.

With regards to a timeframe of how the vacancy will proceed, Roy said this needs to be discussed by the PCC, and then with himself and Archdeacon Paul Davies at a meeting on 8 June.

Tom Murphy then gave a vote of thanks to Clive Ward and David Steel, plus all our lay leaders who work tirelessly to keep services running in our parish.

Tony Gauvain wished to record a vote of thanks to Rev'd Rosemary Mason.

The meeting closed with everyone saying the Grace.

Notes; the meeting closed at 9.05pm and there were 39 people in attendance.