

## ALL SAINTS CHURCH BIDDENDEN

### EASTER VESTRY MEETING Minutes of the Easter Vestry Meeting held On Tuesday 17th April 2018 at 7.30pm in All Saints Church

**Present:**

Rector: Rev'd Alex Bienfait (in the chair)  
Curate: Rev'd Catherine Wilson  
Churchwarden: Ann Courtness  
Secretary: Tanya Ling  
Parishioners: 21 Members

Alex welcomed all to the meeting and opened with a prayer.

Business was then conducted as follows:

**1. Appointment of Clerk:**

Tanya Ling proposed as Clerk by Peter Cutts. seconded by Simon Burgess. All in favour.

**2. Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from Mary Spry, Anne Webster, Martin Giles, Richard Carr, Chris Hautot, Brian Bennewith, Jeanette Oatway.

**3. Minutes of Easter Vestry Meeting 2017:**

The minutes of the Easter Vestry Meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017 had been circulated. It was proposed by Joanna Winston and seconded by Julie Lupton that the minutes be received, approved and signed by the Chairman. All in favour.

**4. Appointment of Churchwardens**

One nomination for Churchwarden had been received, as follows:

- Ann Courtness, proposed by Peter Cutts and seconded by Simon Burgess. (Ann was first appointed in 2014)  
All in favour.

There being no further nominations, Ann Courtness was elected as Churchwarden. Alex said many thanks for all her hard work this year which was followed by a round of applause. Ann said thank you to all those who help her in her role as Churchwarden.

**There being no further business to be conducted at the Vestry Meeting, the meeting closed at 7.40pm and was immediately followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

**All Saints Church Biddenden  
Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
Held on Tuesday 17th April 2018**

Attendance and Apologies were noted as being the same as for the Vestry Meeting.

**1. Minutes of All Saints APCM Meeting 2017**

The minutes of the All Saints APCM meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017 had been circulated. There were no corrections or amendments raised and it was proposed by Peter Cutts and seconded by Peter Whitestone that these minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record. All in favour.

**2. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

**3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll**

A copy of the Electoral Roll has been on the board at the back of the church for the past 10 days. Tanya Ling is our Electoral Roll officer who confirmed that there are 79 on the electoral roll which is 1 down from last year.

**4. Annual Report and Financial Statement**

All reports included in this section, which were the reports required by law, had been circulated with the agenda. These covered a summary of objectives and activities, a summary of PCC business, a review of achievements and performance, financial statements and accounts and the fabric report.

Individual reports from the Churchwardens, and those responsible for or leaders of the many groups that support the worship and activities of the church had also been circulated, i.e. the Choir, Coffee Call-in, the Gift Stall, Fundraising and Events Committee, Health and Safety, Homemakers, Bellringers, Churchyard Maintenance, the Magazine, Website and Welcomers.

**Matters discussed and noted, and comments:**

- **Administrative Information, Objectives, PCC members, achievements...**  
Alex noted some omissions in the Ministry section - the support of David Stuart-Smith and the support of Lay Worship team (Ann Courtness, Julie Lupton, Martin Giles, Peter Whitestone, John Lowings and Tony Richter). Alex conveyed his many thanks to both David and the Lay Worship team for their contributions to the parish this year. Thank you to Ann Giles, Sharon Muskett, Moira Eastwick and Ann Webster and the Sacristan team for all their hard work.  
A query was raised on the Statistics for Biddenden parish as the Usual Sunday Attendance figure has dropped since last year. This can vary a great deal year on year but it was acknowledged that numbers generally are lower. Active Church congregation numbers are not represented in these numbers.
- **Services and Rota Planning:** Alex confirmed that these are planned on a quarterly basis - a team from the choir and the PCC work with Alex and Catherine Wilson (curate) on the details of this planning. We seek to offer a diverse selection of services from Active Church to BCP services.

- Music & Choir: Alex confirmed that we are very fortunate to have three organists who support us. We were saddened by the move from the area of Kate and Peter Whapham and this was felt very much last year. We have a dedicated choir group and are very grateful for their work at Christmas and Easter and all the services that they attend. Also noted the death of Andrew Littlewood who was a very important part of both the choir and the community.
- Sidespeople: Joanna gave thanks to the welcomers team who put so much hard work into their roles, organising things for the service. Always looking for more volunteers for sidespeople.
- Learning : the Biddenden home study group meets twice a month and during Lent and Easter, the study group meets weekly. Thank you to Julie Lupton and Martin Giles who are the co-ordinators for this group. New members are always welcome. Jean Lingwood and David Stuart Smith have recently joined the group.
- Children and Young People: we are thankful for the close links we have with John Mayne school. Julie Lupton and Linda Harman regularly come to take assemblies and we were very sorry to lose Andrew Littlewood from the rota. Generally, every week the school has an assembly provided by the church. We are delighted to welcome the school into the church for special occasions such as Easter and Christmas. Active Church in Smarden continues to receive lots of focus and is very much a benefice event. We also have bi-monthly All Age services in Biddenden though attendance is patchy but significant.
- Child and Vulnerable Adults' protection: safeguarding is taken very seriously by the church. The Church of England has been rolling out training nationally for this. Thank you to Julie Lupton for helping to organise the training for the relevant persons in the parish.
- Collaboration: we work in a group ministry which is most visible on Group Sundays. We also organise a Marriage Preparation morning between the churches. We are also developing more contact with the pastor of the Church of the Weald, (Carl Maidment), who lives in the parish. We also support a Food Bank which is based in Ashford. Many thanks for all those who make donations to this.
- Deanery: currently Biddenden does not have a Deanery representative. No new volunteers were noted. Smarden PCC put forward a proposal to the Deanery Synod to change the rules governing PCC membership to allow non-communicant members to be part of a PCC. This motion has been accepted by the Deanery, debated by the Diocesan Synod and will now be debated at General Synod.
- Fundraising and events: from our financial accounts, we can see the significance of fundraising and convey many thanks for the huge effort that is involved in this.
- Gift Stall: Julie Lupton now manages this and if anyone is happy to take over, it would be most appreciated.
- Coffee Call in: an important part of the weekly calendar. A core number of 4-8 people attend each week. Pam Brown sadly died but was a regular member of the coffee call in.
- Homemakers: Elizabeth Rickwood spoke about the regular talks that are given and well received by the group.

- Keeping the church open: thank you for all the help to maintain the regular opening of the church. Now we can let people welcome on their own (previously they needed to work in pairs) and Joanna Winston would like to thank all those who help with this. Their plans for a welcoming table and new ideas to make the experience more interesting for visitors.
- Fabric: we are very grateful for Julie Lupton for all her hard work and the detailed report that she has written. Any further volunteers to join the Fabric team would be appreciated. A question was raised with respect to painting the interior of the church to make it look brighter. This is not currently allowed due to DAC restrictions. There are issues with damp parts of the walls which we may be allowed to look at.
- Churchyard: this is well looked after by Chris Cox and his team and we are enormously grateful for all their hard work. Six mowers are on a rota and Chris is very grateful for their help. A round of applause was given.
- Bellringers: a great improvement since last year and they have expanded to 13 people who regularly ring. They meet to practise on Thursdays. They are looking to ring at every service. They have rung at special services such as the Remembrance service. All going very well and new members are always welcome.
- Church flowers: the Annual Flower Festival is organised by the church flower team led by Jeanette Oatway. This is the single biggest fundraiser for the church each year and thanks were conveyed for all their hard work. They are always looking for new volunteers.
- Magazine: currently is the single biggest contributor to parish funds at the moment and thanks were given to Paul and Anne Webster for their hard work on this. A round of applause was given. Simon Burgess and Julian Burtenshaw were also thanked for their hard work in the distribution of the magazine.
- Website – working very well and being used regularly. It was a great communication tool when Alex was in Sri Lanka to keep in touch with the parish.
- Health and Safety: still looked after by Mark Clixby who has given a full report. There are issues that need to be attended to which may be difficult, such as the ramp area. Thank you to Mark for his work and support.

### Financial Statement

Peter Cutts, the treasurer, stated that the report should be relatively consistent with last year. It may be slightly difficult to reconcile to last year's report as the flower account was not incorporated into the Payments & Receipts statement. 2017 has been a good year financially for Biddenden as the income has more or less balanced the payments. The Friends of All Saints Biddenden have given £4.5K for the insurance this year, and the Parish Council have also made contributions for which we are very grateful. Cleaning costs have not been incurred last year and we also need to make some backdated payments to the Apollos Trust which may affect 2018 figures. The Sri Lanka funds raised will need to come out of the 2018 budget. The Stewardship campaign that has been run this year looks optimistic and so planned giving should increase. Peter would like to thank Brian Bennewith for all his hard work as well as Jeanette Oatway and David Spry for their hard work. A round of applause was given.

## **5. Other reports**

The Friends of All Saints Biddenden is a separate charity to the PCC. Colin Daly would like to thank Paul Webster for his hard work and Paul thanked Colin for his work.

## **6. Reading of Bequests. Read by Tanya Ling (as attached)**

Peter Whitestone asked if the graves were inspected and looked after. Chris Cox confirmed that they were in a good order.

## **Elections**

### **7.a Lay Person to Deanery Synod:**

Currently have no representation on the Deanery Synod and Alex stressed how important this body was. There were no nominations.

### **7.b PCC Members**

Colin Steere is sadly standing down and many warm thanks were given for his contributions. No new PCC member nominations were raised.

Alex would like to give his thanks for all the time and work that the PCC members give to the parish.

### **7.c Sidespersons:**

The following were appointed en bloc, proposed by Ann Courtness and seconded by Julie Lupton. All in favour:

Denise Bennewith, John Betts, Chris Hautot, Elizabeth Rickwood, Sally Whitestone, Joanna Winston, Colin Steere, Simon Burgess, Pam Littlewood

### **7.d Electoral Roll Officer:**

#### **Tanya Ling**

Proposed by Stephanie Boucher

Seconded by Peter Whitestone

All in favour.

## **8. Independent Examiner:**

David Spry has kindly volunteered to be the Independent Examiner for next year. Proposed by Colin Daley and seconded by Simon Burgess. Warm thanks and a round of applause were given.

## **9. Church Terrier & Inventory**

The Church Terrier & Inventory summarises all the fittings that the church owns. An ongoing list of work is kept on the fabric of the church. Thanks to Julie for keeping it up to date this year and thanks to Linda and Tony Webb who ensured this was brought up to date when Linda was churchwarden. It has been signed by Ann Courtness.

## **10. Rectors Remarks**

Thanks were given to Sharon Muskett, Ann Giles Moira Eastwick, and Anne Webster for their work on keeping the linen fresh and clean.

Amy Sinclair has been an important welcomer and verger for funerals and weddings and has been doing it for over twenty years. We are very grateful to her for her work and are saddened to hear of her bad health.

We would like to remember the following people who sadly died last year – Tim Kitchin and Andrew Littlewood.

Looking ahead, there is great change as Catherine Wilson will be leaving us as her curacy comes to an end in June so a farewell service will be given on the 8<sup>th</sup> July (tbc).

The PCC have plans for the coming year which include experimenting keeping the church open by implementing CCTV with a trial period at weekends to see how this works,. There are also discussions around the possibility of a phone mast being placed in the church tower which would be a revenue stream for the church. The PCC have appointed an agent who will liaise with Vodafone. As yet, no correspondence has been received from Vodafone. This is ongoing and we cannot assume it will go ahead.

There are challenges ahead which include the Benefice team being reduced, congregation numbers declining and the need for more young people to attend church. We will be welcoming a large number of new families due to the new homes being built and we need to consider how we can welcome these new people.

The churchyard has had some issues where churchyard regulations have been broken with some memorials to recent burials. This is a very sensitive subject and we are hoping for a peaceful resolution for this problem. Alex asked everyone to keep this in their prayers. We are running out of space in the churchyard and the PCC are looking at alternative Places for burial

Many thanks were conveyed to Ian Rickwood who has been a server at our church for over twenty years and has now stepped down from doing this. A round of applause was given. Ian would like to thank the PCC for their kind gift.

Ann Courtness thanked Alex and Catherine for all their work and guidance. Catherine will be greatly missed and thank you for her work during Alex's sabbatical. Ann would like to thank all the church family who help look after the church.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed with prayers at 8.55pm

Signed.....

Date.....

**All Saints Church Biddenden**  
**Minutes of the new All Saints PCC meeting**  
**Held on Tuesday 17th April 2017 at 9pm**

**Attendance:** Alex Bienfait, Catherine Wilson, Ann Courtness, Tanya Ling, Peter Cutts, Paul Webster, Joanna Winston, Julie Lupton

**Appointment of Secretary:** Tanya Ling was proposed by Ann Courtness and seconded by Joanna Winston. All in favour.

**Appointment of Treasurer:** Peter Cutts proposed by Joanna Winston and seconded by Julie Lupton. All in favour.

**Agenda**

- Electricity proposal – Peter has spoken with EON and SSE to sort out our annual electricity contract. Peter is going to cancel the EON contract as they are more expensive and we can then look at SSE or another company for a cheaper deal.  
All in favour.

Next meeting is on Tuesday 8<sup>h</sup> May at 730pm at the Cabin.

## **BEQUESTS**

### **Mrs Elizabeth Ellen Hall, deceased**

Received of the Executors of the Will of the above-named deceased the sum of one hundred pounds bequeathed to us upon Trusts declared in the following terms:

“I wish to be buried in the churchyard of All Saints' Church, Biddenden aforesaid in the same grave as my late husband, Charles Henry Edward Hall, if this is in the opinion of my Trustees be practicable and convenient and I give to the Churchwardens of the said Church and their successors the sum of £100 in trust to invest the same in any investment hereby authorised and to apply the income thereof in or towards keeping the said Churchyard in good order and repair and I request that they will keep the said grave (which is numbered 72 and 73) and the tombstone or monument thereon in good order and condition and I declare that if the grave or monument shall at any time in the opinion of my Trustees be not so kept in good order and condition then the said trust fund and the income thereof shall thereupon rest in and become transferable and payable to the British Red Cross Society for the general purposes of the said organisation”.

Signed

Churchwardens, All Saints' Church  
Biddenden

December 1954.

### **Dence Bequest**

1. That it should be recorded in the Minute Book that the money invested, in the names of the Wardens for the time being and the Parochial Church Council, in £2,100 worth of 2½% Consols, and the annual interest thereon shall not be used for any other purpose than the maintenance and beautifying of the Churchyard and the grave of Mrs Dence in accordance with the conditions of a bequest from the late Mr A.H. Dence in May 1950.
2. That a similar record be placed in the Churchyard Account Book.
3. That this resolution should be read at all future Annual Parochial Church Meetings for the guidance of newly elected Officials and Council Members.

### **Note from Jenny Aers re: 3<sup>rd</sup> Bequest:**

With regard to the Reading of Bequests (in the last wallet of this section) I have included the detail of the Bequests for Hall and Dence but I don't have the wording for the new Bequest i.e. for Grace Marjory Smith. The referring minute 01/43.4 reads: “£5000 towards the upkeep of the Churchyard and in particular her grave in perpetuity”.