

Bickington Annual District Church Council Minutes

7.30pm on Thursday 11th April 2024 in the Village Hall

Present: Mark Rylands, Michael Hext, Brian, Lee, Jacquie Redfern, Vernon Coon, Connie Satterley, Peter Warren, Hannah Findley

Apologies: Jennie Aird Gauntlett, Eileen Luscombe, Robert Brown and Christine Carter

Mark opened the meeting with a reading from Colossians 3 and prayer.

Vestry Meeting

1. Appointment of Deputy Churchwardens for the year 2024/25

Peter was nominated by Jacquie, seconded by Connie, all were in favour.

Mark thanked Michael for his service as Deputy Churchwarden, describing him as an Angel that has brought good news. Michael was thanked for the energy, care and hard work he has given over the past few years to help open up the church, raise funds for the church and other charities, and bring people together through the soup and pud lunch. He was presented with a gift.

Annual District Church Meeting

1. Presentation of the revised Electoral Roll for 2024/25

The electoral roll was prepared by Eileen Luscombe. There are 21 people on the electoral roll, including 3 additions, with 8 members living outside the Ecclesiastical Parish.

2. Annual Reports

a) Mark presented the rector's report.

It has been very good to have the church open regularly during the last year, my thanks to the churchwardens, church openers and cleaning team who have made this possible.

Highlights of the last year have included the Harvest Celebration, with Bickington Community Choir and St Andrew's Church choir helping lead our singing, the Remembrance Sunday Service, the Christmas Carol Service, again with the two choirs, good attendance on Christmas Day, the Epiphany Christingle Service, Palm Sunday Service with donkey and Easter Day with Bickington Community Choir and Easter Egg Hunt.

Thank you to those who have made a huge effort to offer refreshments after most worship. I do feel this is a great boost to our fellowship and well-being. I would love it to continue.

The team now includes Jenny Weigel, our curate, who will be ordained priest on 23rd June in Ashburton. Chloe and Mack were licensed as lay ministers, and William West to be licensed this autumn. We also welcomed Ross Hathaway on 20th February as Team Vicar in Widecombe, Postbridge and Leusdon.

The Vision Day 'This is my story' was held on 2nd March in Ilsington.

There was a united service for St Patrick's day and Maundy Thursday was remembered with a Shepherd's Pie and Last Supper Service and Vigil in Ashburton.

There will be a Parish Weekend Away at Buckfast Abbey 10th-12th May and a United Service at St Peter's Buckland on 30th June. Holiday club will be held 24th-28th July concluding with a service on 28th July where we will say farewell to Heidi Lewis.

Church service have been well attended and it's been great that new people have joined and been included. I am most grateful for the soup and pud lunch for both fundraising and outreach, and helping to pay for a cleaner.

However we do have a few challenges: immediately, the tower, bells and heating, and also the roof, which will need special fundraising.

£240 is given each month through the Parish Giving Scheme, which needs to double to pay regular bills. I suggest we reinstate the collection.

b) Peter presented the churchwardens' report

This year has been eventful one minor ways.

We continue with two Services a month, ie. 9.00 Communion on the first Sunday and 10.30 Family Service on the third except for odd occasions. Thank you to our organists Hannah and Geoff.

Several people now contribute via Parish Giving and a retiring collection also takes place.

During this year we have been augmented by the Bickington Community Choir for Harvest and the Carol Service which has brought some extra congregation.

The Church building itself has suffered from the extra damp of this extraordinary winter in particular, The electrics have had a new switchboard fitted but it seems to be so sensitive and reacts to the excessive damp, even with the new dehumidifier on all the time.

A report on the Bells and their fixings and mechanism has resulted in work being necessary, a few rope wheels need repair or replacing owing to rain driving in through the louvres which are designed to let out sound, and new Bellropes are needed estimates are currently being sought.

We are still trying to sort out a more successful means of heating and hope to solve this during the summer.

Finally, Thank you to the District Church Council, the ladies who clean and carry out flower arrangements during the year, the Goodwill Community for their financial support and lastly to Michael Hext for his support and enthusiasm during this last year,,

c) Vernon presented the finance report

d) Michael had previously reported on the one deanery synod meeting of the year

e) Bob Brown was unable to attend due to illness.

3. Elections to the DCC

All members agreed to stand again except Michael and Christine Carter (Brian, Jacquie, Connie, Peter, Hannah, Jennie and Eileen). Lee agreed to be a fabric support officer.

4. Elections of sidesmen/women

No new elections were made

5. Elections to Deanery Synod

Hannah will remain the representative

6. Minutes from the previous meeting

Draft minutes from the meeting on 1st February 2024 were accepted, with the amendment that Peter, rather than Michael, will arrange a rota of people to open the church during the day.

7. Action from the previous meeting

All actions were completed except Hannah is to ask Cassie for a QR code for donations. Peter informed the meeting that the decision of the Parish Council to withdraw from funding the churchyard maintenance is likely to be reversed at their next meeting.

7. Any other business

It was agreed to hold a Bell Tower Fundraising Day on 6th July.

ACTION: Hannah to book the village hall.

ACTION: Peter, Lee and Mark to meet to plan.

ACTION: Michael to thank Mollie Towle for cleaning the church and inform her the DCC will not continue this after the funding from Bickington Goodwill Community ends.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 12th June in the village hall.

The meeting closed with the grace at 20.57.