

ST. MARY MAGDALENE, ASHTON ON MERSEY

Annual Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting in St Mary's Church Hall, Sunday 27th April 2025

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

- 1 Steve Rankin welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened with a prayer.
- 2 Steve Rankin handed over to Nathan Gregory.

2 **Present:** 47 members, the Associate Vicar, Nathan Gregory, and the Incumbent, Steve Rankin (chair)
Apologies: Yorke Menzies, Helen Jarvis, Insook Snudden, Brian Macfaden, Sue Bowers

3 The summary minutes of Annual Vestry Meeting held on 28th April 2024 were accepted and approved by all. At the same time, the minutes from the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28th April 2024 were accepted and approved by all, subject to an amendment to the date stated for the accounts from '2022' to '2023'.

Proposer: Ann McB **Seconder:** Anne Keast. All in favour.

4 **Churchwarden's Report:**

Wardens: John Vaughan, Yorke Menzies

John Vaughan presented the Churchwarden's report:

- This year was John's final year as church warden having served for 4 years. John commented on his time having been a great experience working alongside Anne Keast and Yorke Menzies.
- A fabric report was given, highlighting the work reported in the Quinquennial during John's first year now being completed. Some big items of work included the stonework which, now complete, has secured the building and preserved the perishing stone work and pointing for the next 10-20 years.
- John thanked those who work as part of the maintenance team, including noting some who have now stepped down from the team
- Thanks was also given to the gardening team, the deputy wardens, including Dave Kellert who is stepping down, and sidespeople.
- It's been a good year with lots happening. Some key highlights noted included 150th anniversary, Christmas, all our musicians, and the fantastic team that keeps things going.

Nathan expressed his thanks and appreciation to John for all he has done during his time as Church Warden.

5 **Election of Churchwardens:**

Nathan handed back to Steve Rankin to chair the elections.

- As yet we only have one nomination from Yorke Menzies to re-stand as church warden, with no new nomination to replace John. We have been in communication with Chester Diocese and have been advised that the role is to be classed as "warden in vacancy".
- Once we have a second nomination a church meeting will be called, but until then we will develop a team of deputy wardens who can be involved in elements of the work.

It was accepted and approved by all, with no abstentions, that Yorke Menzies take up the role of Church Warden again this year.

Proposer: Frances Hyde **Seconder:** John Vaughan

The Vestry Meeting closed and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting was opened.

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1 **Present:** 47 members, the Associate Vicar, Nathan Gregory, and the Incumbent, Steve Rankin (chair)
Apologies:

2 The summary minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28th April 2024 were accepted and approved by all alongside the Annual Vestry Minutes earlier.

Nathan Gregory took over leading the meeting again.

3 **Summary of the Annual Report 2024**

The Annual Report includes all the financial details from the past year plus stories from all ministry areas.

4 **2024 Accounts:**

Brian Macfaden was unable to attend the meeting. A video report was prepared in advance, presenting the summary accounts which were then approved with all in favour

Proposer: Janet McIlhagger, **Seconder:** Kai Wong

The financial overview included:

- The General Fund, which includes the church income and expenditure and church centre lettings, had a deficit of £26,000 for 2024. This deficit is driven by our intentional focus on children and youth ministry, and on church planting.
- It was noted however that the deficit was much lower than originally budgeted (£58,000). This was because employment of additional staff for the children and youth team was later in the year than originally planned. A grant was also received for church planting.
- The Maintenance & Development fund had a surplus of £44,000. This fund also acts as our reserves. Significant work was completed on the church stonework and the play area behind the hall. This was covered by a £61,000 grant received.
- £25,000 legacies were received from Norah Campbell, Ray Stone, Jonathan Carter and Dorothy Wharton.
- Butterflies again showed a deficit. While a deficit was expected in 2023, and the deficit for 2024 is less than the previous year this is still disappointing. The deficit is due to low numbers of children.
- Combining all funds, the overall surplus was £11,000. However this was helped by two grants in 2024 which are unlikely to be repeated.
- Almost all our income comes from our congregations.
- An overview of giving was shared with a note that that the increase in giving last year indicates signs of a healthy church
- As a church we commit to giving at least 10% towards mission each year and members were directed to page 11 of the annual report for a breakdown of where donations have been made over the last year.
- The Maintenance & Development fund finished with a balance of just under £139,000 which we use as our reserves and working capital to be able to run month to month.
- A grant of £60,000 towards Church Planting was received from the Northern Church Planting Fund. This can only be used for church planting – our new worshipping communities.
- Our total end of year balance is £211k, which gives us reserves of 2.8 months. We aim to have reserves to cover 3 months so if this reduces further we will need take action to rectify it.
- Brian reminded members of our vision to grow in areas of church planting and children, youth and family ministry – these are critical to the growth of the church nationwide.
- To pursue this vision the PCC agreed a budget deficit of £63,000 for 2025. This could be agreed because there are reserves that can cover the cost this year, but a significant increase in our income is required this year in order for us to continue what we are doing in future years.
- Brian thanked everyone for their stewardship, year on year and asked each person to prayerfully review what they give, or whether you would start giving, and to consider leaving a legacy. Giving directly impacts God’s work both here and around the world.
- Our accounts are all available online (www.stmarysaom.org/financialreports)

NG would like to thank BM and Insook for their work in overseeing the accounts with integrity and being open to being led by Holy Spirit. The following questions were asked following the report:

Q. What’s the Diocese’s view on supporting children’s and youth ministry.

SR answered. The CoFE are doing a big initiative on children and youth ministry. There is no funding available to support that, the work needs to be funded by the parish with the exception of some projects which we are unlikely to be eligible for. A follow up question was is there an opportunity to start influencing that decision and changing that narrative? SR said it’s almost impossible to do that but the bishops have started the conversation around the 1.2 million with a missional outlook. The diocese has a different outlook, there are opportunities and conversations. The accounts document provided by BM alludes to the fact that most grants are to fund new projects with churches that have no children and youth work currently.

Q. With regards to the Pre-School Group, their income is less than expenditure, is that deliberate?

This has not been deliberate, something we are mindful of and have a committee managing that. The whole sector is in a state of change and the situation is being monitored carefully. SR added that the pre-school is in a low year and next year we already know the numbers so we expect the Autumn term numbers to be better and then the general pattern tends to be that numbers then grow through the Spring and Summer terms.

5 **Electoral Roll Report** 319 names. This is down from 411 last year due to the new roll being created.

6 **Elections:**

- **Deanery Synod members** – Dave Atkinson, Avtar Diggwa, Matthew Kay, Jeff McBurney, Rosemary Sigee, Ian Thwaites. There are no Deanery Synod elections due this year so the above names will continue.
- **Ex Officio members:**
Readers – Brian Macfaden, Outi Rankin

- **Parochial Church Council:** We have 12 places available for the PCC 2025/26, for a 1-year term. 11 names were submitted. Following on from an election the following people were appointed to serve on the PCC:
Ada Adiuku-Brown, Rotimi Bajela, Jeremy Barnes, Joan Heys, Frances Hyde, Helen Jarvis, Elaine Jones, Brian Macfaden, Claire Nathan, Martin Samangaya, John Vincent

These names were accepted and approved with no abstentions.

Proposer: Ian Thwaites, **Seconder:** Graham Fosh. All in favour, no abstentions.

There is one vacancy remaining.

This year Jan Darlow and Barbara Shimmings have stepped down. Thanks was given to both for their time serving on the PCC.

- **Independent Examiner**

It is a requirement that we have an Independent Examiner, Sue Suchoparek is willing to re-stand and this was approved.

Proposer: Graham Fosh, **Seconder:** Andrew Campbell. All in favour, no abstentions

7 Deanery Synod Report

- Dave Atkinson gave the report, referring to the written article in annual report.
- The Deanery Synod meet three times a year, with refreshments, a short welcome with worship, and an address from someone external talking about a new initiatives. This year the addresses included a talk on eco churches and how churches can support vulnerable people. The address is always helpful in highlighting areas that churches can work on
- Updates from the General Synod are also given
- Deanery Synod financial reports include the decision by member churches to contribute some money in order to resource churches in the area. Currently the money given has funded the purchase of a portable sound system that can be used by different churches for events etc.

8 Ministry Stories

Children, Youth & Families Update

- Julie Loynd gave an update on Children, Youth and Families Ministry. Since last year we have appointed an amazing new team which has allowed us to increase our capacity.
- Janet McIlhagger has been leading out 0-4's ministry, strengthening relationships with parents in Tiddlers and building a strong team which now allows parents to leave their child with us and go into church. Caterpillars continues to meet each week and also has a great team who come alongside those from our wider community. A highlight has been seeing an increase in parents and carers asking the team for prayer.
- Previously we have had to reduce the amount of schools work being undertaken, stopping reception and nursery aged assemblies altogether, due to limited capacity. Yona Oyegun-Masade, as our children's worker, has now been able to start building those up again. St Mary's school continue their visits to church, and have added a new service to their timetable for harvest. Julie has been able to take RE lessons, including within schools outside of the parish, and Forest Park hold several services in church throughout the year. It's encouraging that we are now able to offer more.
- Dave Atkinson has been working with our young people, continuing to lead our Friday night and Sunday morning groups. We recognised a gap in what was offered to those in GCSE and A-Level year groups and now have a small group for them, meeting on Sunday evenings from 6-7pm with the hope that they will stay on to attend the 7pm service. Dave has built on a relationship with Ashton on Mersey seeing students now doing church visits, developing RE lessons in school, and helping with a day's work interviewing year 11s. Having never been in Sale Grammer before, God has opened doors there and Dave is now involved in helping lead the Christian Union there. Both schools, as of next week, will be running Youth Alpha. Alongside this we are also preparing for a church visit with Manor Ave Academy.
- As well as increasing capacity within the team for all we do at St Mary's, we are also being asked to resource other churches.
- After Easter 2025 the team were able to run their first ever schools week, 'Alive!'. Over 300 children from different local schools visited across two and half days. The uptake was so popular the event could have run for longer. Each session had a team of volunteers who took groups around and Julie expressed thanks to them, and our students who gave up their time to help serve.
- Julie finished by expressing thanks to all members for investing in the team, and encouraged people to keep praying as we continue to reach far more people than we could before.

Church Planting Update

- Steve Rankin gave an update on church planting and shared some information and statistics on how church engagements and attendance has changed in recent years, indicating a need to change our approach to mission, sharing the Gospel outwardly rather than waiting for people to come to us.

- A video was shared from the Faith Around The Table church plant where Chris Tower shared an update and talked about the impact of being part of Myriad.
- Steve added that Myriad provides an opportunity to provide something low-cost that can be very fruitful. As a Myriad training hub we are now supporting other lay-led worshipping communities, some Anglican, some not Anglican, as well as planting our own.
- A video from Sale West was shown. Carol Dodgson gave an update on the revitalisation at Sale West and shared that post-covid attendance was down to 4-5 people but since beginning Myriad there are now regularly 25 adults and 15-20 children attending. Myriad has helped the team form an action plan for growing the church together.
- A video from All Nations was also shown. Joy and Kewal Dass shared how their worshipping community has grown from a handful to now approximately 30 adults attending, with children on top of that. They have benefitted from being part of Myriad, they've found it has been encouraging and helped keep them on track with their vision.
- Church planting is also being developed within the diocese. There are now have 4 strategic teams, each overseen by a bishop, with one team specifically looking at church planting and which Steve is part of. Steve has also undergone training so he can now teach at other Myriad hubs being set up around the country.

9 Future Plans

Nathan shared the vision for next year

- It's exciting to hear so many stories from the last year and our vision for the future is more of the same – having built capacity in our Children, Youth and Families team, we want to see that grow further, and we want to continue to build on the work being done around church planting. We want to be a church that continues to desire to glorify God in all we do so others see God's glory.
- Nathan referred people to the Bible Society's research entitled "Quiet Revival", which highlights young people with no faith background walking into church to find out more about Jesus. We believe God prepared us with our teams for that.
- On Easter Sunday St Mary's church was full, and we don't believe it's just a coincidence that we spent six weeks before that prayer walking around the parish.
- But continuing all we are doing costs money. We can carry on this year, and probably the year after, but beyond that we need to resource the work more.
- Nathan finished by thanking everyone at the meeting for the time given to serving on rotas, and for the prayer and witness that they give. And he encouraged everyone to continue sharing the stories of all God is doing and to boldly proclaim the gospel.

8 A.O.B

There were no additional items for discussion.

9 The meeting closed with prayer at 6.40pm.