



## ST NICHOLAS BATHAMPTON

### MINUTES

#### of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens and of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025

at 2.00 pm in the Miller Room

Both meetings were chaired by the Rector, Jonty Frith, who welcomed everyone and opened in prayer.

#### Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens

(open to all resident in the parish or on the church Electoral Roll)

1. As both Paul Bryant and Anna Young were retiring from their roles as churchwardens, Jonty thanked each individually for their years of service and support and gave them each a gift of appreciation.
2. **Election of churchwarden 2025-26.** There being no other nomination received, Ian White was appointed unopposed. Jonty noted that, as sole churchwarden, Ian would need support from others – a point subsequently endorsed by Ian White himself.
3. **Recognition of stewards.** JF expressed his gratitude for the work of the stewards and to Jane Buckley for co-ordinating the rota. The stewards during 2024 were as follow: Jane Buckley, Robin and Angela Donald, Tim and Penny Laver, Andy Lloyd-Williams, Sylvia Perry, Nigel Shepherd, Ian White, Helen Williams, Ian and Jan Williams.
4. Jonty led a prayer for the past and present churchwardens, Anna, Paul and Ian.

#### Annual Parochial Church Meeting

(all welcome, but voting open only to those on the church Electoral Roll;

\* denotes a non-voting attendee)

*Present:*

Rebecca Bragg	Angela Donald	Tim Laver	Margaret White
Jilly Bryant*	Robin Donald	Ian Lewis*°	Helen Williams
Paul Bryant	Jonty Frith*	Andy Lloyd-Williams	Ian Williams
Jane Buckley	Samuel Frith	Sylvia Perry	Jan Williams
Anne-Marie Conn	Hilla Hunt <sup>‡</sup>	Nigel Shepherd	Anna Young
Timothy Conn	Peter Hunt <sup>‡</sup>	Ian White	[ <sup>‡</sup> from 2.40; ° from 3.15]

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from Molly and Phil Edge, Becky Frith, David Lascelles, Charles Laurie, Linda Lewis, Steve and Sally Magee, Chris Perry and Stephen Dalley Smith.
2. **Minutes of the 2024 APCM** were considered, with a few very minor corrections being noted.
3. **Reports:**
  - a. **Electoral Roll:** It was noted that the distributed version of the new Electoral Roll had omitted 3 applications; with their inclusion the new Roll comprised the names of 51 people of whom 31 were living in the parish and 20 outside; there were 22 men and 29 women. It was further noted that the necessity for every person to be re-enrolled this year had probably not been appreciated by everyone who had been on the previous Roll; a number of people would be contacted soon with a view to their applying for inclusion on the new Roll.
  - b. **Parish Review:** the 28-page booklet was taken as read.
  - c. **Financial Statements 2024:** both the Treasurer (Rita Warboys) and Independent Examiner (Andrew Morrison) were thanked for their work. A few typographical errors were noted. In response to a number of questions, the following points were noted: fees income was from weddings and funerals; the method for determining the amount of the Parish Share (now known as the Benefice Share) had been changed, resulting in almost no change in the amount for Bathampton but a significant increase for Claverton; the sum spent on churchyard

maintenance was under review by the PCC. Some dissatisfaction with the location of the shed was expressed.

- d. **Fabric** (see pages 26-27 of the Review): noted with thanks to Fabric Committee for their work.
- e. **Deanery Synod** (pages 13-14): noted.

#### 4. **Re:Generations project**

- a. **Phase 1:** Ian Williams presented an update on progress towards installation of the new 3-phase electrical supply, electrical rewiring, far-IR heaters and improved lighting in the church building, along with the status of the faculty application for this work. In response to questions, it was noted that, while part of the churchyard had been the subject of an archaeological report in 1992, some of the proposed cable route might still require archaeological oversight; also, the one currently operational gas-fired boiler would continue to heat the extension until such time as electrical heating could be installed throughout. Ian Williams was thanked for his excellent and patient work, together with Paul Bryant.
- b. **Phases 2-4:** Jonty Frith directed attention to the list of items on pp. 8-10 of the Annual Report, and he invited comment upon the possibility of replacing the pews (which, he has come to the opinion, are an obstacle to discipleship and fellowship) by flexible seating which would not only be helpful in encouraging better relationships within the church body but also could be used for other purposes. Robin Donald commented that he had obtained a quote for new flooring but not for laying concrete on the ground beneath the pews. Suzie Shaw noted that St Michaels Without had sold their pews by public auction some years ago. Paul Bryant observed that more people could have been accommodated in the church building during the time of social distancing if flexible seating had been in place. Jonty led a prayer for the whole Re:Generations project.

#### 5. **Elections:**

- a. **Appointment of independent examiner** for 2025 accounts: the meeting unanimously approved Andrew Morrison's reappointment (proposed Paul Bryant, seconded Tim Laver).
- b. **Deanery Synod:** Tim Laver would continue until 2026, but Anna Young was standing down, thereby creating a casual vacancy. Peter Hunt had been nominated to serve for 2025-26 and was elected unopposed.
- c. **Parochial Church Council:** in addition to *ex officio* members (*viz.* Rector, churchwarden(s), and representatives on deanery synod and diocesan synod), the size of our Electoral Roll (51-100) allows us to have 9 elected members of PCC, of whom normally one-third are elected each year for a 3-year term. This year one member had resigned, and 3 members had completed their terms. Together with Peter Hunt's appointment as a deanery synod representative, this meant that there were 5 vacancies, for which 4 nominations had been received. Consequently, Carl Fullway, Nigel Shepherd, Helen Williams and Ian Williams were elected (or re-elected) unopposed. The full composition of the PCC for 2025-26 would be as follows.  
*ex officio:* Jonty Frith (Rector), Ian White (churchwarden), Phil Edge (diocesan synod), Peter Hunt (deanery synod), Tim Laver (deanery synod)  
*elected lay members:* Jane Buckley (to 2027), Ann-Marie Conn (to 2026), Carl Fullaway (1 year, to 2026), Charles Laurie (to 2027), Sally Magee (to 2027), Nigel Shepherd (to 2028), Helen Williams (to 2028), Ian Williams (to 2028).  
One vacancy remains, in addition to the vacancy for a churchwarden.  
[NB: The PCC also has discretion to co-opt up to two people; in 2023-24 this included Ian Lewis.]

#### 6. **Rector's Comments**

In reminding us of the theme verse for 2025, which refers to the disciples as having 'been with Jesus', Jonty's hope was that all of us would not just talk about Jesus but would be with him, and that all our church activities would help us in this rather than be a distraction from it.

#### 7. **Any Other Business / Questions.**

- a. Jonty replied to Sylvia Perry's enquiry about the Ephesian Fund (EF) by directing the meeting to

the link provided in the notes to the 2024 accounts and by explaining first that there are two ways by which it operates: (i) an individual gives via EF to their parish church; (ii) a parish church gives via EF to the diocese. The intention in each case is to enable generous giving from those who do not in conscience want their money given to be used to support ministries in churches that are considered to undermine the gospel and morality. The approach of Bath & Wells towards EF differs from that of other dioceses. Money given by method (i) to St Nicholas Church during 2024 has been used for purposes other than paying the Parish Share. In practice this has no effect because the total amount given in other ways exceeds the amount of the Parish Share. The PCC has not reached a decision regarding the possibility of adopting method (ii).

b. Sylvia also requested for important items from PCC agendas to be made known to the church family in advance of PCC meetings. Jonty replied affirmatively.

c. The first of two questions from Stephen Dalley-Smith sent by email was as follows.

*'I am very concerned that the maintenance of the churchyard may be handed over to the local authority. As an 'arms-length' and more corporate organisation he felt they were less likely to exercise the required conscientiousness and diligence than a local person. Has the PCC considered approaching the Parish Council about sub-contracting the village Lengthsman or indeed employing him direct?'*

In reply, Jonty said, *'I am interested in your concerns about B&NES and how well they would look after the churchyard. The PCC has been considering that quite seriously. I visited All Saints Weston last week, which has handed over this responsibility, and the B&NES team were there strimming and cleaning up after themselves, and I was impressed with the standard – actually, it was tidier than ours. I talked to the vicar about it, and he said that they did a very good job, but they have a policy of not cutting grass in the summer because of biodiversity, which in his view leaves it looking a bit of a mess for a time. People have different views and priorities on that. I would not be against a local person being engaged to maintain the churchyard, but paying them to look after this asset of the whole community should not be the responsibility of a small group of generous givers in the church.'*

d. Stephen's second question was:

*'I note that the Electoral Roll has fallen by nearly 50% and that only 58% of those remaining live in the parish. Taken with worries minuted at last year's AGM about a perception that the church is not welcoming or inclusive, then this must be of very serious concern. Maybe it is not so much the team needing to adjust the 'method of explanation' but to think about the message itself?'*

In reply, Jonty had answered that the drop in Electoral Roll numbers occurs every six years (when the roll is completely renewed) as people are removed unless they actively fill in the form asking to be on the new roll. *'I am sorry for a marked lack of enthusiasm for the roll this time. But numbers attending church are not falling, despite a large number of members dying, so the membership is getting younger. It is mainly that there are fewer people who, like you, care about the church and choose to be on the roll, but not to attend Sunday services. I don't think that indicates a deficiency in the message.'*

7. **Date of next meeting:** to be confirmed, but probably after Easter 2026.

8. Jonty led a **closing prayer**. The meeting ended at 3.45 pm.