



**DRAFT Minutes of
Parishioners Meeting
and
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
held on Sunday 28th April 2024 in the Parish Hall.**

The meeting began with prayer led by Fr Kevin Morris. He also drew the attention of the meeting to the original sign for the Tabard Inn which has been installed in the Michael Room. The sign is on loan from the Bedford Park Society, having been found discarded during a refurbishment.

A. Parishioners Meeting:

Approximately 65 members of the congregation were in attendance. Father Kevin Morris was in the Chair.

Election of Churchwardens Nominations for the office of Churchwarden for 2022/24 had been received on behalf of Christina Whiteway and Peter Haigh. Both were duly elected to serve for the coming year.

Father Kevin thanked Peter Haigh and Christina Whiteway for all their work during the past year which had been particularly busy.

B. Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

1. The Statutory Notice convening the meeting had been displayed in the church porch as required and was taken as read.

2. Apologies: received from Jane McCabe and Torin and Carol Douglas

3. The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023.

A small amendment had been made before the meeting and they were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed.

4. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

5. Election of Lay Members of the PCC:

There were vacancies for two lay members. Nominations had been received for the election of Helen Simkin. She was duly elected following a vote by the meeting.

6. The Annual Report and Accounts for 2023: the Annual Report and Accounts were received.

7. Financial overview for 2023. Amanda Bradley, treasurer, introduced the accounts and illustrated them with slides.

Amanda began by thanking a number of people:

- Jamilla Amra, bookkeeper and adviser on financial accounting matters;
- Michael Pownall, Planned Giving lead and cashier;
- Allan Donner and the counting team.
- Tony Simkin, who processes Gift Aid reclaims.

- Andrew Mitchell, chair of the charities group.
- Ian Flatman, who buys and manages stock for our bars.
- Helen Dods who organized the Green Days cash collection and has also done considerable work in identifying energy suppliers who offer good value for money, balanced with our green criteria.
- Anna and Claire in the Parish Office who support the day-to-day administration of finances.
- The Wardens and PCC members who support the good governance and stewardship of church resources.
- Aly Mitchell who compiled the accounts for both SMAAA festivals and was instrumental in shifting Green Days to predominantly e-payments.
- Young St Michaels and Little Angels have raised funds for their work through cake sales.

Amanda went on to outline the main areas of the accounts:

Income: the main source of church income has continued to be voluntary donations. Regular donations are now slightly above pre-pandemic levels at £138.5k. but cash collected at services is down from £39.6k in 2019 to £27.7k in 2023. Licensing the parish hall to Dukes Group has provided a regular income stream but other usage is still a little way below pre-COVID levels. There have been increased expenses in terms of utilities and caretaker cover. Inflation has been at around 5% per annum: this means that our real spending power has declined and we are still some way behind 2019.

A new donation station at the back of the church was purchased for £30 with a grant from the Church of England – a saving of over £300. Known as a CollecTin, it gives us greater functionality and makes it possible to run special campaigns at selected services.

Expenditure: although the parish is now funding the stipend and living costs of our Curate the PCC decided to maintain our Common Fund contribution at £96k. We also continued to support St Peter's Church with £3.7k to help with administrative costs. Additionally, we were able to give over £45k to our chosen charities in the year.

Investments: the surplus generated before investments fell from £12.9k in 2021 to £8.6k in 2022: this has to be seen against a strong investment gain in the previous year.

Cash Holdings:

The cash outflow on Quick Road and the new boilers was just over £62k, which explains the rapid fall in cash holdings in the year. At the year end, the church held cash at bank of £229.2k. Of this, £4.2k was restricted with a further £148K being designated for defined purposes by the PCC, including a new music fund. £3.8k was donated into this fund in the second half of the year and, with other music-related donations, this offset just over a quarter of the music costs for the year.

We continue to hold a prudently high cash balance, split across ethical investment funds and term deposit accounts. In prior years, we have easily met our reserves policy of holding unrestricted funds equal to six months' expenditure. However, the expenditure on Quick Road and the boiler in the year has put us just under that at 5.8 months. With the completion of the memorial garden project, this will decline further. Whilst six months may sound very conservative we are aware that we are moving into a more challenging financial situation, as custodians of an expensive building in a rising cost environment.

Managing our costs.

With advice from Helen Dods, our Eco Lead, we have refixed our energy prices now until 2026. Our new tariff is more expensive than our old one, but still a very good deal. Fr. Kevin has also managed to secure Diocesan Funding for our Curacy costs from July 2024 for 12 months, reflecting the financial and time investment made by the parish and Fr Kevin in training for the next generation of priests. We are also grateful to the St Michael's Trust for giving us a grant for half of the 2024 Curacy costs to lighten the load further.

We have enhanced our budget process this year, involving those who spend the budget in setting the budget and providing help in controlling costs.

Amanda concluded by pointing out that more details were provided in the Annual Report and Accounts. She thanked the congregation for their part in the good governance and financial management of SMAAA. We are all responsible for thoughtful stewardship of the resources of our Church.

Fr. Kevin thanked Amanda for her work as treasurer during the year. This has become a time-consuming role which she has carried out in a very professional way. He also reiterated that SMAAA is struggling to cover its costs: we are not a wealthy church. However, we are one of only two churches in Hounslow who give more than we are asked to the Common Fund and in this way we are supporting churches who are in even greater difficulty than us. Fr. Kevin reminded the meeting that, although important, money is not the only factor in running an active church: the gifts and skills of the congregation also play a crucial part.

8. Re-appointment of the Independent Examiner. A motion to re-appoint Reddy Siddiqui as the SMAAA independent examiner was seconded and passed.

9. Report on the Electoral Roll: The report on the electoral roll was presented by Vicky Brooke, our electoral roll officer. At the end of December 2023 the electoral roll stood at 291, an increase of 13 from the previous year. In addition, five new members have been added in the current calendar year. Vicky had encouraged young people and new members of the congregation to put their names on the roll but this is something where everyone should play a part. She was thanked for all her work on the roll on our behalf.

10. Fabric Report: The report was introduced by Christina Whiteway.

Major Works

Restoration and repair works on the north side of the church: some works identified at the last Quinquennial inspection are still awaiting completion, mainly due to the need for funding. However, most of the works needing immediate action have been addressed and many smaller tasks are being tackled.

Friends of St Michael: The PCC has created a fund for the Fabric of the Church with an initial target of £400K. A working committee is fact-finding about best practices and engaging with local historical and architectural societies. The aim is to encourage the wider community to help care for a local historical building. A generous donation from a member of the congregation has already been received.

Refurbishment of All Souls Chapel: this project is now with the faculty panel at the diocese.

Michael Room Kitchen: Last summer the kitchen received a significant upgrade to meet the needs of our main hirer, Chiswick & Bedford Park school. This was paid for by Dukes Education. We now have new halogen hobs, fridges and dishwasher. These can only be operated by professional caterers which puts some limits on hiring out the kitchen. However we benefit from the financial investment made by the school.

Maintenance of the Estate

Guttering: the high guttering was cleared in February 2023 through a service organised by the diocese. Other guttering is cleared regularly by the caretakers.

Font Chain Safety Inspection: we have so far been unable to find a way of inspecting the chain for the lid of the font. John Scott has kindly taken this project forward.

CCTV security: last year we identified the need for better security for church users, volunteers and workers and also to protect the valuable assets and treasures of our church. Following a series of incidents the installation of CCTV was agreed. Jan Vermooten assessed our requirements and we have applied for a grant from the Home Office.

External locks: a key-pad operated lock has been fitted to the external door to the Michael Room. Similar locks are being considered for other external doors.

Pew painting: our caretaker Damian undertook the task of sanding down and repainting all our pews last summer and we are very grateful to him for doing such a good job.

Our caretakers, Valerio, Damien, Will, and Kristian continue to be a great asset to our team and, with Claire and Anna, our parish managers, they keep the church and parish halls running. Christina thanked them all on behalf of the St Michael's community.

Boiler replacement and heating system upgrade: Our boilers have been replaced with updated, hydrogen-compatible models. They have been relocated to a more suitable position and the thermostats and heating control panels upgraded and repositioned. As part of the Church of England's environmental plan, we are setting the temperature at 17 degrees, which, along with the more efficient equipment, will significantly improve our energy usage and costs. Insulation has been installed on the outer main church doors and to the external door to the car park.

Eco/Environmental Report

Helen Dods, our Eco-Champion, has carried out significant work in assessing, reporting and bringing about positive change to our eco credentials in the past year including:

- Advising on the installation of new hydrogen-compatible boilers
- Submitting our Energy Footprint for calendar years 2022/23
- Gathering information on 'clean energy' heating and lighting systems in other churches
- Investigating LED lights
- Investigating additional church insulation.

Christina thanked Helen for her hard work and vital contribution.

Planned Works

Refurbishment of toilet areas: This summer we are intending to refurbish the toilets in the parish rooms. This should enable us to increase the hire charges.

Quick Road

The Quick Road property has been let on a two-year agreement following an extensive refurbishment. Thanks are due to Lizzie Harris for overseeing this project. There have been some condensation issues and there was also some water ingress from the ceiling, which was traced to the roof. Repairs were made to the tiling and flashing, which has resolved the issue. There is a six-month break clause in the lease agreement in the event that we need the house back to accommodate a new curate and family.

Garden/Grounds

Tree removal: we have removed the Robinia tree from the garden facing the Tabard, as it was becoming unsafe. The tree stump still remains but there are plans to have it removed in 2024. We have also taken down the scaffolding, which was only used occasionally and had become unsightly.

Questions from the Congregation.

1. The PCC was reminded that there are several high chains in the church which should be inspected at the same time as the font chain.
2. There was a query about the display on the new thermostats and whether it is possible to check the actual temperature in the church as well as the target temperature.
3. There was a query about the possible impact of the new Rent Reform Act on the tenancy at Quick Road.

11. Report on Progress with the Memorial Garden.

Helen Wareham reported on the plans for the Memorial Garden. Garden designer, Jane Ashley, has been appointed and is working with our panel, Susan Hunt, Nigel Woolner and Helen Wareham, to finalise the design. There have been consultations with the gardening team and our Eco-lead. The final drawings will be displayed for the congregation and wider community to view.

A planning application has been submitted for pruning the yew tree, which has become very lop-sided. The widening of the path at the main church entrance will be undertaken at the same time as the memorial garden works to reduce costs and disruption. Helen thanked Susan Hunt and Nigel Woolner for their work on this project.

Question from the congregation

1. The planning application for pruning the yew tree requests 5 metres off the height and 3 metres off the width. It was suggested this might be excessive.
2. It was pointed out that the postcode on the planning application is inaccurate.

12. Slide Show: St Michael's in 2023.

A slide show, prepared by Jim Cox, demonstrated the number of events and activities which had taken place at St Michael's and acknowledged the clergy and volunteers who had contributed to them. Jim Cox was thanked for preparing the slides.

13. Any Other Business

On behalf of the congregation Christina Whiteway thanked all the clergy who support St Michael's and, in particular, Fr Kevin whose dedication and hard work continue to inspire us all.

Signed.....Date.....