

St George the Martyr, Shirley
Following Christ + Serving the community + Welcoming all

MINUTES of the Annual Vestry Meeting for 2024
held on Sunday 18th May 2025

Attendance 27 Parishioners were present with 2 having tendered apologies.

The meeting was opened by the new Priest in Charge, Rev Jenny Walpole (JW) who extended a warm welcome to all in attendance.

The minutes of the AVM for 2024 had been circulated and made available electronically, no amendments had been tabled. The Chair asked if anyone present had any additions or amendments to be made. There were none so Owen Whalley proposed and Marion Sheehan seconded that the minutes be confirmed. The proposal was adopted unanimously with two abstentions due to absence but no objections.

Appointment of Church Wardens There was only one nomination for Churchwarden, Mrs Jan Turner. JW explained that another Warden could be appointed until the “Visitation” at the end of August but there being no other candidates Mrs Jan Turner was duly appointed Warden.

This concluded the business of the 2024 Annual Vestry meeting.

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MINUTES of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2024
held on Sunday 18th May 2025

Attendance 27 Parishioners were present with 2 having tendered apologies.

Minutes The minutes of the APCM for 2023 had been circulated and made available electronically, no amendments had been tabled. The Chair asked if anyone present had any additions or amendments to be made. There were none so Owen Whalley proposed and Jan Payne seconded that minutes be confirmed. The proposal was adopted unanimously with one abstentions, due to absence but no objections.

Vicar’s Report

JW delivered her first report.

“I was licensed as Priest-in-Charge of St George’s on 3rd October 2024 and so this report covers just three months of 2024 and my first three months in post. I am delighted to be here, many thanks for your welcome. Thank you to all those who worked hard during the Vacancy – especially Jan, Hilary and the ministry team. I came this Church because I felt called to serve here and to love these people, to love you. That calling remains and that is what will inspire my ministry going forward into 2025.

I am proud to be part of this particular Church family here in Shirley and to be part of a team. I am also proud to be part of an Eco Church, and an Inclusive Church, and I believe we excel in these areas and there is more we can do. I look forward to celebrating our vision and developing our Mission Action Plan with our three main priorities which are serving the Local community, All-Age discipleship and Stewardship.

We held an All Age service to mark Black History month, we held a service called: Wave of Light for Baby Loss Awareness week, we held a service to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance, we held an All Age Parade service for Remembrance Sunday. We held an Advent course, and a range of services over Christmas including a Crib Service, and a Christingle. We continue with our regular pattern of services which include a 10 am service on Sunday, an 11:30 am Eucharist in the Lady Chapel on Wednesdays and Morning Prayer on Zoom, Monday to Fridays. Many thanks to all those who are involved in leading, preaching, preparing, serving, singing, and simply turning up to ensure our worship runs smoothly.

My first three months in post involved listening and learning and as I continue in my first year here at St George's I continue very much in that vein. I understand there is concern about our finances and about our Building Project. These are challenges which we will work out together, I won't be making any unilateral decisions. I very much believe in the collective responsibility of the PCC. However, I will be putting in place some light changes to our governance, such as electing a Standing Committee and to ensure that we are able to think strategically and address the issues which are of importance to our Mission and Ministry. Finally, thank you for supporting me, thank you for loving your Church, thank you for being you. Here's to the next exciting Chapter at St George's!

The report was received with enthusiastic applause.

Churchwardens' Report

JW then invited Jan Payne (JP) to present the Churchwardens' Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church March 2024 - March 2025. This report had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

Last year saw the last nine months of the interregnum which culminated in the appointment and subsequent licensing of Jenny as our Priest-in-Charge at the beginning of October. We were all then able to start to get to know Jenny as she settled into life in the parish and within the St. George's family.

On a more mundane level, our five yearly electrical inspection and lightning conductor installation took place in February, both of which are legal requirements and included in the QI. The urgent re-pointing, particularly on the wall around the Missen window has also been carried out, again as referred to in our last QI.

All the statutory maintenance checks have been carried out (including the boilers, fire-fighting equipment and portable appliance testing) and the tower ladder serviced. The drains and gutters are regularly checked and cleared. The Church Log Book has once again been updated.

We now have a defibrillator for the site which is located in the church hall but with appropriate signage and a hall key also available in the church porch.

As ever, I am grateful to you all for your continued support, especially to Tony Aufenast for his continuing leadership and coordination of his 'Sound System' team; to the 'Premises/Maintenance' team ably led by Evan and Kwame who respond to requests for additional or specific help; and to

Steve Westray, Jan Turner and their team for continuing to maintain and develop the garden so that it remains a place of peace, solace and beauty.

I also have to say a huge thank you to the Assistant Wardens, Alexander and Evan, who have found themselves with additional and unexpected responsibilities since the end of last year and have both gone out of their way to support me in every way they possibly can.

Finally, I need to thank Hilary for her guidance and leadership during the interregnum, and subsequently Jenny as she took on her new role, along with the staff team who so ably support both of them, along with Heather and myself, over the past year.

I hope my successor will find this role as much of a privilege to hold as I have done, and that with all your continued love and support, we can all further strengthen our church's position at the heart of our community.

Jan Payne April 2025

Electoral Roll

Owen Whalley (OW) the Electoral Roll Officer explained that at last year's Parish meeting the Electoral Roll stood at 116. However, that every 6 years we are required to completely renew the Electoral Roll and no names are carried forward and all parishioners must make a new application to be included on the new Roll.

Inevitably, numbers on the Roll drop significantly when it is completely renewed but increase again during the subsequent year, currently there are 71 names on the Roll.

In response to a question from the floor OW outlined the qualifying criteria for inclusion on the roll.

Report on the PCC

The secretary referred to his written report and pointed out that in compliance with requests made at the APCM in 2023 this year's report gave more information on what had been considered. In response to a question about the current position on the sale of land JW responded and gave an update and confirming that in due course the PCC would consider the options for building an annexe or a hall. JW named and thanked the Steering Group for all their efforts.

JW explained that a Deed of Easement had been signed and asked Susan Wheeler to outline the land to be sold. General discussion ensued.

Finance Report and Appointment of the Independent Examiner

Finance Report

The accounts had been circulated and made available electronically. The Chair invited Sophie Clayton to give a brief overview of the Church's financial position. SC went through the accounts explaining the new layout required by the Charity Commission.

JW pointed out that at the moment we only pay some 43% of the cost of running to the Parish Support Fund and need to increase the percentage year by year to move toward the full cost as well as keeping up with inflation.

Elizabeth Birchenough proposed and Helen Aylward seconded that the accounts be adopted. The proposal was carried unanimously with no abstentions or objections.

Profound thanks were extended to SC for all her work on the accounts

Appointment of an Independent Examiner IE

JW reminded the meeting that the current IE had been used for a number of years and the PCC considered it was appropriate to appoint a fresh IE and had suggested that Independent Examiners Ltd, Liz Bebington proposed, Helen Aylward seconded and the meeting voted unanimously with no objections or abstentions that Independent Examiners Ltd n be appointed as IE.

Election of Laity to the PCC

JW reminded the meeting of the membership of the PCC. The inclusion of the staff team, Jenny, Hilary, Ray, and Elizabeth were approved unanimously. The Deanery Synod representatives, Fay, Helen and also Ray had places automatically. There were nine places open for elected representatives but only seven names had been proposed so the nominees, Alexander Baldwin-Smith, Owen Whalley, Susan Wheeler, Katie Francis, Elizabeth Bichenhough, Jan Payne and Steve Westray were declared as elected. The remaining two places remained available.

JW congratulated and thanked all those on the newly elected PCC.

It remained for the new PCC to appoint a Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary, subject to confirmation of his willingness to continue Alan Chitty was proposed as Treasurer and Eric B-S as secretary. Both nominations were adopted by the PCC members unanimously and JW thanked to both.

Deanery Synod Report

JW explained that the Deanery Synod Report was a mandatory and thanked Fay Westray for producing the report which was received without questions.

Other Reports

The other reports had been made available electronically, no comments or questions were forthcoming, and the reports were adopted unanimously.

JW expressed thanks to all those who had provided reports to applause of the meeting.

Any Other Business

No matters of other business had been tabled. The point was made from the floor how important it would be in connection to the sale of the land and building projects for the PCC to keep the congregation fully aware of the issues and where necessary consulted. JW stressed that she intended to be as transparent and informative as she could.

There being no further business JW thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting with the Grace.

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