

Benefice of Hardwicke and Elmore with Longney

PARISH OF ST NICHOLAS HARDWICKE

Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held Sunday 7 May 2023, 12noon in the Church

Minutes

Opening Prayers at 12.10pm

Apologies for absence: Anita Russan, Jenny Bell, Wendy Hollis.

Annual Parish Meeting (*anyone on the Electoral Roll or who lives in the parish and is on the Local government Electoral register may vote*) 15 Number present.

Election of churchwardens: Richard Flower and Neil Hollis had been duly proposed and elected; All in favour.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (*Only those on the Electoral Roll may vote*) 15 Number present.

- 1) **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held 15 May 2022** : were accepted with no amendments; Proposed Neil Hollis; Secunder Nick Denman. All in favour.
- 2) **Matters arising** : None
- 3) **Reports** : (taken as read, questions invited)
 - Electoral Roll (Claire Trafford Electoral Roll Officer) 1 extra bringing total to 66 this year.
 - PCC and Church activities report, the Vicar thanked everyone for all their contributions.
 - Financial report : From Neil, we kept our head above water, income and outgoings similar to last year, we have paid our full parish share this year, however, this is only due to fundraising, therefore we need to continue fundraising. The Plate is similar and the card machine is well used. We cannot afford to be complacent. Vicar and everyone present thanked Wendy in all she does as treasurer. The urgent work on the Bells, fundraising continues, the PCC has agreed to put in £4,000, Pat (former editor of Hardwicke Matters) suggested contacting Hardwicke Matters for both funding and placing an article in the magazine about the bells. Vicar thanked everyone's for their contributions throughout the year.
 - Churchwardens' Fabric report, ongoing works.
 - Deanery Synod report concentrating on Strategic plan.
- 4) **Elections and appointments**
 - Appointment of Deanery Synod representatives (2) Justine Sullivan + Marion Williams – all in favour.
 - Election of PCC members (3) 9 Members elected. 2 New Nominations Glen Duff and Paige Hendy, plus Anita Russan, Nick Denman, Andrew Plater, Mark Walters, Jenny Bell, Carrie Gladstone, Linda Cook. Proposer Pam Lewis; Secunder Sarah Walters. All in favour

- Appointment of Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead Recruiter : Anita Russan will continue as Safeguarding Officer and Georg Parfit will continue as Lead Recruiter.
- Appointment of Data Protection Officer : Neil Hollis will continue.
- Appointment of Independent Examiner : David Edwards

The Vicar thanked all people for all they do.

5) Priest-in-charge's comments

That gospel passage is a reading we often use at funerals. It'll be read here on Tuesday at Peter's service. And indeed, it tells us clearly of the hope, through Jesus, of life in God's presence, a place prepared specially for us. A place which is not fully booked – there are many rooms!

There are other lessons to be drawn from it, too, which I think help us at this APCM.

First, Thomas says, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way?"

It feels as if we are at the start of new beginnings here – and re-starting ones that were forced into hibernation by Covid. We have started, but we don't know really how things will turn out – like Thomas we don't know where God is leading us to.

The re-ordering plans have made some progress, in that we now know what we need to do to apply for a faculty. How will it all turn out? We don't know. We now have the monthly service in the school – thanks to all who help with the logistics of that, by the way! – and it's getting good attendances – but how do we develop that? what's next? Where is God leading us? We have Tim and Luke working as Pioneer sports ministers on Hunts Grove, and have had a Christmas Carol service and 2 Messy Churches in the school – but we aren't sure how things will build from these foundations.

There are other things too: the monthly toddler service, another new Head at Hardwicke school from September – please pray for Sharon - and the possibility of a new youth choir. Here we are, with all these things either started or planned – but where next?

So, I think Thomas' question is ours, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way?"

Now let's turn to Jesus' answer, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no-one comes to the Father except through me".

You may have heard me say before that in the Middle East if someone says "I am the way" they mean, stay with me, I'll take you. Not, here's a map, or even, let me put the postcode into your Satnav, but I'll be your guide.

If we want to reach God's destination, the key thing is not seeing ahead, but seeing the Head – Jesus, the head of this and every Church. Keeping close by him, in step with him. Watching and imitating him. Listening for his word calling us back if we try to go it alone, and receiving his daily bread to sustain us. Praying daily for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who changes us to become more and more like Jesus.

Now let's look at verses 13 and 14. The words, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" have been much misunderstood. They don't mean, pray for anything you like, then add "in Jesus' name Amen"! In the Bible, the name of someone means their character, their true

nature. To pray in the name of Jesus is to pray as Jesus would pray, to pray for the things he'd be praying for. The Lord's Prayer, his own prayer, gives us a pattern to start from, a pattern that has untold riches within it.

What could those in Jesus' name prayers be, specifically in our context here at Hardwicke? Again, we have no clear answers. But if we stay close to Jesus, and allow the Spirit to shape us into his character, we will find our prayers are his prayers, we'll be truly praying in his name.

As we move forward into another year, let us each, in our own lives and together as God's Church here, renew our resolve make our friendship with Jesus our number one priority. And wait with expectant faith to see how he shapes and then answers those prayers.

6) Priorities for 2023-4

- a. Continue to press on with the Re-ordering scheme. Statement of Significance and Options Appraisal now received this will enable us to continue with what is required.
- b. Progressing the service at School, now held on the 3rd Sunday every month, how do we deepen their awareness etc
- c. Develop Relationship with school - new head teacher. We also need several new school governors.
- d. Huntsgrove is still being built. Tim and Luke's work through Sportily and all those support the Messy Church. Needs to grow and make more stable. Our next Messy Church is Pentecost, Sunday 28 May.
- e. Our Church needs to do things to engage with the community such as Coffee mornings, however these do not organise and run themselves, more help is required – on the day; with publicity, making things for it etc etc.
- f. Wednesday children and carers will continue – the childminders and their charges come once a month, they listen to a bible reading and sing some songs, about 20 children on the last session.

7) Any Other Business

- a. Sarah wanted to include our thanks to our Vicar and all he does – round of applause from everyone. The vicar again thanked everyone for all they do.

8) Closing Prayer with the grace at 12.31pm