

# **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023**

## **THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, NUNEATON**

### **MINUTES OF ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING HELD ON**

**TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023**

The meeting was chaired by Fr Roger

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – There were no apologies
2. APPOINTMENT OF CHURCHWARDENS – There were two nominations, current Churchwardens Keith Lyons and Paul Allred. (Keith was proposed by Carol Hayes and seconded by Colette Marston, and Paul Allred was proposed by Colette Marston and seconded by Lesley Colclough). It was proposed that they were appointed and as there were no other nominations Keith and Paul were elected as Churchwardens (all in favour). Thanks were given to Keith and Paul for their work last year.

This concluded the Annual Vestry Meeting

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## **THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, NUNEATON**

### **MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON**

**TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023**

The meeting was chaired by Fr Roger

1. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING – The Minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 had been forwarded to the PCC and were read and accepted
2. CHURCHWARDENS REPORT – This Report was produced by the Churchwardens, Keith Lyons and Paul Allred
3. GARDENING REPORT – This Report was produced by Tony Nixon
4. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT – Due to the fact that until the last PCC meeting there were no Deanery Synod Reps there is no report. Ginny Butcher was appointed Synod Rep at the last PCC meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Keith Lyons was also appointed Synod Rep at the APCM (proposed by Ginny Butcher and seconded by Susan Read).
5. FAIRS AND FUNCTIONS GROUP REPORT – This Report was produced by Jan Bradbury.
6. FLOWER FUND REPORT – This Report was produced by Jan Bradbury.
7. ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT – This Report was produced by the Electoral Roll Officer, Sharon Allbrighton.
8. FABRIC REPORT – This Report was produced by Keith Lyons

9. CHILDREN'S CHURCH REPORT – This Report was produced by Ginny Butcher.
10. ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REPORT – This Report was produced by Fr Roger.
11. ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PCC – Three members of the PCC, Julie Murray, Gaynor Cart and Lynn Hancock, were due to stand down after serving three years. Sadly Lynn passed away in 2022. The two members due to stand down both wished to be re-appointed (Julie proposed by Helen Allred and seconded by Susan Read, and Gaynor proposed by Keith Lyons and seconded by Veronica Grice). It was proposed that the two member would be elected to the PCC. All in favour.
12. FINANCIAL REPORT – The report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was produced by the Treasurer, Julie Lyons and thanks were given to her for work the past year.
13. ACCOUNTS EXAMINER FOR 2022 – Michael Williams examined the financial accounts for 2022 and thanks were given to him for his work. He is willing to continue as accounts examiner and it was proposed that he continues as examiner for 2023.
14. The Churchwardens thanked all the Sidespeople for their work on Sunday mornings.
15. Thanks were given to Fr Roger and Ginny for everything they do and for their support.

This concluded the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

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**THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, NUNEATON**

**MINUTES OF PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON**

**TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023**

1. The meeting was chaired by Fr Roger
2. WELCOME TO MEMBERS – The two members, Julie Murray and Gaynor Cart and also Ginny Butcher as Synod Rep were all welcomed on to the Council.
3. ELECTION OF PCC OFFICERS – the following were duly elected
  - (a) Vice-Chairman – Paul Allred (proposed by Gaynor Cart and Ginny Butcher) All in favour
  - (b) Hon. Secretary – Susan Read (proposed by Paul Allred and seconded by Trevor Davies) All in favour
  - (c) Hon. Treasurer – Julie Lyons (proposed by Helen Allred and seconded by Julie Murray) All in favour
  - (d) Electoral Roll Officer – Sharon Allbrighton (proposed by Paul Allred and seconded by Trevor Davies) All in favour
  - (e) Standing Committee – this consists of the following members – Fr Roger (Clergy), Keith Lyons and Paul Allred (Churchwardens), Sue Read (Secretary), Julie Lyons (Treasurer), Sharon Allbrighton (Electoral Roll Officer) and Julie Murray (Safeguarding Officer). If the Standing Committee meets there must be a quorum of at least three members.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

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## **Background**

The PCC of St Mary's Abbey Church, Nuneaton has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar on promoting the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

It also has maintenance responsibilities for:-

- The church which is a Grade II listed building
- The grounds which are a Grade I listed building
- The Parish Hall

## **Membership**

The members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules or are co-opted by the PCC.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC

Vicar	Fr Roger Butcher	
Reader	Mrs Helen Allred	ex-officio
Warden	Mr Keith Lyons	ex-officio
	Mr Paul Allred	ex-officio
Reps of Deanery	Ginny Butcher	
Synod	Keith Lyons	
Co-opted	Julie Lyons (Treasurer)	
Members	Sue Read (Secretary)	
Electoral Roll	Sharon Allbrighton	
Officer		
Elected Members	Andrea Bradley	
	Veronica Grice	
	Julie Murray	
	Sharon Allbrighton	
	Gaynor Cart	
	Stephen Harban-Bullock	
	Trevor Davies	
	Tony Nixon	

## **Committees**

The PCC has only one committee – the Standing Committee – which is the only one required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. A quorum of at least three members of the Standing Committee is required for a meeting to be held

## **Report on the PCC activities**

The PCC has met regularly and we hold our meetings in the Choir Vestry.

Fr Roger and Ginny have now been with us for two years and we thank them for their wonderful ministry and friendship. We also thank Fr Brian for the continued support which he gives to Fr Roger.

PCC members are on the governing body of both Church schools with Paul Allred being both a Foundation Governor and Chair of Governors at Queens Academy and Helen Allred is also a Foundation Governor at Queens. Fr Roger is also on the Board of Governors.

The Childrens Church has continued to flourish under the care of Ginny and our thanks are given to her for the continuing nurture of the children.

The PCC members are fully committed to their responsibilities and the whole mission of the Church. They are involved in, and support the many events in the Church year including Holy Week, Christmas, the three fundraising Fayres, pilgrimages to Walsingham, concerts and numerous social events during the year.

As secretary I wish to thank the PCC for their continued support.

Sue Read  
Secretary

### **Churchwardens Report 2023-2024**

Over the past year, since the previous APCM, we have continued to see the development of our church life and social activities linked with the church.

Fr. Roger is on the governing bodies of both Abbey Infants and Queens as a Foundation Governor along with Helen Allred at Queens and Paul Allred at both Queens and Abbey Infants. He leads assemblies in school on a regular basis and pupils from both schools visit St. Mary's for occasional assemblies.

Fr. Roger and Ginny continue to lead and encourage us in so many ways. Ginny continues to take the lead in organising Children's Church. She would be delighted to receive help in delivering this valuable part of our ministry. Continued thanks go to Fr. Brian for his support to us all at the Abbey and also to Helen for her Reader ministry.

The St. Benedict window has now been installed and excellently complements the other windows. We look forward to Bishop Paul coming to bless the window on 11<sup>th</sup> July as well as confirming our candidates at the same service.

It is a joy to see the life of our Church continue to develop, thanks to the dedication of so many people. These range from the inspiring Lent Group meetings held recently, to concerts, an expanding and established choir expertly guided by Trevor our organist, inspiring pilgrimages to Walsingham, Children's Church and an increasing number of activities organised by the Fairs and Functions group to name but a few. Thank you to everyone who organises and supports these along with everything else that contributes to our life as a Church. It is encouraging to see the number of people involved in so many ways.

Ginny and Keith continue to represent the Abbey at Deanery Synod and we thank them for their efforts in ensuring that our views are heard.

The Abbey Ruins are the subject of ongoing discussions concerning what needs doing to ensure that they are preserved and safe, whose responsibility they are and who pays for the maintenance. In the meantime, an appropriate weed killer has been used to minimise the risk of further damage due to growing weeds.

New noticeboards have been secured on the walls at the Bottrill Street entrance to our grounds. In addition, the Rose Garden has been established to provide the opportunity for loved ones who have died to be remembered in a permanent and attractive way. Thanks must go to all who have contributed.

Thank you to everyone for your support over the past year.

Your Churchwardens - Paul Allred and Keith Lyons

## **Gardening Report 2023-2024**

First some thanks. To all those still in the Gardening Club, thank you for your continued support. Next my thanks to our gardeners, Veronica, Andrea, Colin, Nigel and Keith, who continue to turn up come frost, heat, wind and rain. Without their efforts the gardens would not look as good and tidy as they do especially in the last few weeks of very wet weather. It is surprising how often it seems to rain on Mondays!

The new rose garden is coming along well and the bulbs planted by the children's church have put on a good display. Looking forward to some warm, dry weather in the near future now.

Cheers,

Tony.

## **Deanery Synod Report**

Deanery Synod Representatives:            Keith Lyons  
    Ginny Butcher  
    Plus one vacancy

The main focus of the Deanery Synod (DS) is to act as a bridge between the Diocese and Parish Churches—a forum for sharing and understanding the wider deanery picture of mission and ministry. DS can propose motions for the Diocesan Synod and select members for the General Synod; Lay Member Sam Margrave worships here at the Abbey.

Keith Lyons and I attended two meetings during 2023. The first centred on Generous Giving, and the second on the Vacancy in the See Committee, which is responsible for replacing the Diocesan Bishop of Coventry, who left during the summer of 2023. Representation at these meetings from the Abbey is most important as we are the only Society Church in the Deanery.

Our discussions often provide insight into the other churches in Nuneaton and the sharing of ideas. We frequently stand out as a 'well-attended' church, who is not just following, but already implementing most of what is recommended to 'grow' the church. This proactive approach should inspire hope and confidence in our collective efforts.

We are allowed three to represent the Abbey. Please chat with us if anyone would like to join Keith and me at these meetings.

Ginny Butcher - April 2024

## **Fairs and Functions Group Report**

The group have organised a range of events since the last APCM and these have been well supported.

Three Fairs have been held attracting good crowds and raising valuable income. By using both church and the hall we have widened the range of stalls and kept people feeling comfortable in the space available post covid.

Regular Saturday morning Brunches have been held and summer barbecues. Afternoon teas and ploughman's lunches also held.

There have been a range of concerts in church again well supported.

The church has also been open on several Saturday mornings/early afternoons for visitors to be shown round the church and grounds. The Parish archive has created lots of interest and continues to grow.

Thanks to Ginny Abbey film sessions have been popular as has the Craft group.

Volunteers to help with events are always welcome, as are new ideas for activities.

Thank you to everyone for their support.

Jan B.

## **Report from Electoral Roll Officer**

The electoral roll as at the 3rd April 2024 is as follows:

	No	%
Members resident in the Parish	24	31
Members not resident in the Parish	54	69
Total on roll	78	

Sadly, since the last annual report one long standing and faithful member of our congregation has passed away. One member of the congregation was added meaning that the total number on roll has remained static.

There are a number of regular members of the congregation who are not on the electoral roll which is something that could be looked at, however as 2025 will see a full revision of the roll perhaps there could be a push at that time to encourage more people to enrol.

Sharon Allbrighton  
Electoral Roll Officer  
3rd April 2024

### **Buildings and Fabric Report**

#### **Hall**

Generally in good order. Some broken tiles will need replacing.

New 3 phase mains supply fuses fitted.

Due to the age of the building it will need a series of improvement works, damp problems in the cupboards.

The kitchen needs a complete make over.

#### **Church**

Annual inspection of the gas heating boilers and fire extinguishers.

Nave valley gutters cleaned.

Poor condition of some of the walls in the nave, loose material falling off the walls also the hooded mouldings and window frames due to lamination of the sandstone.

Faculty approved for the St Benedict window, installed in March along with the engraving. (In memory of Alan Jannett a former Churchwarden).

#### **Grounds.**

Hard work by the gardeners over the past year to maintain the grounds.

Creation of the rose memorial garden.

Car park in poor condition

#### **Ruins**

No progress on the work required to repair and consolidate the ruins (funding). Any works will require Historic England and DCMS approval.

We carry out a visual inspection and monitor the weeds and treat with weed killer.

Keith Lyons

## Children's Church Report

### Abbey Family Children's Church

#### 2023 Annual Report

Children's Church continues to follow the following timetable after singing the first hymn at mass.

- Carpet for Gospel Narrative & discussion
- Activity at table
- Prayer
- Return to the mass to sit with their family.

The activity is mainly focused on the day's Gospel, with a craft and colouring activity to take home or display on the Abbey notice boards.

Our Children's Church is growing steadily, with 12 regular children attending over the course of the month. We also welcome extras on an adhoc basis, such as the children of couples getting married or baptised. Children under school age are accompanied by parent/carer.

Children's Church will continue to evolve, providing the opportunity to explore serving and choir duties.

2023 Easter: I received a cash donation, which covered the cost of the 26 Easter Eggs purchased. Twelve children took part in the Easter egg hunt, and the remaining eggs were distributed to older children and members of the Abbey community on Easter Sunday.

Over the six-week summer holiday – Children's Church had a break from Sunday Sessions, and instead, we held 3 weekday craft sessions based on Noah's ark in the parish hall. This went well, starting off with a small group. I will continue to explore summer activities which can be advertised through the schools. Additional volunteers will be needed for this. Eventually, I would like to link into the Walsingham Children's pilgrimages – but this will take time to discern.

I would also like to further the Children's involvement with the Christmas Eve Crib service. But again, this will take time to discern/plan.

Thank you for your support.

Ginny Butcher - April 2024

## Parish Priest Report April – 2024

Incumbents Report 19th April 2024

### ***If it had been easy, we would have done it before. – Unknown***

I am filled with joy and jubilation as we have walked together for another year with the Lord. I thank Paul and Keith for their magnificent efforts as churchwardens and the ministry team: Fr. Brian, Helen, and Ginny. May I express my sad loss to see Laura and Laurence as they move on to different pastures. Please join Fr. Brian and me as we continue to pray for their return to the Catholic faith as we understand it.

My gratitude goes to existing PCC members and those new members joining soon. Trevor Davies for all his musical ministry, including the instruction of the newly formed choir. In the broader sense, the volunteers - gardeners/Friday fairies/fairs and functions plus servers choir & rota

**Worshipping numbers**—I am delighted to report we are seeing an increase in church attendance and a depth of spiritual growth. This is promising news against the backdrop of a church that is accepting inevitable decline. We are evidence of visible green shoots. We should be mindful of our new members, who are here primarily to worship, and encourage them to participate actively in our church family.

Fr. Brian ran an excellent discipleship course over Lent. Furthermore, an appetite for more intellectual courses and communal meals leads to much nourishment. More to follow in the future.

### **All things catholic**

We are a proud catholic parish with an excellent bishop who is fast becoming the envy within the established church. Please pray for Bishop Paul and his priests and deacons as we continue to fight the battle for the catholic church in England. Our inheritance is our worship and spiritual life of zeal demonstrating holiness and the proper worship of God. Let us be proud defenders and avid learners of the faith as we seek to share it with others. May the Abbey continue to be a jewel in the crown of Anglo-catholic worship in this country, and may God bless her with his abundant mercy.

### **Services –**

The Abbey benefits from good liturgy, joyful worship and regular daily services. The devil often makes us complacent and whispers into our ears, 'God does not mind'. Let me assure you, 'God does mind'. We must intentionally please the Lord, as the bible and our tradition clearly teach us this fact. There is always room for improvement. Together, we continue beautifying our worship and liturgy at every level, and I look forward to your continued support with this.

**Easter services** – were well attended and thoughtful, prayerful and edifying for the soul.

**Food Bank** – Thank you to those who contribute - demand remains ad-hoc.

**Poverty Fund & Silent Givers** - Thank you to those who contributed. The funds have been used to purchase food, electricity, and other areas of discernment.

**Schools** – Abbey School has returned to worship in the Abbey after covid. I continue to visit both schools bi-weekly.

**Governors**—Paul, Helen, and I remain committed to school governance. Please apply if you are interested in being a governor.

### **Pastoral**



The pastoral needs have increased in the parish and probably remain my most difficult challenge. Hospital and home visits have increased, and so my ability to respond quickly is only sometimes as people might expect. I'm so grateful people want to see their parish priest. May this continue, although my response may not always be as quick as some hope.

As the only traditional Anglican in the locality, I am growing in demand at the hospital. I will visit as soon as I can, at home or in the hospital. Please encourage people to contact me via my mobile phone, WhatsApp, and Messenger.

There are many community needs (youth, poor, healthcare. etc), and how the Abbey responds to these needs will require discernment about where to allocate finances and time.

### **Personal**

Ginny and I feel very much loved at the Abbey. We are grateful for your love, friendship, and support. We value you as our brothers and sisters in Christ and as the family of God. Our ability to lean on each other at times of difficulty demonstrates our wonderful family. May this long continue! Thanks be to God!

As a low-income family, we rely upon social benefits to supplement our income. We have now moved onto universal credits, and this new system has significantly affected me and other clergy. The old system granted financial privileges that are currently not available. We will navigate these tightened restrictions along with the tax office.

*Every Blessing*

*Fr. Roger*