

Parish Annual General Meeting
St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green
Sunday, 18th July 2021

Item 1 Welcome

Fr. Quentin welcomed around 25 members of our Parish to the AGM.

The meeting commenced with an opening prayer.

Item 2 Minutes of the Last AGM (2019)

Kathy Wilson proposed amendments to two paragraphs on page 4. It was decided that she would propose the wording for Fr Quentin to agree.

The minutes were otherwise approved.

Item 3 Chair's Annual Report

Kit Tranmer presented his report:

This is the first report since 2019 as we were unable to have an AGM in 2020 due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Following the elections in 2019 members of the Council spent a half day in the autumn at Chigwell planning our working for the coming year. Two main themes emerged -

- Firstly, how the PPC should work - We felt the PPC should be trying to facilitate happenings in the Parish rather than the small number of us on the Council trying to plan and organise activities ourselves.
- Secondly, there should be better Parish Communication within the Parish and means of doing this were discussed.

Some things were achieved, in late 2019, the 24hr Adoration was held and for the first time in early 2020 we had a "Volunteers" evening - a way of trying to show our appreciation for all that was being done by the many volunteers we have in the Parish.

There were also many meetings to discuss the possibility of having a Youth Leader.

This has been raised many time over the years – on this occasion it was planned that a youth leader would be shared between the three Parishes (St Ann Line/Our Lady of Lourdes and St Thomas) the decision for this had to be taken by Feb 2020 and it became clear to the PPC (and also to the other Parishes) that as each Parish had a totally different vision of what was involved, neither we nor they, could not commit within this time frame to the large cost involved and sadly the project was temporarily shelved.

For Lent, we had planned a series of talks on Mental Health. We managed one of these – an excellent talk by the psychiatrist Dr Kiran Nijabat on “Mental Health in the Young”. Two more were planned to follow.

Covid then struck with all its limitations of group activity and since then there have only had 2-3 face-to-face Council meetings.

This though, has not meant that all activity in the Parish ceased – far from it!

The Health and Safety group, with members from the Parish, PPC, Parish Office and Clergy have met at regular intervals throughout the crisis trying where possible to keep the Church active but safe.

Following the excellent restoration appeal in late 2019, the Heating Project has been going ahead and is now moving to a close. Plans are already made, and in fact have already started, to redecorate the Becket Centre in two phases. Phase 1 being the upstairs area and Phase 2 will be the downstairs –the latter to be done later this year.

There are also plans to improve the Church Porch area and the Audio-Visual system in the Church. Some of this work is more advanced than others.

Moving back to Parish Council activities - normally at this meeting, we would have new elections to the Council. But when today’s meeting was planned - restrictions existed and it was decided that this year these would not take place.

Instead after discussion and consultation we are co-opting some new members to the Council on an “as needed” basis and we will return to normal elections next year.

In closing I would just like to take a rather unusual step and thank, on behalf of the Parish those many people who stepped up and came forward during the Covid Crisis.

They have kept our Church and Parish going whether helping with the restoration or simply enabling activities in the Parish and Church.

I will not name names -as I am sure I shall to my embarrassment miss out some very important people - but, during the last year an enormous amount of work has been put in by many Parishioners.

These range from the heating project where some have been attending weekly site /zoom meeting managing the project on behalf of us all, the First Communion and Confirmation organisers, the Becket Centre Committee, Parish Office and all those organising and carrying out Stewardship and Eucharistic Ministers work in the Parish. We are extremely grateful to you all.

May I propose on behalf of the Parish a vote of thanks to all of those involved. The proposal was seconded by Paul Turpin and endorsed by a round of applause by those parishioners present.

A final thanks also to Parishioners. We were all quite amazed that however much you disagreed with what we were doing and no matter how difficult things were

everyone was immensely cheerful and polite, even when being nagged about masks or one-way systems!

Item 4 Parish Finance

Bernard Bourdillon presented the report of behalf of Brian Martin, Chair of the Finance Committee. He referred to the booklet that had been circulated and the Accounts that are displayed in the Church foyer. He highlighted the following points:

- **Expenditure**

Much of the Parish's expenditure is deemed to be fixed costs and therefore, despite the reduced activity of parish due to the pandemic, there has been little change in the last year by way of outgoings.

- **Income**

With the lower mass attendance throughout the lockdown periods of the financial year, income has reduced considerably. There has however been an increase in the numbers using the standing order facility to make their regular contributions. The income received through regular planned giving has been sufficient to ensure the parish had not been required to dip into reserves to support the parish expenditure in the year.

- **Restoration Appeal**

The Appeal has got off to an excellent start with the amount collected since the Appeal started in late 2019, reached £100k by April 2021; therefore, the target of £500K over 5 years seems achievable. The heating project is nearing conclusion and the financial status of the Parish is sufficiently robust to support other prioritised infrastructure improvements that are being considered by the PPC, such as the Church lobby, Becket Centre refurbishment and audio system improvements.

The Committee wished to record and acknowledge the Parishioners' generosity and continuing financial support for the Parish through the past difficult year. With the continuing commitment of the Parishioners, the Parish is in a sound financial state as is summarized in the Balance Sheet that is to be published with these minutes.

Item 5 General Questions from the Floor

A. Liturgy Committee

Bernadette Harris firstly wanted to thank the PPC for their support to the Health & Safety Committee. She then asked if there were plans to re-establish the Liturgy Committee. Fr Quentin confirmed this was the case and he was actively seeking someone to take the lead. He also commented that as we move out of Covid restrictions that there will be a lot of groups and rotas to re-establish such as prayers of the faithful.

B. Solar Panels

Mike Murphy referred to the minutes (2019) and asked if solar panels were now been installed. Bernard Bourdillon confirmed that following planning permission and a commercial justification a small number of solar panels were been installed with the aim of reducing electricity costs over time.

C. Covid St Thomas' working as a team - Vote of thanks

Bernadette Harris referred to the group of volunteers who enabled the church to function during the pandemic period. She wish to offer a vote of thanks to the stewards, ministers of communion, Clergy, Parish Office and Mike Murphy who, in particular, was fantastic in organising everyone and a real team effort was evident in how people worked together.

Those present acknowledged this with a round of applause.

Item 6 Vote of thanks

Fr. Quentin thanked Mike Eggleton for his contribution to the Parish Council, particularly in relation to his perseverance over the delivery of a live mass streaming service which play a key role in helping parishioners to keep in touch with the Church during the lockdown. He is moving to another parish and we wish him well.

William Yeung was thanked for his key role as steward of the gospel, which involved him in a lot on meetings and engagement with the Diocese.

The meeting closed with a prayer.