

Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting of St Swithun's Church, Martyr Worthy followed by the Annual District Church Meeting, both immediately following 10.00 am Service on Sunday 25th February 2024

Present: Sara Mason (Acting Temporary Chairman and Churchwarden), Theo Mezger (Churchwarden), John Barber, Peter Collings, Fiona Coulter, Simon Ffennell, Guy Green, Robin and Gilly Greenwood, Malcolm Hogg, Andrew Impey, John Lang, Liz Platt, Judith Mezger, John and Jane Prince, Richard and Amanda Seymour and Emily Windsor-Aubrey.

Apologies: Apologies were received from Nicky Barber, Rolls & Verity Coleman, Katherine Impey, Joanna Lang, Philip Windsor Aubrey, The Revd. Peter Walker.

ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

Welcome: Sara Mason ("SM") welcomed everyone to both meetings. In the absence of Verity Coleman, Hon Sec, Robin Greenwood ("RG") agreed to be Acting Hon Sec for both meetings.

Minutes: The Minutes of last year meeting on 12th March 2023 were approved. There were no matters arising.

Churchwardens: SM said that she was willing to stand for one more year, which would be her sixth and final year, and that Malcom Hogg had put his name forward. SM thanked Theo Mezger ("TM"), who had very kindly and generously stood in for one year to bridge a gap and give SM and Simon Ffennell ("SF") the operational support they needed, for all that he had done which was truly appreciated by all.

It was proposed by Andrew Impey and seconded by John Lang that Sara Mason should be nominated again as a Churchwarden; agreed. It was also proposed by Guy Green and seconded by Liz Platt that Malcom Hogg should be nominated in place of Theo Mezger as a Churchwarden; agreed.

Sidespersons: SF submitted a proposed list of sidespersons: Verity Coleman, Simon Ffennell, Guy Green, Robin & Gilly Greenwood, Andrew & Katherine Impey, John & Joanna Lang, Sara Mason, Liz Platt, John Prince, Robert & Joanna Sutcliffe, Angela Wheeler, Philip & Emily Windsor-Aubrey. The list was approved.

ANNUAL DISTRICT CHURCH MEETING

Minutes: The Minutes of last year meeting on 12th March 2023 were approved. There were no matters arising which are not discussed below.

Chairman's report: SM gave a report on what had happened during the last year including introducing a cashless machine to enable the large number of people visiting the church a further means of contributing, and the quiet background music emanating from behind the organ in the Chancery which has also been much appreciated. Apart the number of visitors, SM commented on the favourable comments people leave in the Visitors Book about MW Church being a very special and spiritual place.

SM said that we had 54 services in the last year with sometimes two services on one day, all made possible by SF. SM said the Evensong led by SF and with its informal choir continues to be a much commented upon success.

SM thanked Gilly Greenwood (“GG”) on behalf the DCC for all that she and her team had done to make 2023/24 MW Lecture Series the outstanding and happy occasion that it has been and putting MW on the map (see below for a fuller report).

SM again thanked TM for joining her as a Churchwarden, doing so much for which she and everyone was most appreciative and for being a joy to work with. SM then presented TM with a present in gratitude for all that he did in his year with us.

SM then thanked all those who in a myriad number of ways contribute to the running and maintenance and of the church. They include Cathy Dickinson’s team of cleaners, Lizzie Reid’s team of flower arrangers, those who act as sidesmen, lesson readers, intercessors and chalice assistants, those who sing in SF’s choir at Evensong, , those who make coffee, our bell ringers, those who open and close the church each day, those responsible for banking collections, laundering altar cloths, those who help maintain the churchyard including those who maintain the edges in the churchyard, our PCC representative, DCC members and last, but not least, our Verger. It is one big team effort and truly appreciated.

Fabric and major repairs: RG reported that 2023 was another quiet year as a result of no major repairs needing to be done and that the MW Restricted Fabric Fund stands at £17,774 as at 31.12.2023 up £547 from £17,277 as at 31.12.2022.

Fundraising: GG reported that the 2023/24 Martyr Worthy Lecture Series, which comprised four lectures, one in 2023 and three in 2024, has made a record £10,010 in total for the parish’s unrestricted general fund. GG thanked everyone in the parish for their support as well as her fellow members of the organizing committee, Verity Coleman, Sally Johnston, Camilla Mortimer and Sophie Parry, and the large army of helpers who made it all happen. GG said that she hoped that we would be able to organize the next MW Lecture Series in 2025/26.

SM also thanked Philip Windsor-Aubrey’s for the proceeds of his woodwork sales for the benefit of MW’s restricted fabric fund for which we are most grateful.

West Window: RG reported that our faculty application was submitted on 19th Nov and that since then (1) the DAC Pre-Consultation Review has taken place, (2) the Formal Consultation with invited consultees took place with no responses by the deadline of 10th January, and (3), we progressed to the DAC Post-Consultation Review phase. Unknown to us, the Church Buildings Council (“CBC”) then subsequently wrote in to say that that they wished to comment and the DAC decided to re-open the Formal Consultation Phase as they felt that Chancellor was almost bound to ask if the CBC had any views before considering granting a faculty. The CBC’s response eventually arrived on 18th January. In view of the delay and with no DAC Meeting in February, the DAC decided in late January to try and progress matters in the meantime by appointing a two-man committee to consider the CBC’s letter and visit MW Church. This we only learnt about on 13th February. Unfortunately, the earliest date it turned out that they can both do is 25th March. The DAC Secretary, who has been most apologetic for what has happened including not keeping us informed, has advised us we should wait until this meeting has taken place before drafting a response to the CBC’s letter.

Friends of St Swithun’s Report: Guy Green gave a brief report. He said that the Friends is now in its 15th year having been set up in 2009, has a growing list of supporters which, has grown from 82 to

85, and currently has reserves of £51,000. Guy Green said that MW DCC have kept the Friends informed of how things have been progressing with the west window. Guy Green also said that the number of trustees had been restored back up to four with the appointment of Jo Sutcliffe during the year.

Elections and appointments:

- **Nominations for membership of the PCC:** It was proposed by Andrew Impey and seconded by Emily Windsor-Aubrey that Nicky Barber should be nominated as Martyr Worthy's representative on the PCC; approved. No one put their name forward to be an alternate.
- **MW DCC membership:** It was proposed by Gilly Greenwood and seconded by Richard Seymour that Sara Mason, John Barber, Verity Coleman who was co-opted during 2023 and was also co-opted as Hon Sec. at the same time, Peter Collings, Fiona Coulter, Simon Ffennell, Robin Greenwood and Malcolm Hogg who was co-opted during 2023 as well, Andrew Impey and Liz Platt should be re-elected to the DCC; approved.

Theo Mezger retired in view of his impending retirement as a churchwarden but said that he would complete re-decoration of that part of the ceiling in the knave where there are staining marks. He was yet again thanked for all he did during his year.

In the absence of anyone putting their name forward, SM agreed to be again Acting Temporary Chairman in 2024/25 until a new Chairman has been found. TM said that, as he understood it, there has always been a tradition that MW's DCC is not chaired by a Churchwarden and that he would recommend that that it is re-introduced to relieve the pressure on the Churchwardens, and in particular where a Churchwarden is also acting as Deputy Chairman of the PCC as SM is currently doing.

- **Deputy Churchwardens:** It was proposed by Sara Mason and seconded by John Lang that Liz Platt and Simon Ffennell should be re-appointed deputy churchwardens; approved.
- **Verger:** It was proposed by Andrew Impey and seconded by Gilly Greenwood that Simon Ffennell should be re-appointed verger; approved.
- **Sacristan:** It was proposed by Andrew Impey and seconded by Gilly Greenwood that Liz Platt should be re-appointed as Sacristan; approved.

Any Other Business:

Way of the Cross: SM said that Way of the Cross was happening in Church Lane on Friday 29th March. SM said that Judith Mezger and Jenny Crowther had offered to organize it with JD responsible for casting and JC directing it. Liz Platt and her team will be organizing coffee and hot cross buns in the village hall afterwards. SM said that we are all most grateful to them.

Patronal Evensong: SM said that the date of Martyr Worthy's Patronal Service in 2024 has still to be agreed.

Last, but not least, SM was thanked for all that she does chairing MW DCC, including this meeting..

