

ANNUAL DISTRICT CHURCH MEETING

Notes of the meeting held on 29th March 2026

Present: Theo Mezger (Chair) Katie Hart (Secretary) Judy Bishop, Jill Croft, Chri Ellis, Simon Ffennell, Sara Janssen, Sue Kennedy, Helena Martin, Judith Mezger, Harry Smith and David Swinstead

1	Welcome	Theo Mezger welcomed everybody and started the meeting with a prayer.	
2	Apologies	David and Jane Anderson, Penelope Kellie, Sally Clarke	
3	Record of previous meeting	Minutes of previous meeting held on 16 th March 2025 were accepted Proposed by Jill Croft Seconded by Sara Janssen	
4	Matters Arising	There were no matters arising	
5	Church Wardens Report	<p>This year has been a mixed year for both St Mary's and Parish of the Itchen Valley. The first quarter was disturbed by the retirement at the end of the ecumenical year of both the Wardens in Easton and to more importantly the early retirement of the Rector. The new Warden, distracted by other matters, was somewhat slow to orientate himself, in contrast to the PCC, led by John Barber, that have efficiently embraced the interregnum and seen through the appointment of a new Rector.</p> <p>We are most grateful to both Chris Ellis for his many years of service to St Mary's and likewise Elaine Labram, particularly in relation to her management of the completed renovation work.</p> <p>The DCC has remained unchanged with the hugely valuable addition of Harry Smith to the team. In so many respects the Warden benefits greatly from the experience, reliability and energy of Judy Bishop and Sara Janssen the two Deputy Wardens. Whilst the DCC meets only occasionally it works efficiently as a team, utilising its many differing skills.</p> <p>The year has been busy at St Mary's where in total 37 services have been held including 3 weddings, 2 baptisms, 4 funerals and two interments. Apart from the funerals, the best attended have been the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, the Patronal Service and those on Palm Sunday and Easter Day.</p> <p>Whilst the size of the congregation of the parish as a whole remains strong that of Easton dwindles. It has never recovered since COVID and as it has no suitable venue for the ARK/Sunday School, it has lost to the</p>	

		<p>other churches in the parish both the services that used to appeal to the younger generation. Another challenge is that Eastoners appear less inclined to recognise and travel to the other churches in the valley therefore we are failing to attract the young families of Easton, of which there are so many. Still, they represent untapped potential for the new Rector. This situation illustrates clearly our desperate need for the extension but only once the immediate renovations are completed.</p> <p>Over the last year small scale fund raising for the renovations has continued, by setting up a Just Giving scheme and through organising a most imaginative flower festival and two contrastingly different concerts, one in the late summer and the other recently in the spring. The Just Giving scheme is designed to appeal to the passer by and those that simply appreciate the building. With the concerts, we reach out to both the wider community and those that rarely enter the building. To date we have some £50,000 in the kitty. More fund-raising activities are planned whilst we hope for bequests.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the progress with the actual renovations has been slower than we would like.</p> <p>The delay is attributable to parish distractions, some dissatisfaction with the architects and the absence of anyone able and willing to lead the institutional fund raising. These excuses are now resolved and a small subcommittee of the DCC has been established to drive the matter forward: Judy Bishop – architect and builders; Harry Smith - institutional fund raising; Sara Janssen – communications/'Friends of St Mary's'; and myself supporting all of the above. We seek another with a professional qualification to encourage us to be on the case and fully accountable. Progress with the project is again being made.</p> <p>Besides this, a fresh quinquennial report was due last summer and this has now been commissioned.</p> <p>It takes a big team of workers to run St Mary's, all of whom were mentioned at the recent Patronal Service. We will not list them here but again I thank each and every one of them for their generous and dedicated contributions, great and small, in their differing ways. Thank you, thank you.</p>	
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6	Financial Update	<p>The Easton Fund is £52,268 overall, of which £31,693 is in the restoration fund. From the floor it was suggested these sums should be kept separate. The Development of a new extension has not been abandoned but comes second to the Restoration work. Funds had been received from two concerts, the Safari Supper, the Flower Festival and the Easton Players Play held in the McGowans garden. A generous bequest had been gratefully received from the late Geoff Dee. Proceeds from the forthcoming Safari Supper, a Bridge Day and another Easton Players Performance have been promised.</p>	
7	Election of DCC Members	<p>David Anderson, Judy Bishop, Jill Croft, Sally Clarke, Katie Hart, Sara Janssen, Penelope Kellie, Sue Kennedy, Helena Martin and Harry Smith were willing to stand for re-election.</p> <p>Proposed by Judith Mezger Seconded by David Swinstead.</p>	
8	Nomination of Church Warden	<p>Theo Mezger was willing to stand for re-election.</p> <p>Proposed by Sara Janssen and Seconded by Penelope Kellie</p>	
9	Nomination of Deputy Church Wardens	<p>Judy Bishop and Sara Janssen agreed to continue being Deputy Churchwardens. Proposed by Theo Mezger and seconded by Jill Croft.</p>	
10	Nomination of Deanery Synod Representative	<p>Theo Mezger was willing to continue.</p> <p>Proposed by Katie Hart and Seconded by Sue Kennedy</p>	
11	Nomination for PCC representative	<p>Judy Bishop to remain the PCC representative and Sara Janssen the Alternate</p> <p>Proposed by Theo Mezger and seconded by Chris Ellis</p>	
12	Nomination of Sidesmen	<p>David Anderson, Judy Bishop, Sally Clarke, Jill Croft, Penelope Kellie, Sara Janssen, Sue Kennedy, Judith Mezger, Theo Mezger and David Swinstead.</p> <p>All were willing to stand again.</p> <p>Proposed by Katie Hart and Seconded by Helena Martin.</p>	

13	Election of Verger	Sara Janssen agreed to remain Verger Proposed by Judy Bishop and seconded by Theo Mezger	
14	AOB	The Licencing of Rev David Cooke will take place in St Mary's Easton on 20 th July at 7.30pm. A small committee to discuss this will be held on 20 th May. Theo reminded everyone that the APCM will be held at St. John's Itchen Abbas at 7.00pm on 30 th April.	
15	Date of next meeting	Tuesday 26 th May.	