

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MIDSOMER NORTON

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
HELD IN ST JOHN'S CHURCH, SUNDAY 6 APRIL 2025 at 11-30**

APOLOGIES

Taken as for the Meeting to Appoint Churchwardens

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Sunday 21 April 2024, having been posted on the church web site were taken as read. Robert Broughton proposed that they be accepted as a correct record, seconded by David Moore and with all present in agreement, they were signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

None

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are 78 names on the new electoral roll.

Father Guy thanked Linda for the work she had done to prepare the new electoral roll and also for keeping the document up to date.

APPROVAL OF THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

No questions were raised regarding either the contents of the Annual Report or the Financial Statements

Carol Moore proposed and Linda Broadhurst seconded that the documents be accepted. All present were in agreement.

Father Guy thanked Kay for the amount of time she spends not only working on the accounts but also other work involved in the position of Treasurer.

He added the generosity of the congregation was much appreciated and grateful thanks were due to the anonymous donors whose gifts had covered the cost of the work on the clock (£28,000).

ELECTION OF PAROCHIAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Nominee	Proposer	Secunder	Term of office
Robert Broughton	Pat Marriott	Angela Fitch	2025 – 2028
Heather Hill	Pat Clynes	Matthew Livsey	2025 – 2028
Ann Munton	Pat Marriott	Michael Fitch	2025 – 2028

With all present in agreement, Guy declared them elected.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Paul Justin had agreed to act again as the independent examiner.

The appointment was proposed by Pat Clynes and seconded by Hilary Denning

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT CHURCHWARDENS

Carol agreed to continue as assistant, she was proposed by Sally Curtis and seconded by Les Martindale.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Vicar's Sermon delivered at the 10am service before the 2025 APCM

"The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume". (*John 12:3*).

Our Gospel reading from John, describes the complete devotion of Mary and the brooding cynicism of Judas. The contrast between Mary and Judas is stark - one displays passionate affection, the other demonstrates deep insecurity.

Let's consider how Mary's pouring of the ointment stands for so much more: it is the pouring out of all she values most. Mary is giving of herself; she is giving what she has selflessly; she is making a sacrifice for adoration. Judas witnesses this act and assumes it is wasteful, futile, careless, and worthless. For Mary, it is the most expensive thing she has, and she pours it with willing generosity. Jesus sees Mary, and her devotion, and her display of affection. Jesus does not rush to judge or to reduce Mary's actions to a financial loss. Jesus sees Mary; Jesus is mindful of her sacrifices; Jesus accepts Mary's gift and affection.

This account from John invites us to ask ourselves - why do we save our treasures up for the special moments, keeping them in the back of the cupboard, never quite sure the occasion merits the best champagne? Why do we not rather turn the ordinary moment into something special by gracing it with delight? What, exactly, are we waiting for? The consideration of our love and our treasure and our generosity is to be explored today and every day, for we don't know when it may be too late.

Today is the beginning of Passiontide, and Mary's passionate action is remarkable, quite 'over the top' one might say. Not only does she wash Jesus' feet, but she also wipes them with her hair. It is raw; it is tangible; it is intimate. Mary's perfume wafts its welcome fragrance all through the house - her presence is known by all. Jesus sees Mary, receives her adoration, and grants her the dignity which Judas was quick to discard. Now, of course, it could be argued that Mary's actions are somewhat outrageous since her admiration borders on that of worship. But that's the point. Excessive affection; whole devotion; endless love. For as we know, brothers don't get raised from the dead every day.

Did Mary's spontaneous demonstration of love come to Jesus' mind later that week, in the Upper Room, and spur him on to wash the feet of his disciples, I wonder? Perhaps the fragrance of Mary's perfume travelled further than the house, and went with Jesus as an act of devotional love? Breathe in now - can we still smell Mary's fragrant love in our church, in our witness, in our worship this morning?

Mary's actions were a reflection on the generous and passionate love of God in creating the world, his generous passion in forgiving our blindness and wickedness, and the passion that led him to risk so much and send his Son. Love and devotion came first. Something to dwell on!

Later this morning we have our APCM. So, I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate and thank you all for your generosity.

- Our Annual Accounts show your generosity in giving. We paid our share, in full to the Diocesan Common Fund, we covered our day to day costs, we supported charitable work, our Gift Day was generously supported, and we received generous anonymous donations, which paid for all the work to refurbish the tower clock.
- You have also been generous with your time and talents. From cleaning and dusting to gardening and tidying our churchyards, from polishing brass to preparing sacred vessels, from offering refreshment to baking, from flower arranging to decorating for festivals.
- Our church hall is well used and requires a constant eye on its upkeep, this takes time and commitment! When we meet, generosity enables our community and our relationships to flourish.
- In our worship, from offering music and song to serving, from reading scripture to interceding, for attending and engaging in our offerings of worship. For colleagues who are so generous with their support and who offer different voices.
- To our PCC officers and members who are generous with their time in the administration of this parish and church.
- And we acknowledge the generosity of our Churchwardens and thank them for all that they do, seen and unseen!

As we become a more diverse worshipping community, I hope and pray that we will become a more generous community. Generous in word and deed and with each other, and the community in which we live. Just look around. See what blessings we have. God is generous. God is good. Be more Mary, because Mary loved unconditionally, and God is love.

APCM Report: 2024-5 School Work

During the past year we have been developing our relationship with our church school, St John's CE Primary. Each week clergy from St John's have continued to lead weekly collective worship and the established pattern of school church services at Christmas and Easter has continued. Clergy also support RE in the school with visits and talks when requested. This is also part of our work at Norton Hill Primary School where we lead annual workshops for the whole school at Christmas and Easter.

We are developing our links with the other schools in the local schools partnership and now lead half termly assemblies at Midsomer Norton Primary School. Plans are being made to do likewise at Longvernal Primary School. Through these visits, our baptism ministry and our family services, connections are being made.

Family services are now monthly. Children from St John's Ethos group write and deliver intercessions each time and help with the service at the offertory. Volunteers have also had a go at serving as crucifer. We hope to grow this practical engagement in the service.

The Ethos group have also come to church to make Christingles with volunteers from the congregation and posies for Mothering Sunday. Children from the Reception class have continued to make our Easter garden.

Our involvement with the diocesan Launchpad initiative resulted in twice termly visits to church for Y6 pupils to talk and share, and to experience our hospitality...especially cake! At the end of the year, Y6 children move on to secondary school. At our final session we present each with holding crosses from Bethlehem and stress that though they are moving on, we remain their church. We plan to hold a follow-up reunion for them in the autumn term and see what develops from that.

The school is always interested to hear from anyone interested in volunteering, and is fortunate to have a School Librarian from our church. (Pat Marriott).

Fr Philip.

Guy said that Philip is particularly gifted with respect to his involvement with St John's School.

Heather Hill added that Philip spends a considerable amount of preparation beforehand to ensure that all he organises runs smoothly.

Churchwardens Report

Hilary gave the following report on behalf of Pat and herself.

How quickly a year passes, and, as always, it's been a busy year (April 2024-March 2025) at St John's.

We continue our mission to remain a welcoming sanctuary for all and providing a calm reflective space both in our church and churchyard.

Our usual services continue and we are now enjoying a regular Family Service once a month. It is wonderful to hear some new young voices in the church and we look for further growth in this area in slow and steady steps.

We hosted the Archdeacon's Visitation, grew plants for and manned a Plant Stall at Midsomer Norton Town Fair in July. Patronal Festival was celebrated with an afternoon tea and a wonderful Harvest Lunch was enjoyed together. Sadly, the Social Committee had to be wound up during the year so we shall miss some of our many social events which have raised thousands of pounds in previous years. We hope that the congregation will fully support those social events which may be organised.

As well as hosting a series of concerts last spring and early summer, we have continued to host many other concerts during the year which encourage more of the community of Midsomer Norton to step through our doors.

Another successful event was the afternoon offering Tower Tours during the Heritage Weekend in September and, looking further forward to this year we hope to build on this success and encourage more families to come in and see what we are doing.

The Christmas Fair was held in December and despite being the most dangerously wet and windy day ever in Somerset, it raised an impressively large amount of money.

A good start has been made with the Parish Giving Scheme and it's heartening to see more people adopting this method of stewardship for the benefit of the parish. We will be looking to do more and we are very willing to assist you to do so. The donation terminal and QR codes continue to collect donations that we would otherwise would not receive. A successful Gift Day was held so although the financial situation remains 'difficult', we are just about getting by.

During this year we have had a consultation with the Diocese which has led to an energy survey of the church. As a result, we have a clearer understanding of where our focus needs to be in reducing our Carbon Footprint (and our energy bills). This will be investigated further during the next year.

Good inroads have been made into clearing the open churchyard from many years of unchecked brambles and have recovered tens of graves in the process. Sadly during the very strong wind, previously referred to, a large tree in the churchyard came down, tearing up part of the central path. The tree was removed and the path repaired.

Another problem has been the spoil heap from burials which has been accreting gradually. We have managed to enlist the help of a Payback team who are undertaking the task of removing the unsightly heap from the centre of the churchyard to the margins. All this has made a positive impact on the overall look of the churchyard.

The Churchwardens wish to thank many people for their contributions to the life of St John's church over the last year. At risk of accidentally missing someone, it is, perhaps, better that people are not individually thanked but that is not to take anything away from the tremendous amount of gratitude we owe to so many folk who make a real difference to St John's and we would suggest, raised its confidence as we look to the future.

As you all know, we recently enjoyed a visit from Bishop Michael. When Pat and I had a chat with him, one of the questions we asked him was how to remain positive in mission and finance with few young, willing hands and financial constraints. His reply was 'Pray and ask God for everything that you want because He is bigger than you can possibly imagine'

So please, imagine 'big' and pray that we can grow our mission and pay our way. It is very important for us to know we are being prayed for in all we try to achieve.

Guy thanked the clergy who provide help and support. In addition to Jim, Kate, Philip, and Tony, there is now Innocent Ogbidikhe (an ordained priest who has recently moved to Midsomer Norton). He has been granted PTO by Bishop Michael, and is keen to help out when he can.

Carol offered a general thanks to all who contribute in whatever way to parish life at St John's.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 12-00

