

# Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 2021 - St. Peter's Draycott

## Agenda

26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Draycott church.

### Agenda

Item	Report	Presented by
1. Welcome		<i>Stuart Burns/ John English</i>
2. Attendance and apologies		
3. Minutes from meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 (confirmation of accuracy)		<i>Chris Green</i>
4. Vestry Meeting – election of church warden(s)		
5. Statutory Reports		
Electoral Roll	A	<i>Chris Green</i>
Report on PCC proceedings	B	<i>Chris Green</i>
The financial report and accounts	C	<i>David Cheetham</i>
The churchwarden's fabric report	D	<i>Chris Green</i>
Deanery Synod Report	E	<i>Tricia Lumley</i>
6. Other reports		
Worship report	F	<i>Chris Green</i>
Covenants	G	<i>John English</i>
Safeguarding	H	<i>Thea Oliver</i>
Environmental report	I	<i>Nicola Devitt</i>
School	J	<i>Nicola Devitt</i>
Health and safety	K	<i>Richard Oliver</i>
Supporters of St Peter's	L	<i>Karen Percival</i>
Church magazine	M	<i>Rob Walker</i>
7. Appointment of Laity to the Parochial Church Council		
8. Appointment of sides men/ women		
9. Appointment of independent financial examiner		
10. Remarks from the rector		<i>Stuart Burns</i>
11. Any other matters of important to the Parish		

## **Reports**

### **Statutory reports**

#### **A. Electoral Roll**

*Chris Green (NB. we currently have no electoral roll officer)*

The electoral roll is 35, unchanged from that reported at the previous APCM.

#### **B. Report on PCC proceedings**

*Chris Green (PCC Secretary)*

This report covers the six month period from the previous APCM until the present.

The PCC had eight members: Stuart Burns (rector); David Cheetham (Treasurer); Gill Dury, John English (covenant secretary, lay chair); Chris Green (churchwarden, secretary); Tricia Lumley (Deanery representative); Pat Mulla; Thea Oliver (Deanery representative, safeguarding officer).

Changes since the last APCM

- Thea has stepped down from her position as lay chair, for perhaps obvious reasons – we thank her for chairing us so ably over the years, and also John for stepping up to fill this position.
- We previously had no parish safeguarding officer, the responsibility being taken by Jim Reeve (Cheddar) at the benefice level. We were required to appoint one (mainly to provide a local contact point), and Thea kindly offered to fill this role.
- John English stepped down as churchwarden, and so we currently have only one, Chris Green. We would like to fill this vacancy as soon as possible.

Note also that we still have a vacancy for electoral roll secretary since Richard Dingley stood down.

In the short period covered we have only convened two formal meetings, both on ZOOM. On the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 we decided we would re-open the church following the second lockdown, and in the next meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 we decided to reopen again in time for Easter. Between times, other business has been conducted by email.

This has been a trying period for the PCC as for so many other such groups – it has been harder to act as the governance body we should be, in constant touch and with regular meetings. We found that ZOOM meetings were somewhat divisive as not everyone is prepared or able to join them; we hope that they are now a thing of the past, and future meetings can be face to face. We would welcome more members!

#### **C. The financial report and accounts**

*David Cheetham (Treasurer)*

(Please see separate report)

#### **D. The churchwarden's fabric report**

*Chris Green (Churchwarden)*

This report covers the six month period from the previous APCM until the present.

1. Damp problem in north nave and north transept

This was the main outstanding interior issue reported in the previous APCM. Early in 2021 the walls were sufficiently dry for painting. Accordingly a working party finished the preparation and (after some trial and error paint matching) the affected walls were painted with appropriate distemper paint. I wish to thank all who helped – Rob Millard, Richard Oliver and Jeff Monks.

2. Damp in south transept

The south nave had previously also been affected by damp, which had caused paint damage (and a little plaster damage) on the wall by the safe and behind the organ. I have scraped down the walls and found there was sufficient paint left from the previous job to paint some of the transept (although not the area behind the organ, which is less visible).

3. Trees in churchyard

Both the lime tree avenue and the yew tree by the gate to the car park are in need of attention. Both were raised as specific areas of concern (with Health and Safety implications) with Mendip District Council early this year but I have heard nothing further.

4. Churchyard management

We are engaging with the 'Wilder Churches' project (a joint exercise between the diocese and Somerset Wildlife Trust, SWT) to explore how we can manage our churchyards better from a wildlife point of view. This may involve a change in the cutting regime for the closed graveyard. However this is a Mendip District Council responsibility. We are advised by SWT that they are negotiating with the councils over churchyard maintenance and are awaiting their conclusions. We will consult more widely before agreeing to any changes, to make sure that we take account the wishes of all stakeholders.

5. Quinquennial survey

Due this year. I intend to book the church architect George Chedburn soon.

6. Health and safety issues

Our health and safety officer Richard Oliver has just provided a comprehensive report, included in this APCM (for which, many thanks). Some of the issues are in hand but need chasing (such as trees in churchyard), others are new and will be addressed.

## **E. Deanery Synod Report**

*Tricia Lumley (Deanery representative)*

This was a very different year for Deanery Synod, as it was for every group. We have been a comfortable little group, meeting in each other's parishes, enjoying fellowship over a cup of tea and generally going about business in the traditional manner. Then Covid struck and everything changed. We moved onto Zoom, along with every other meeting in the world and discovered that actually, technology is not as scary as we thought it was. This took a while though so we were not able to replace June's planned meeting at Warrens Farm with an alternative.

In October our meeting was entitled "Thanksgiving: lament, growth" we looked at how the Deanery had coped with lockdown, had it undermined, weakened or strengthened us? What did we learn about our church and local communities over the previous extraordinary months.

It was surprising how much positivity and optimism was displayed. Yes, we had missed church services and regular fellowship but community spirit had become much stronger. Online services were being well attended and we were even being joined by people from

around the world. Our parishes were no longer entirely geographically based. Some parishes just put sermons on Facebook or email but others tried new, innovative ways to reach people. Many people said that had started reading more books about faith now and intended to continue this.

The picture was not all good. Many people were not comfortable being on screen and the deaf, in particular, could not cope with the new technology. There were no children involved in the online services and many people missed that interaction, in particular when the schools come into the church. People missed the element of physical touch too, something we have not yet been able to reintroduce.

It was mentioned that we could have a pilgrimage around the Deanery when we are back to some sort of new normal.

February's meeting was a very interesting one. Ben Buse brought a motion that the Deanery should support the CEE Bill and encourage the government to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 instead of 2050. Many people were behind this idea.

Our local MP, James Heapey, joined the meeting and spoke about how he sees the issue and whether it was practical to advance the date. He was concerned about the impact on farming and industry in our constituency if we try to move to fast and in an unconsidered manner.

The motion was passed with a large majority.

I hope that our next Deanery Synod meeting will be able to be held with all the delegates together and in proper fellowship

## ***Other reports***

### **F. Worship Report**

*Chris Green (Lay Reader)*

(This report mostly covers the previous calendar year, in line with previous practice. NB. there was no Worship Report in the previous APCM).

#### **Worship highlights in 2020:**

- Worship was held in church on thirty-one of the Sundays in 2020 in spite of lockdowns
- For twenty of the Sundays, worship switched to ZOOM only, benefice wide
- The worship team has stepped up to provide complete coverage of services in the benefice where allowed, with ZOOM services adding to the workload
- Our musical tradition has been continued post lockdown in various innovative ways, including a Christmas carol service (both a live and recoded version).

#### **Sunday worship in church**

Eleven Sunday services were held pre-lockdown, three of which were Morning Prayer and the remainder Eucharist. Attendance figures were in line with previous years (18.7 average Sunday congregation).

The church was closed from the 22<sup>nd</sup> March for sixteen Sundays, due to the national lockdown imposed. This period spanned Easter and early summer 2020. The church opened again after a risk assessment and the implementation of anti-Covid measures on 12<sup>th</sup> July, but had to close once more during the second lockdown, from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November, four Sundays. We reopened for Advent 2 and kept going until Epiphany, but decided to close the church in early 2021 again after advice from the bishops.

During the post-Covid reopening, services have been very restricted (no congregational singing, social distancing, mask wearing, no refreshments afterwards). Congregation numbers were down to an average of 7.7 per Sunday (not counting our carol service). This was due mainly to people shielding, on behalf of themselves or those they lived with. In order to make best use of the Ministry Team, services alternated between Morning Prayer and Holy Communion (which was distributed in one kind only to the congregation). Other innovations have been used – extended communion on one Sunday, and the 'syndication' of sermons (where a sermon was written by one member of the team but delivered by another member). This has allowed services to take place in all three churches and also on ZOOM for most Sundays post-lockdown when the churches were open (21 occasions).

Bringing matters up to the present, the church reopened in time for Easter 2021 on the 4<sup>th</sup> April, a very joyful occasion. Numbers have shown a significant recovery, at about 14 to 17 per Sunday, in spite of most restrictions still being in place. In common with the rest of the country, we look forward to better times ahead.

### **Worship on ZOOM**

A major mitigation introduced during the lockdown and afterwards was the introduction of worship on the ZOOM video-conferencing platform. This was started soon after the first lockdown, and attracted well over 100 participants in Easter of 2020. In addition to Sunday worship, evening prayer was started during every weekday, and morning prayer on Saturday. This has carried on even after churches reopened, and has maintained a faithful following until the present, although numbers are falling away somewhat.

### **Music**

Barry Rose and David Cheetham have worked hard to keep church music going under difficult circumstances. On most Sundays there is a choir of between two to four. Barry and David have recorded many hymns that are used during ZOOM services. And on the 27<sup>th</sup> December we held a carol service under Covid restrictions, with twenty people present (including musicians). Barry Rose also recorded the choir for an online version of the service, which was made available to anyone who wished to listen.

## **G. Covenant Report**

*John English (Covenant Secretary)*

Gift aid claims totalling £1,600 have been submitted. There are currently 22 covenanters.

## **H. Safeguarding**

*Thea Oliver (Safeguarding Officer)*

Safeguarding is not only related to activities within the church building but potentially encompasses anyone within the parish boundaries.

During the last 14 months when our church has been closed for months at a time and services held mostly on zoom, the responsibility of safeguarding our community is still very important. Those of us with a pastoral role have been keeping in touch with isolating/shielding members of the congregation, perhaps by phone, or socially distanced conversations from their gates or front gardens. Members of our congregation have also been volunteering by doing shopping, delivering and collecting prescriptions for example. This non-contact support can prove very challenging to all involved.

The Church of England National Safeguarding Team published guidelines for Promoting a Safer Church to be followed by all those involved in safeguarding (that is, in effect, all of us).

Their website is regularly updated with general advice and specific advice during Covid-19 pandemic.

The advice for parishes included a document called “Think Safeguarding!” detailing how to safely and effectively “Reach out” to others, “Recognise” potential safeguarding issues/situations, “Record” observations accurately, “Report” immediately.

If anyone from this church community has any safeguarding concerns, I am the named Safeguarding contact for St Peter’s Church. Jim Reeve, from St Andrew’s Cheddar, is the Benefice Safeguarding Lead. We are supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding team.

## **I. Environmental Report**

*Nicola Devitt*

In view of the climate and environmental emergencies, there was a plan in our benefice to get our churches thinking about their respective environmental impacts, and to start to draw up plans to reduce them. Despite the challenges of lockdown, we finally managed to stage a meeting for the Benefice with the Diocesan Environmental Advisers on 6th October 2020, which took place on Zoom, and was attended by members from all three churches.

Caroline Pomeroy from the Diocese outlined our responsibility as Christians 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth', in accordance with the fifth Mark of Mission of the Church of England. The meeting was recorded on the benefice Youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NFRCK9odqI>

A number of practical ideas were suggested, which churches could use, first to start assessing their own positions, and then to tackle reducing their environmental impact. These actions would need to be adopted by the PCC. For example,

1. Consider doing an audit of church activities using the 'Eco-church' template: Self assessment comprehensive environmental survey for churches, covering Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community & Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. (Also has details of the 'Ecochurch awards', but the survey is a good starting point whether or not we decide to aim for an award). See <https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/>
2. Consider doing an energy audit via 'Green Journey', which is an Environmental Consultancy. This is complementary for churches and can be accessed by contacting the Diocesan office.

Other environmental activities this year have included participation by some church members in 'Wilder Churches', a joint initiative between our Diocese and Somerset Wildlife Trust, which aims to promote and maintain churchyards as havens for wildlife. Due to Covid precautions the first few sessions have also been on Zoom. Our initial task will be documenting the wildlife we already have in situ, and we plan to launch an initiative to do this summer.

## **J. School**

*Nicola Devitt* (School worship team)

Despite Covid restrictions, we have maintained contact between the church and our village school throughout the year. Since our last APCM, most of the children have been home-schooled for most of the time, but we have managed to keep collective worship going via Zoom, with teachers logging on from school, for the small core of key workers' children still attending, and separate families logging on from home at the same time.

We now have a regular rota involving three of us to do the school worship, Stuart, Thea and Nikki. The children have been back at school en masse since March this year, and we have

continued with the Zoom assemblies weekly with school until 6th May, since when with the school's Trust's agreement, we have been allowed to go into school in person again, with suitable Covid precautions in place. With the PCC's agreement we look forward to the children being able to come back to the church building very soon, although opportunities for participation by the children remain limited because of Covid rules at present.

We are very grateful that the school staff's enthusiastic participation with Zoom has enabled this important link to continue, and look forward to further easing of the restrictions enabling a more familiar form of collective worship later in the year.

## **K. Health and safety**

*Richard Oliver* (Health and Safety Officer)

Prepared on 16/05/2021. No review was carried out in 2019-2020 due to COVID.

1. Footpath just below shed monitor the growth of moss a slip hazard.
2. Step in porch and boot scraper need repainting (this I suspect will be an ongoing issue).
3. Broken roof tiles need monitoring.
4. Flower stands being left in toilet area on occasions blocking access to washing facilities.

Up and coming issues:

1. A number of trees in the churchyard will need to be monitored especially the fir tree next to the car park gate (some branches have already caused an issue, and some have already been removed). A tree survey may be required in relation to rot in the crowns of the Lime trees along the church path.
2. Outside rainwater down pipes need to be monitored for blockages (this has recently been carried out and three nests removed from the hoppers at the top.
3. Chains around the area for burial of ashes needs to be straightened to make them more visible.
5. Wall between school and church will need maintenance in due course.
6. Inside damp on walls may result in mould and then mould spores (The most serious area has now been cleaned off and dried out after the external drainpipe was repaired, the wall has been repainted.
7. Choir stall pew fronts loose, options secure, remove or make removeable.
8. Because the main door is being left open and the heating turned off there has been an increased use of portable electric heaters, ensure that these are unplugged when not in use.
9. Ensure that electrical sockets and not overloaded.
10. Be aware that the stackable chairs on the trolley will fit neatly together if all placed the same way, recently one or two were incorrectly stacked making them unstable.
11. The wooden flooring (main part of church on the left looking towards the alter) 3rd board in is loose.
12. Monitor the contents of the shelves in the Vestry and consider alternative arrangements.
13. Whilst still in the COVID situation ensure bins are emptied.
14. Ensure that the exit door from Vestry is not obstructed by cleaning equipment.

15. P.A.T testing of electrical items, as there are a small number of items it may be worth contacting the Church Wardens of St. Leonard's Church Rodney Stoke to arrange a joint visit.

## **L. Supporters of St Peter's**

*Karen Percival (SoSP member)*

(The period covered is for the year from the end of March 2021 to the present)

Due to the pandemic and lockdowns the majority of the year's planned events were cancelled. The SOSp team continued to meet on the first Saturday of the month when possible, over zoom.

At Christmas we invited the school and the community to make Christmas wreaths with the theme of a Christmas Carol or song. This was very well supported and we were able to bring some festivity into the church, the community were invited to visit the church during the first weekend in Advent following all Covid guidelines. The Nativity in the Glebe Field was again set up with the new addition of a Camel made by and donated by villager Graham Cragg.

For Easter 2021, SOSp joined with Draycott and Rodney Stoke PTA and invited the local community to take part in an Easter quiz and to make Easter eggs to decorate an Easter Tree in the Glebe field. A total of £80 was raised for the school PTA

SOSP are continuing to make plans for future events and fundraising and hope to resume the popular Coffee and Cake mornings in the autumn. Future events provisionally planned, Covid permitting, include: a tombola stall at the Strawberry Fayre, Harvest Lunch, and Christmas festival and a possible joint Christmas Fair with the school.

SOSP have enjoyed working with the school and look forward to more joint events. Karen continues to liaise with Matt Perret, and as soon as Covid permits we hope to have more displays in church from the children.

## **Christian Aid 2020-2021**

Due to the pandemic Christian Aid cancelled the envelope collections last year.

This year 500-600 envelopes were delivered throughout Rodney Stoke and Draycott. with 40-50 returns. This has raised £863.61 of which £327 was gift aided, which is approximately the same as Lent Lunch and Big Breakfast events previously.

A decision has been made regarding next year that we will no longer deliver envelopes, as this is a waste of resources and proving more difficult. Instead SOSp have agreed to help Karen organise the Big Breakfast, which was very successful in 2019, as well as a Lent soup lunch. All proceeds to Christian Aid.

## **M. Church magazine**

*Rob Walker (Editor)*

### **Adapting to the COVID challenge**

Despite the challenges of COVID, the magazine has continued to appear ten times a year and copies have been delivered 'as normal' to all our regular subscribers. Call it exercise with a purpose. There have been some changes and adaptations including:

1. The magazine is now being printed in the Benefice Office in Cheddar rather than by the Kings of Wessex Printshop which has been closed for much of the time.
2. The print run has been reduced to 175 copies as we have lost the 'back of church' sales.

3. Some advertisers have fallen by the wayside reducing our income from that source.
4. The subscriptions for 2021 have not been collected yet. This will be done once the various COVID related restrictions have been sufficiently relaxed.
5. The content of the magazine has had to be rejigged somewhat to replace the rather random four or five pages of announcements of social events etc, which were one of the magazine's delights in the pre-COVID era, with proper articles. By a mysterious mechanism that I still do not fully understand, our contributors – regular and occasional - have always managed to fill most of the gaps for which, as the editor, I remain eternally grateful.
6. It has been noted that over the last year the content has taken on a more sombre and serious hue so the editorial intent is to lighten the tone in the coming year.

Each edition remains the work of at least a dozen people involved in writing, printing and distributing the magazine. They 'know who they are' and I would like to thank them one and all for their support. I would particularly like to thank Samm for her unfailing help in the printing department. It has been a real lifesaver.

### **Editorial Policy**

The magazine serves the needs of two parishes so it is especially important to have a common, agreed Editorial Policy. The APCM is reminded of the magazine's Editorial Policy, given below, which has been unchanged since 2013:

'The magazine's purpose is to

7. Inform, intrigue, inspire and amuse the readership in roughly equal measure.
8. Aspire to be more than a glorified bulletin board while reflecting the interests and concerns of the parishes.
9. Provide a platform for the views of the readership.'

### **Remarks from the Rector**

*Stuart Burns, Rector of the benefice of Cheddar, Draycott and Rodney Stoke (05/05/21)*

### **Overview**

For our last round of APCMs (in October) I wrote reflectively and at length on the struggles, learnings and future challenges the pandemic had brought to our churches (and I am not going to repeat that here). Now, seven months later, we have the great hope that, over the next few months, we shall emerge clearly into possibilities for church life that resemble what we had pre-covid, at least in part. Maybe we'll even be able to hold a children's Holiday Club in the late summer?! Breakfast Services have been especially missed by very many, along with many social events in all of our churches. I know that regular worshippers long to be able to sing and socialise at church, as these two elements are so basic to the reason we gather for services. May God faithfully continue to sustain us (through and out of our covid-weariness), and energise us with this new hope and expectation.

### **Schools**

The loss of schools attending our churches has been a particularly sad result of pandemic.

Draycott and Rodney Stoke First School children used to attend St Peter's every week, and St Leonard's several times a year for special Sundays and at Remembrance; none of this happened for fourteen months; however, a small team has maintained school worship on zoom, which has at least maintained our relationships with the children.

Kings of Wessex students and staff used to attend services in St Andrew's five times a year, and I (with other clergy) used to lead worship in school often; none of this has happened for fourteen months; there are children in KOW who have not been in St Andrew's since Christmas 2019, and this year's first-years have never been; this is very sad; we have a huge catch-up waiting for us.

Feeling that the parish churches belong to every child or teenager in the church-schools is extremely important for our intention to be open and available to all.

### **Worship and outreach**

Whether we were holding zoom services alone, or a combination of both zoom and in-the-building services, our total numbers on Sundays have usually exceeded those that preceded the days of zoom. 60+ children attended our zoom Christingle service at Christmas (in contrast to the average of half that number when it was in-church for many years). 40+ children attended our zoom Easter service (in contrast to an average of about 10 when it was in-church for many years). This presents the obvious challenge that will call for creativity in deciding what to offer post-pandemic - we obviously cannot just return to what we did before. I hope and pray that our churches will prove to be more adept, attuned and mission-minded because of the pandemic.

### **Eco-awareness and witness**

It is important to mark that we have become a great deal more aware of our vital need of nature and the outdoors, and also of the critical climate crisis we face, because of the pandemic. We have been helped in this by the witness of a few in our benefice who have a heightened concern, and also through the sacrificial activism of one in particular. We carry now, as we emerge from pandemic, a challenge to each PCC to have high on their agenda the desire to become "eco-churches", to re-wild churchyards, and to seek green energy sources, as soon as we realistically can.

### **Thank you**

I am very grateful to our three PCCs, churchwardens, treasurers and secretaries who have worked harder and very conscientiously in the past year to manage our churches well, often having to make difficult decisions regarding opening (or not) and also making the churches covid-safe.

Our capable and diverse Ministry Team has been consistently generous with time and resources and this has enabled us to offer worship and prayer on zoom on virtually every single day since the pandemic began. This is a remarkable achievement, not matched anywhere else (that we know of)!

Our musicians and choir members have kept sung worship going at a high standard (on zoom and in church) with great difficulty, requiring much patience and adaptability for many, many months.

Thank you very much and congratulations, to all the above, as well as to so very many other unnamed church-people who have helped us with flowers, extra cleaning, opening and closing, and in so many other ways.

Through God's grace, his people have also continued to give generously, financially, so that St Andrew's, St Leonard's and St Peter's have been able to survive the pandemic and still be viable. This itself is a great achievement and is not taken for granted. Thank you.

## **Sadness**

Many funerals have happened in our churches, and in crematoria led by our benefice clergy, through the pandemic (some due to covid). These have been very hard for families, having so very few there to support them. Our benefice churches have lost some very loved and very faithful members in recent months (not through covid). The loss of a churchwarden is a serious blow to the church - the Neave family of Rodney Stoke lost their beloved Chris, one of our churchwardens - Chris served selflessly and untiringly, and we and I miss him enormously. To all these families, our desire is that the church family can give real and loving support.

## **Joy**

Do be aware that, on 1st July, Ruth Motion, chaplain at Kings of Wessex Academy, will be licensed as a lay-curate, and as a deacon on 25th September, to be (another!) part-time, non-stipendiary curate in our benefice!

Be aware also that, on 26th June, Thea Oliver, our current part-time, non-stipendiary curate, will be ordained priest, and will then be able to conduct weddings and baptisms and also absolve, bless and preside at the eucharist!

Thank the Lord for vocations and for new, gifted ministers - we are very fortunate and this is most exciting! (Remember too, though, that your gifts and skills, and your love and friendship, are every bit as important to the health of our churches as any person's, ordained or lay.)

## **Conclusion**

I receive a lot of friendship, support and affirmation from the people of our three churches. I have been here five years this month. Some would be starting to get itchy feet by now, (as ordained, stipendiary clergy tend to move). However, I am now beginning to feel that this is home (it takes five years to feel at home in a new place - social scientists tell us). Being located here in the family that congregates around St Andrew's, St Leonard's and St Peter's is a good place to be. Thank you.