Minutes of St Michael's Church APCM, 28 May 2023 in the WCC at 11.40 a.m.

Attendees: Rev'd Derwyn Williams (DW) (Joint Chair), Claire Conquest (CC) (Churchwarden, Joint Chair), Gillian Johnson (GJ) (Churchwarden, Joint Chair), Caroline Galwey (CG) (minutes), and about 30 members of the Congregation.

At 11.45 DW opened the meeting with prayer, welcomed those present and thanked all who had created and circulated reports.

Apologies were received from Daphne Birchmore, Bill McDonald (BM), Graham Savage, Rev'd Derek Hinge, Pauline Hinge, Peter Mannings, Val Ashwood, Mark Johnson, Jenny Klincke, Katharine Stanley (KS), Katherine Aitken and Vivienne Emmett.

Vestry Meeting 2023

Item 1 – To receive the minutes of the 2022 Vestry Meeting. The 2022 minutes were received with minor corrections: proposed by DW, seconded by Martin Pettit, unanimously accepted.

Item 2 – Election of Churchwardens. Claire Conquest and Gillian Johnson were duly nominated and unanimously elected as churchwardens for 2023–2024.

The Vestry Meeting was declared closed at 11.55 a.m.

The APCM began immediately.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

Item 1 – To receive the minutes of the 2022 APCM. DW thanked Sarah Copley for preparing the minutes. They were unanimously received subject to a minor correction: proposed by DW, seconded by Angela Weeks.

Item 2 – Matters arising from the minutes. None were raised.

Item 3 – Vicar's Report. The report had been circulated before the meeting. DW summarised it, emphasising his thanks for the parish's prayers and support during his illness and recovery. Bishop Alan had remarked that the Spirit was very much alive within our church community during this time. DW reflected that during his decade as vicar of St Michael's, great resources had been devoted to improving the fabric of the church, especially the organ, bells and quinquennial repairs, and recovering after the break-in. He expressed the hope that our next decade might see more of our resources devoted outwards towards the poor of the world and to our worship and spiritual outreach. A sign of vitality is the variety of new Christians who have come forward in recent years and are still coming. The community needs to pray and foster the discipleship of new believers. The Lent Prayer course this year has been an encouragement to deepen our relationship with God. DW invited ideas for a similar exercise during the Kingdom season in autumn.

The meeting unanimously accepted the Vicar's Report, proposed by DW, seconded by Rob Klincke.

Item 4 – Safeguarding Report and PCC Statement to the APCM. CC took the chair for this item and spoke to BM's report in his absence. There were no questions and the report was accepted unanimously, proposed by CC, seconded by Angela Weeks. DW proposed a vote of thanks to BM for his tireless work in the ever-expanding field of safeguarding. The proposal was seconded by CC and passed unanimously.

Item 5 – Election of PCC representatives to Deanery Synod. DW resumed the chair for the election of three parish members to the Deanery Synod for the next triennium. All three nominees – Peter Rixson (PR), Margaret Fox (MF) and Michelle Durnell (MD) – were to continue in post from the previous three years. DW thanked all three for their past service through the difficult time of the pandemic, and declared them duly elected.

Item 6 – Election of PCC members. Nomination forms were received for Gaillie Anderson and Mireille Els and they were duly elected to the PCC with thanks from parish members. DW noted that the next PCC meeting will take place on 24 July and expressed his hope that more members, up to the number of 5, may come forward.

Item 7 – Electoral Roll. GJ took the chair and spoke to the Electoral Roll report. She noted that the figure of 149 members on the Roll should be corrected to 147. The revision has taken place and will be notified to the Diocese. GJ thanked Katherine Roy for producing a new alphabetised version of the Roll which is to be displayed on the notice board in the welcome area following this meeting. She asked parishioners to ensure that their membership is up to date as enrolment lasts for 6 years.

Item 8 – Sidesmen's Report. GJ thanked Carole Macdonald for her report, which had been circulated, and read out the list of proposed sidesmen for 2023–24. She reiterated Carole's request for new volunteers for this important role. The report was unanimously accepted, proposed by GJ, seconded by MD.

Item 9 – Secretary's Report. GJ thanked Christine Solway for preparing the circulated report. Christine in turn thanked PCC members for their support and DW added his thanks to the PCC members and Churchwardens. The report was unanimously accepted, proposed by GJ and seconded by John Steward.

Item 10 – Treasurer's Report. CC took the chair. The Treasurer, Graziana Maddolozzo (GM), referred to her circulated report and financial statements with a slide presentation. She noted that it was her eighth year as Treasurer and thanked the Finance Committee, the Parish Administrator, Terry Pigram, the various committees and finally Clive Risby, the independent examiner of accounts, for their support.

The total income for 2022 (as of 31 December 2022) was £197,473 and expenditure was £180,271. Tax efficient Planned Giving decreased slightly in 2022 compared to 2021 but.there was a 23% increase in one-off donations and collections. However, these have yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Income from social committees, Music at St Michael's and hire of the WCC is likewise depleted. The Charities Support Group has no direct income except the annual Fairs and appeals, but a PCC allocation has helped the CSG to maintain its support of various charities. There have been some generous legacies. Share dividends are up on 2021 as is income from weddings. Rental of Cowell House is steady.

In terms of expenditure, running expenses have decreased overall. While utility bills have increased, we have succeeded in reducing the use of gas and electricity. There has been a slight increase in salaries. Some major repairs are likely to be needed in 2023.

Assets and liabilities reflect the depreciation of some equipment and the decrease in market valuation of shares, which is now slowly rising again.

The accounts have been reviewed by the finance committee and the independent examiner and approved by the PCC.

GM was applauded for her presentation and thanked by the Chair, as was the Finance Committee. There being no questions from the floor, GM proposed receiving the audited accounts and statement of funds from 2022. The proposal was seconded by MD and passed unanimously.

To receive the Budget for 2023. CC proposed accepting the 2023 budget as circulated. The proposal was seconded John Steward and passed unanimously.

Item 11 – To elect an Examiner for the coming year. CC proposed thanks to Clive Risby for his work in the role in the past year and asked for a volunteer to come forward for this role. The appointment will be dealt with by the PCC.

Item 12 – Churchwardens' report on fabric, goods and ornaments.

DW took the chair and invited questions. The report was unanimously accepted, proposed by GJ and seconded by CC. DW thanked the Churchwardens for looking after all our equipment and also thanked Terry Pigram, Peter Rixson and John Steward for archiving.

Item 13 – Deanery Synod report. In PR's absence, DW spoke to his report and invited contributions from the synod representatives. He noted that there has been little activity for the past triennium, but we hope that activity will resume. Holy Trinity has no vicar, and another parish in the deanery has long been vacant. MF reported that Holy Trinity is active despite the vacancy, especially in providing night shelter. The report was proposed by DW, seconded by MF and accepted unanimously.

Item 14 – Reports from other groups collectively. GJ took the chair and invited questions on the separate reports before voting on their acceptance *en bloc*.

Charity Support Group: GJ thanked VA and the CSG for their work.

Education Group: the success of Godly Play on Sundays was noted and thanks were offered to KS and all those who help week by week. Ministry to schools continues and it is encouraging to see the schoolchildren in church on special occasions.

St Michael's School report: GJ noted the continuing challenge that the pandemic has posed for schools. Staff turnover has been considerable, but catch-up recovery funding has been put to good use. A very valuable innovation is the 'wrap-around' care at school before and after school hours. Like all schools, St Michael's has been affected by strikes but care and activities, if not regular lessons have been available for pupils throughout. GJ thanked all the staff and governors led by Val Ashwood and Mark Johnson.

Mothers' Union report: Barbara Eldridge pointed out that the Mothers' Union has been disbanded at the parish level. This item should be removed from future agendas.

Churches Together report: MF added to her report that the Ukrainian Support Group has been added to members, linking churches in Stortford to the crucial and live political situation. John Emmett reported that Churches Together will support the Stortford Carnival under the 'Love Stortford' banner and will be in the procession with a float.

WCC report: John Emmett pointed out the importance of reaching a permanent solution for the severely leaking roof. Terry Pigram reported that an appointment was made for a builder to examine the damage but he failed to arrive. Organising a solution is ongoing. A re-design is needed, which is sure to be costly.

TLC group report: Rosemary Thomson (RT) spoke to her report, quoting feedback from attendees that the group meetings help to alleviate loneliness. A good number of new attendees came to the Coronation event. The group welcomes Mother's Union members. GJ thanked RT for her efforts in organising the group.

Tower report: Nick Hughes spoke on the completion of the Bells Project. A thanksgiving service will be held on 4 June. A few works still need to be completed: for instance, a new clock hammer which is recommended to be installed on the tenor bell so that it is as powerful as it was before. The firm A. James have quoted for this work, which should happen soon. £11,000 still needs to be found to complete the work, for which we have a year in hand. CC and DW thanked Nick and his team for their work.

Director of Music report: Nathan Collins spoke to his report and thanked all participants in music at worship. RT asked if anything was being done to recruit young people to the choir: Nathan replied that that is our next task. CC thanked Nathan for his work.

Rob Klincke proposed and MD seconded that all reports be accepted *en bloc*. The reports were unanimously accepted.

DW took chair and thanked Clare.

Item 15 – Date of next meeting.

DW took the chair and proposed 27 May 2024 as the date of next year's APCM, to be confirmed by the PCC. AW pointed out that half term week is not ideal for families, but DW replied that April too is problematic because of Easter and the end of the tax year.

Item 16 – AOB.

DW: None notified in advance. RT: we are making plans to return to visiting care homes post Covid since restrictions have been removed.

DW summed up, in conclusion, that we are grateful for the signs of life and renewal in so many fields. He reiterated his thanks to everyone who has contributed reports, and for the vitality to which they attest.

The meeting closed at 1 p.m. with prayer and the Grace.