

**PARISH OF WITNEY
ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING
WEDNESDAY 5TH MAY 2021 12 NOON
ZOOM MEETING**



Present:	Toby Wright (chair), Julia Bee, Lawrence Bee, Ness Brunner-Ellis, Bill Down, Sally Down, David Exham, Anne-Marie Fisher, Ian Galletley, Melody Helm, Jeremy Lasman, Elpie Lewis, Kate Lockwood, Helen Meyrick, Ian Meyrick, Martin Peirce, Rosemary Peirce, Chris Riley, James Robertshaw, Anne Taylor, Claire Titcomb, Charlotte Tremain, Hugh White, Andrew Whitehouse, Lorna Whitehouse, Richard Young.
Apologies:	Kate Banks, Sue Campbell, Michele Foot, Sue Hodges, Josie Holmes, Keith Holmes, Christine Lever, David Taft, Linda Taft.

Item	
1.1	The meeting opened with prayer.
2.1	Apologies were received as above. Anyone knowing of other apologies was asked to email Kate L.
3.1	<u>Annual Meeting of Parishioners</u>
3.1.1	Minutes of the last meeting on 20 September 2020 were approved and there were no matters arising.
3.1.2	Election of Churchwardens Jeremy has agreed to continue, proposed Robin Carr, seconded Richard Young. Kate Banks has agreed to continue, proposed Linda Taft, seconded Melanie Bennette. The election was uncontested and therefore passed. The meeting of Parishioners closed at 12:04pm
4.1	<u>Annual Parochial Church Meeting</u>
4.1	Minutes of the meeting held 20 September 2020 Minutes of last meeting on 20 September 2020 were approved nem con and there were no matters arising.
4.2	Reports
4.2.1	Proceedings of the PCC in previous year Since the last APCM in September 2020 the PCC has held five meetings over Zoom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC has worked alongside the Ministry team, and made decisions on the need to temporarily close church buildings or restrict their use during the Covid-19 pandemic. Worship has continued online. • The Health & Safety Policy 2020 was revised to include reference to opening churches during the Covid-19 pandemic • The Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy 2020 was revised to include using Zoom for church services and meetings, including young people. • The General & Fire risk assessments for each of the four churches in the parish have been revised. • In line with Church of England guidance, risk assessments have been written to reflect the use of church buildings during the Covid-19 pandemic and have been regularly updated as the situation changes. • The Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and the PCC has monitored the safeguarding training of volunteers within the parish. • The PCC has started the process of employing a Schools Chaplain/Youth worker. • The PCC is supporting the newly formed Benefice Environment Group and their Action plan. • The PCC is supporting members of the congregation as they discern calls to ministry.

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4.2.2	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Over the last year, even though church buildings were closed for much of the time, the parish has continued to develop its safeguarding practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policies including online guidance for young people and safer recruitment have been reviewed and updated as needed • Training and DBS checks have taken place online • Sarah-Jane Ebanja has replaced Ness as Deputy Safeguarding Officer • Concerns have continued to be reported and dealt with as needed • The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. • Risk assessments, including for Covid, are in place for when activities resume in person
4.2.3	<p>Annual Fabric Report</p> <p>St Mary the Virgin, Witney</p> <p>During the last year, we have made certain improvements to the fabric of St Mary's, despite the restrictions imposed to control the Covid pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The replacement of carpet in the High Altar area, the Nave altar crossing, all three side chapels and the 'cross' within the Nave. • An upgrade to the Wifi capability. • The installation of comprehensive CCTV • Essential repairs and maintenance to the heating system within the Church • Peter Preston has been appointed as Inspecting Architect for the church. • The design of a new external noticeboard facing onto Church Green has been agreed. • The Cedar of Lebanon tree to the south of the church in the churchyard had to be cut down, with an aspiration to use some of it to create a new Nave Altar for the church. • The storms over the winter months caused substantial water ingress and damage to the paintwork in the church around the toilet block. We are working with Peter Preston to determine the best course of action to remediate this. • The Town Council has repaired the pillars and wall. <p>Holy Trinity Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since last year's report, no progress has been made with the repairs to the stone pillars or the cutting back of the evergreens in the churchyard. • We were able to have the kitchen units replaced before the lockdown. • During the summer the south roof repairs were completed and the gutters cleared. The work on the north roof has not yet started because the fundraising had to be put on hold. • The servicing of the fire extinguishers, boiler and heaters and PAT testing were carried out as required. <p>St. John the Evangelist, Hailey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new wooden vestry screen and door, and the wooden servery screen have been a source of delight however, the cold and damp over this winter, has seen some of the newer wood expand and some are now difficult to open and close. • The heating system in the church has been serviced • Water damage to the electrical systems in the basement has since been fully repaired and a claim made on the insurance. • Lightning conductor was inspected, gutters are performing and a slate from the roof was replaced. • The spring bulbs planted in previous years are coming through. • The ongoing grass cutting, and strimming has maintained the space well this year and we have the Parish Council to thank for the contributions towards this.

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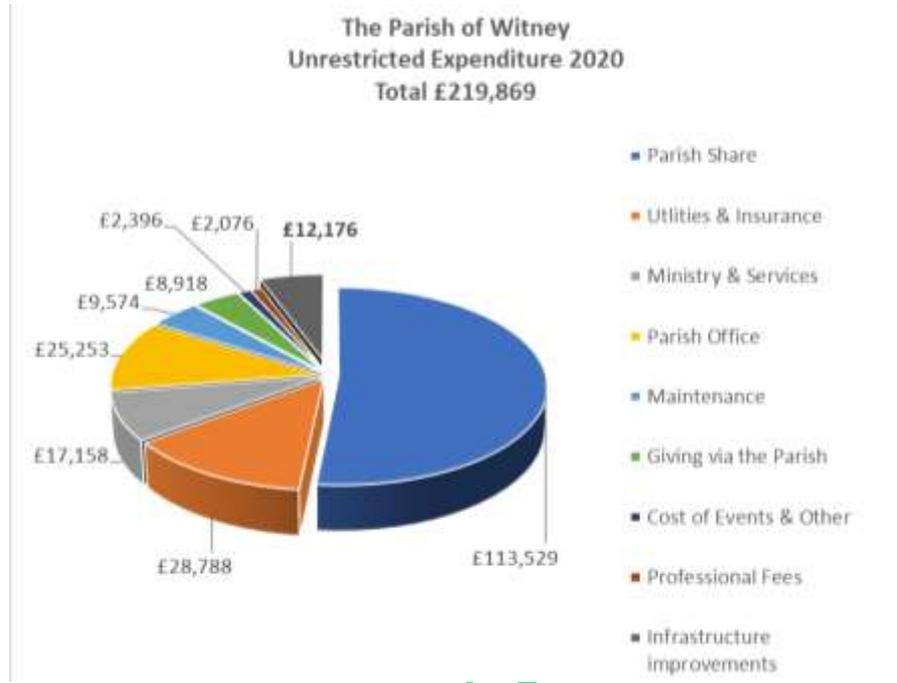
Item															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Armistice stone carved specially for Hailey and sited adjacent to the Liquidambar styraciflua tree will receive a blessing once the church is open once again. <p>St John the Baptist, Curbridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the quinquennial year for Curbridge, so an expert opinion will be available soon. The churchyard is in good shape, with lots of beautiful snowdrops and primroses. There are some large cracks in the main pathway which need to be cut out for the path to be re-made. The church building seems generally sound, with no obvious leaks or rot. The ancient electrical heating works every time it is asked to. The church bell has seized up and needs to be freed and a new rope and mechanism fitted. The organ is in working order but is due a service. The church is clean and ready for use, thanks to a few dedicated people. Let us hope the inspection does not reveal any hidden horrors. 														
4.2.4	<p>Finance and Statement of accounts</p> <p>The income for the year ended 31st December 2020 totalled £237,172, with total expenditure of £246,649, resulting in a deficit of £9,477. However, these figures include both restricted and unrestricted funds.</p> <p>Restricted income can only be used for the specific reason stated by the donor, and is often in support of a longer-term project. In 2020, restricted fund income totalled £30,147, of which £22,165 related to the Hardship and Youth Worker Funds, both newly created last year. Restricted expenditure amounted to £26,781 of which £8,550 were payments from the Hardship fund and the remainder relating to the installation of CCTV and part recarpeting of St Mary's and a contribution to the replacement of the boiler in the Parish Office.</p> <p>A review of our unrestricted funds gives a much clearer view of the health of our Parish finances. Here, income totalled £207,026, while costs amounted to £219,869, resulting in a deficit of £12,843 (2019 deficit £3,333). However, 2020 expenditure includes a number of one-off maintenance and/or improvement projects in our churches, including the replacement boiler in Hailey, Holy Trinity roof repairs, completion of the recarpeting and the upgrade of the wifi capability in St Mary's. Excluding these costs, the deficit is reduced to just £667. This is an exceptional result, and reflects the generosity of our congregation in response to the special appeal launched to cover the loss of income from Festivals and Events last year due to the pandemic. Once again, a huge thank you to all who have given so generously.</p> <p>A breakdown of our unrestricted income and expenditure is shown in the charts below.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <table border="1"> <caption>The Parish of Witney Sources of Unrestricted Income : 2020</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Source</th> <th>Amount (£)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Regular Congregational Giving</td> <td>117,581</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Donations, Legacies and Grants</td> <td>71,418</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Festivals and Events</td> <td>6,735</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Weddings, Funerals, Lettings</td> <td>4,512</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Income</td> <td>6,781</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>207,026</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Source	Amount (£)	Regular Congregational Giving	117,581	Donations, Legacies and Grants	71,418	Festivals and Events	6,735	Weddings, Funerals, Lettings	4,512	Other Income	6,781	Total	207,026
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4.2.4
contd



Given the impact of the pandemic, it is difficult to make direct comparisons with previous years' figures. However, it is extremely encouraging to note that our regular Gift Aid giving (either through the Parish Giving Scheme or regular Standing Orders) has increased by 4% over 2019.

Our costs are largely non-discretionary; we have to pay the largest items of our expenditure (e.g. Parish Share, Insurance, Heating and Lighting costs) to continue to operate. In 2020 our unrestricted costs reduced by 6% over the previous year, largely as a result of the reduced running costs as our churches remained closed.

The following chart reflects the exceptional generosity of our congregations in such a difficult year. It shows all elements of giving last year irrespective of whether it was restricted or unrestricted.



Once again, thank you to everyone who has given so generously to support the work of the Parish in such exceptional times.

Thanks were expressed to Jeremy for making the accounts so visible and to Michelle for all her work inputting figures.

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4.2.5	<p>Electoral roll on 20 April 2021</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">St. Mary's</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">144</td> <td style="width: 60%;">(from 152 in 2020)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holy Trinity</td> <td style="text-align: right;">59</td> <td>(from 60 in 2020)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St John's, Hailey</td> <td style="text-align: right;">34</td> <td>(from 37 in 2020)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St John's, Curbridge</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> <td>(from 9 in 2020)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">246</td> <td>(from 258 in 2020)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Rector's report</p> <p>Key points of the video presentation:</p>	St. Mary's	144	(from 152 in 2020)	Holy Trinity	59	(from 60 in 2020)	St John's, Hailey	34	(from 37 in 2020)	St John's, Curbridge	9	(from 9 in 2020)	Total	246	(from 258 in 2020)
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Total	246	(from 258 in 2020)														
4.2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last year has been a deeply troubling time for many but there's still much to celebrate. • We've continued ministry through online worship and found ways of being together when physically apart • The hardship campaign has raised thousands of pounds for those most at need within our community, helping us to live out our call to be community of mercy and kindness. • Looking to the future, circumstances mean that plans are changing all the time but worship will remain at the heart of our life. • We have an opportunity to re-evaluate our common life and discover new ways to launch ourselves by allowing Jesus to form us and enable us to reach out to other people. • Within the ministry team we have said farewell to Ross, and Joy and Nick. James and Rebecca have come on board as pastoral assistants and looking forward, we are planning to appoint a Schools and Youth worker to develop our work with children. We already reach out to 11 schools across the benefice. Thank you for prayers and financial support that are helping us achieve this aim. • As we come out of lockdown, it's important that we allow time to rest; recuperate social networks and our religious faith; and refresh ourselves. • The church has undergone possibly the biggest reformation the church has known in a very short period of time. We've found ways to adapt and connect - the Book Circle, Bible study and ESP have all carried on online. • We're mindful that some people are not online. The Benefice Bulletin has been sent out in hard copy to those who can't access internet. • Many people have suffered great loss and the bond of grief has been very hard. Financial suffering is just beginning and is likely to go on for generations. Mental health has suffered because of isolation, loneliness and the fear of the virus. Across the globe many have suffered greatly and we stand in solidarity, especially with those suffering in abject poverty. • Zoom has been right; it differs from streaming services because it allows interaction between people. Thank you to Richard and James, and Kayleigh beforehand, for technological knowhow in assisting us with Zoom. • Thank you to the wardens who have resourced us and continued to care for the church buildings while they were closed. • Thank you to everyone for adapting and changing, and continuing to be faithful to our baptismal promises. • Thank you to the callers and everyone who has helped in keeping in touch with each other. • Thank you to everyone involved in the Drinks parties. They were set up to provide opportunities for keeping in touch socially. • Thank you to Francis and Sally for leading our music. We're conscious that Paul and Jeremy and the church choirs are keen to be involved again as soon as possible. • Thanks to Michelle who has continued to work in the Parish Office. • It's been a really challenging time. May the God of tenderness known in each of our hearts, help us witness that power of God to others. May we move forward together in our calling to be a community of mercy and kindness. 															

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4.2.7	<p>Toby and the Ministry Team were thanked for their extraordinary work and commitment through such a difficult year.</p> <p>Deanery Synod Report Meetings were held at Shilton in February and on Zoom in November.</p> <p>The Deanery Share was paid in full because of individual churches paying their share the previous year and because the Cotswold Wildlife Park had generously paid for 12 churches in the Shill Valley area. The rebate of 3% from 2019 covered any shortfall in 2020.</p> <p>The Rev'd Margot Hodson and Dr Martin Hodson spoke on <i>The Christian Response to the Environmental Crisis</i>. The Deanery Synod passed the motion: <i>To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth</i>. (This motion was also passed by the Diocesan Synod in March 2020).</p> <p>Kirsty Morgan reported on six areas of <i>Common Vision</i>. These emerged from areas of Mission and Ministry following meetings Bishop Steven held with parishes and deaneries. These areas were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental action • Christian Formation and Discipleship • Growing new congregations • Schools, Children and Young people • Addressing poverty and inequality • Celebrating and blessing Milton Keynes. <p>Grants were made available for funding projects such as church planting and work in schools.</p> <p>A motion was passed asking for guidance, assistance, advice and teaching from the House of Bishops on communion during Covid-19. There was recognition of hurt to some and diversity of theological opinion on the matter.</p> <p>Churchwardens' report</p> <p>It is, of course, a great sadness that our churches have had to remain closed for much of 2020, and that, therefore, many of the events that would have normally taken place in our wonderful buildings, from regular worship to concerts and festivals, had to be cancelled.</p> <p>Nevertheless, we are hugely grateful to the Deputy Wardens and all the volunteers who have worked so diligently to complete numerous iterations of Covid Risk Assessments for their respective churches to enable them to re-open. They have also worked hard to ensure that our churches were set up and remain Covid secure for all the services and occasional offices that have taken place during those times when we were allowed to re-open. Once again, many thanks for this gracious service.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the pandemic, we have been able to progress various projects to maintain and improve our buildings, and also to plan ahead for the times when we will be able to hold major festivals and events again. Thank you to all those who have contributed to these projects in this fallow time.</p> <p>We are thankful that we live in a time when technology has allowed us to keep in touch from the safety of our own homes. As such, we are all so grateful for the work of our Ministry Team in adapting so creatively to the challenge of undertaking their priestly calling in such unusual circumstances. And of course, to those who have worked in the background to enable our Zoom events to happen so seamlessly.</p> <p>Finally, a special word of thanks to Michelle, who has worked in the Parish Office throughout the pandemic. She has had to adapt her work practices significantly to enable us to hold services safely and has provided great support to those without internet access by sending them paper copies of sermons, liturgies and the weekly newsletter (as well as being a friendly voice at the end of the phone when needed).</p>
4.3	Elections
4.3.1	Deputy Churchwardens

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	<p>The following people were proposed and duly elected: St Mary's - Melody Helm, Claire Hermon Holy Trinity - Dair Henderson, Charlotte Tremain Hailey - Robin Carr, Elpie Lewis Curbridge - Ian Galletley</p>
4.4	<p>Appointment of Independent examiners The meeting agreed to reappoint Whitley Stimpson Ltd. They have been very supportive in working with Jeremy to restructure the financial records. Proposed Jeremy Lasman, seconded Rosemary Peirce, approved nem com.</p>
4.5	<p>Any other business Marriage Registration laws changed yesterday. The green registration books have been closed. One copy will be sent to the Diocesan Registration Office and the other will remain in church.</p>
4.6	<p>Date of next meeting Sunday 27 March 2022 at 4:00pm</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ness closed the meeting in prayer at 12:52pm.</p>

Signed: _____ Date: _____

AGREED