

**PARISH OF ST ANDREW, RUSHMERE
ANNUAL MEETINGS**



Thursday 20th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the church hall



Present: 33 members of the electoral roll.

The meeting was chaired by Revd Alan Comfort.

Opening Prayers. Revd Alan opened with a reading from Hebrews 10:24-25, followed by a prayer, and we then sang *Be thou my vision*.

Annual Vestry Meeting

1. Hilary Platts was elected as clerk of today's meetings.
2. The Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 25th April 2024 were approved as a true record and signed.

3. Election of 2 Churchwardens

Ruth Silburn: proposed by Rachel Daniels, seconded by Pat Scates.

Kevin Brazier: proposed by Paul Hesketh, seconded by Kate Theobald.

There being no other nominations, all present were in favour and Ruth and Kevin were elected for the coming year. Revd Alan thanked retiring Churchwarden David Chaplin for his service over the last 3 years and wished him well. He also thanked Ruth and Kevin for their extra support during David's period of ill health.

Revd Alan reported on his discussions with Bishop Mike concerning the gap between Churchwardens being elected and being admitted to office at the Archdeacon's Visitation. The Bishop agreed that a newly elected Warden could assume responsibilities in the daily life of the church from the Annual Meetings onwards, whilst the outgoing Warden might be called upon to sign any legal documents until the Visitation.

4. Election of 1 Deputy Churchwarden

Jim Ainslie: proposed by Ruth Silburn, seconded by Dianne Davey.

There being no other nominations, all present were in favour and Jim was elected.

There was a short interval before the APCM.

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. **Apologies:** Jim and Gill Ainslie, Joan and Bob Batchelor, June Collins, Dianne Davey, Claire Driver, Mark Finch, Sandy Lloyd and Bob Mellor.
2. **Appointment of tellers:** Kevin Brazier and David Chaplin were appointed as tellers for the meeting.
3. **The Minutes of the meeting of 25th April 2024** were approved and signed as a true record. There were no Matters Arising.
4. **Electoral Roll Report:** The Secretary read the report from Gill Ainslie, Electoral Roll Officer. The Electoral Roll was fully revised this year and there were currently 126 members on the Roll; 51 resident and 75 non-resident. Gill thanked everyone for completing their application so promptly.

5. **Election of 5 members of the Parochial Church Council:**

The following were nominated:

- Gill Ainslie: proposed by Bron Punchard, seconded by Russell Scates.
- Bob Batchelor: proposed by Margaret Mellor, seconded by Joan du Boulay.
- Chris Gibson: proposed by David du Boulay, seconded by Ros de Lapeyre.
- Belinda Mottram: proposed by Mary Odam, seconded by Chris Yule.
- Chris Yule: proposed by Kevin Brazier, seconded by Shirley Glazebrook.

There being no other nominations, all present were in favour, and they were elected.

Thanks were given to Tim Oxbrow, who has stood down from the PCC but continues to serve in so many ways.

6. **Appointment of David Gill to the PCC:**

David may be appointed to the PCC by the APCM in his capacity as Reader licenced to the parish. This was approved unanimously and he was thanked for his continued ministry and support.

7. **Appointment of an Independent Examiner:**

Sandy Lloyd was thanked for his diligence and care in examining our 2024 accounts, and for his support of the Treasurer. He has agreed to act as Independent Examiner for another year. His appointment was approved by all present.

8. Annual Report:

The Annual Report and Accounts had been displayed in church for 2 Sundays and made available online and in hard copy. The Report was received and there were no questions. Thanks to everyone who helped to put the report together.

9. Treasurer's Report / Financial Statement

For the first time in 9 APCMs the Treasurer was able to report it had been a really good year financially, and he thanked everyone for their continued generous giving, and all who assisted with financial work in 2024: the Wardens and Sides men and women; Dianne Davey, Russell Scates and Kevin Brazier (Cashiers); cheque signatories; David du Boulay who administers the brown envelope scheme; Jean Yule who looks after Hall bookings; Joan du Boulay, Margaret Mellor, Mary Odam, Rachel Daniels and Russell Scates who look after the accounts of our ancillary organisations; Sandy Lloyd, our professional and diligent Examiner. Thanks also to Tim Oxbrow for producing the slides for this evening and for his valued help throughout the year.

The Treasurer explained that until now we have been an 'Excepted Charity' but Charity Commission rules have changed meaning we must become a Registered Charity. This process is in hand, and training will be offered to all PCC members to help them understand their responsibilities and the impact of this change.

Income & Expenditure: 2024 was a much better year than expected, and with Income up nearly £6.5k and Expenditure up nearly £4.5k, the Operating Surplus was nearly £6k. Giving was up nearly £8k, and Investment income had doubled, while Fees and Hall Hire were significantly down. Expenditure increases were due to Mission costs (Messy Church and Youth Alpha) and higher power costs. The Surplus was split between the Unrestricted Reserve Fund and the Designated Youth Worker Fund.

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2024: the various types of funds and how they operate were explained. Overall funds were up by £28.5k, particularly due to 2 extremely generous anonymous donations.

2025 Budget: The Budget shows Income steady at £101k and Expenditure up £7k (due to higher costs all round, especially Power and Mission), with an Operating Deficit of £500.

The Treasurer ended his report by noting that the congregation and income are growing, Reserves are much healthier, and the damage caused to our finances by Covid has been repaired.

Thanks were extended to Chris Gibson for his hard work over the year as Treasurer.

10. Churchwardens' Report:

Ruth Silburn gave an update on the application for a Gold Eco-Award. Although this had not been successful, an opportunity had been given to make amendments to the Churchyard Management Plan and 3 assessors will visit in June to review progress.

The report was received and there were no questions. Thanks were given to the Wardens for all they do.

11. Deanery Synod Report:

The report was received and there were no questions.

12. Chairman's Words:

I do hope you have been encouraged by everything you have heard and read tonight. We are a church that takes seriously our responsibility to be well run, and kind. Thank you to everyone already mentioned, and particularly any who have not heard your name but faithfully offer your gifts to serve this church. Thank you.

Annual meetings are a celebration of God's presence with us and the often invisible work of God to strengthen us in our inner being with a trust in Jesus. How do we quantify such work? Such a measurement is hard to describe but we can see it - a spiritual confidence that begins to grow as we get closer to God through bible study, prayer, service, and through reaching out to others to share our faith.

Last year I promised I/we would commit to caring for people through visits and so on; to enable faith to grow through the creation of more home groups and discipleship opportunities; and work to lead the church in outreach through the May Festival and similar. I will leave you to decide whether we are delivering on these promises.

My prayer is that we will see more growth over the coming year. Can I ask you whether you are willing to step out with us? Are you part of a home group? Are you wanting to move forward in your faith? Are you willing to serve in new ways? What is God calling you towards? Your faith and usefulness is not in the past but right now.

For me the highlights of the year have been:

- Visiting a lady in hospital who was frightened of what was going to happen to her and after praying seeing her face literally change in front of me. From panic to peace. As I got up a man opposite asked me to pray that for him too.
- Hearing one of the people on an Alpha course say he wanted to open the door of his heart for Jesus to come in.
- Listening to the London Community Gospel Choir sing to a packed church as the 2024 May Festival came to an end.

There is so much to praise God for. Let's enjoy the coming year without setting goals but simply asking God to grow us deeper and in number to his glory. *Revd Alan.*

The meeting was asked to suggest their own personal highlights of the year, and these included the number of people at the Carol Service; the joy of the Messy Church Baptism, Graham Daniels' visit; the Crib Service; seeing the Young Alpha group growing in confidence and leading prayers; Jill's talk to the MU in spite of ill-health; the Messy Sports event.

13. Any Other Business

Mary Odam asked if there was any progress towards appointing a Director of Music. Revd Alan said it had been important to see how the direction and pattern of worship might change to ensure the right person was appointed, and perhaps it was time to go back to the PCC. Margaret Mellor said that Graham Platts did not wish to organise further Music at Rushmere concerts after Autumn 2025, and it would be a shame if there was no-one to pick this up. Perhaps this should be part of the same discussion.

Closing Prayers: Revd Marion read a short passage from Micah

The APCM was followed by a short Special Meeting of the PCC.