

**Minutes of the Parish Annual General Meeting
St. Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green**

Sunday, July 9th, 2023

Item 1: Welcome

Father Quentin welcomed approximately 50 members of the parish to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and commenced with an opening prayer.

Item 2: Minutes of the last AGM (2022)

The minutes of the previous AGM held in 2022 were approved.

Item 3: Matters Arising

No matters arising were discussed.

Item 4: Finance Committee Chairman's Annual Report

Brian Martin, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented the annual report. The accounts were presented using a short presentation/handout leaflet version, with handouts distributed. The formal statement of accounts is available on the notice board and will be published on the parish website.

He made the following comments:

- Premises costs were higher due to an increase in heating expenses, but there was a supportive contribution of 50% of the heating costs made by the OFM.
- The diocesan quota was lower than expected but is expected to return to previous levels.
- Social events expenditure was lower than planned.
- The parish contributed £8,000 towards supporting mental health initiatives in Trinity and St. Anthony's.
- Overall costs were up by 9% compared to the previous year.
- Offertory income increased by approximately 6% as the parish returned to normal life post-COVID.
- Cash plate contributions increased by 60% due to successful social events, including the summer fete.
- Income from candle lighting by parishioners became a full income source for the parish.
- The parish had a surplus of income over expenses of approximately £75,000.
- Funds of up to £200,000 were committed to a one-year deposit bond yielding 3.6%.
- The parish has transitioned to the Brentwood Diocese accounting system, leading to more efficient and simplified financial reporting.
- The introduction of tap and go card facility for direct debit and credit card payments is forthcoming.
- Brian Martin reported on the success of the restoration fund, noting that the heating expenditure of £747,000 had been fully settled, with the parish's contribution being £366,000. The campaign will continue until May 2024, with

a target of raising approximately £233,000. Individual letters of thanks and appreciation will be sent to campaign supporters.

- The balance sheet showed a surplus of funds of £427,000, with £370,000 in the general fund. Discussions on how to allocate these funds in the future, while retaining a rainy-day fund of £150,000, are ongoing.

Item 5: Questions and Comments

Concerns were raised regarding the clarity of the presentation of accounts, specifically the lack of reference to the starting and end points. Brian assured attendees that a full statement of accounts is available on the notice board and will be published on the parish website.

A vote of thanks was offered to the Finance Committee for their diligent work.

Item 6: Chairman's Annual Report

A summary of the Chairman's report was distributed, and Kit Tranmer presented his report. The following observations were made:

- Consideration of tenders for the church sound system, with a priority to appoint a company. Tenders ranged between £70,000 and £45,000, and the lower tender is likely to be accepted.
- Car park congestion issues, particularly during church times and funerals. Options for improvement are being reviewed.
- Refurbishment of the Becket Centre, with attention now turning to the Henrietta's suite. All options for its utilization are being considered.
- The youth project is still a work in progress, with no firm decisions made yet. The proposal to share resources across three parishes for youth initiatives was not supported by the other parishes, but a financial contribution to support mental health in Trinity and St. Anthony's was agreed upon.

Item 7: Additional Questions and Comments

- Concerns were raised regarding the Henrietta suite and the need to gather opinions from its users. (Shelia Pryor).
- Suggestion to allocate surplus funds towards supporting the food bank. (Shelia Pryor)
- Reminder that when parishioners financially support St. Thomas's they do so with the expectation that they are supporting the community, and therefore 3rd parties should only be supported at the discretion of each parishioner. (Bernard Bourdillon)
- Emphasis on investing in the best sound system within the budget for the church. (Geoff Craft)
- Consideration of TV screens in the church was discussed but not pursued at present. (Therese McCleary)
- Support for the preferred supplier for the Sound System. (Bernard Hunter).
- Unanimous support for mental health initiatives in local schools.

- Support for giving beyond the parish and allocating surplus funds to initiatives outside the parish. (Leon Menzies)
- Appreciation for the new railings leading up to the altar.

Item 8: Nominations

Retiring member Paul Kinman was thanked for his service, and it was announced that there are currently two vacancies on the parish council.

Bernard Hunter was nominated and elected to the parish council.

Item 9: Farewell to Kit Tranmer

Kit Tranmer, the Parish Chairman, announced his stepping down as Chairman. Kit will continue to serve on the Parish Council. Father Quentin expressed sincere gratitude for Kit's leadership, service and support to him personally and to the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury.

Leon Menzies also expressed personal thanks for Kit's efforts on behalf of the Parish.

Bernard Hunter proposed a vote of thanks to Fr Quentin whose unstinting support has been essential in enabling a much healthier lay involvement in running the parish.

Item 10: Call for New Volunteers

Father Quentin highlighted the need for new volunteers, particularly to replace elderly parishioners, in various church groups.

The Finance Committee and the parish council were thanked for their service and support.