

**Parish Church Lower Peover**

Meeting Two

**The APCM** 26th April 2023

This meetingis open to Parishioners and electoral roll membership although only those on the electoral role may vote in the elections.

**Agenda:**

**Prayer.**

**1. Apologies.**

**2. Minutes.**

*Vicars Statement.*

**3. Electoral Roll and Constitution Report.**

**4a. Annual Report.**

**4b. Safeguarding Report.**

**5. Financial Report.**

**6. Wardens Report.**

**7. Deanery Synod Report.**

**8. The Elections**

**9. AOB** *(Notifications put forward prior to meeting)*

**10. Date of Next Meeting.**

**Closing Prayer.**

 **Prayer:**

1. **Apologies:**
2. **Minutes of last meeting:**

The minutes of the previous meetings have been available for the statutory period and circulated. The agreed minutes are to be proposed and seconded as an accepted true record.

Proposed: Seconded.

**Vicar’s Statement**

Dear St Oswald’s Church family, when I sat down to write these short reports for the this and our sister church of St Lawrence’s, I recognised that we have had a challenging year.

Having moved through the challenges of the covid 19 pandemic and then six months without a vicar due to sickness, our parish had been asked to meet unexpected difficulty and had met these moments with fortitude and resilience. I personally thank everybody who exercised ministry and gave support to the church and parish during these hard times.

Since returning to work, I have appreciated the continuing support and encouragement of all but particularly our warden Norman Withenshaw, our assistant warden Pam Adlington and the PCC.

Now however is the time to begin to look forward to better times and I hope you will all join with me to pray that as we move forward, we will enjoy a closer relationship with our sister parish of St Lawrences and see our church grow in faith, number and experience of Christs Holy Spirit working in this special place.

Two years ago, I shared a beautiful verse from Jeremiah with you and I would like to share it again as a source of continued encouragement and as an insight into the prayers that I recite on your behalf and on behalf of our church here in this place.

The Verse says, *‘I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans to prosper you and bring you hope’.*

I honestly believe that the Lord’s hand has been on us all in a profound and remarkable way here and across the benefice despite our challenges over the past few months. And we have much to be thankful for. God is at work, and he is releasing his gifts even now to build up the church as a place of love and as a beacon of joy and light to those around us. His gifts are here, and I truly believe that we will see more of those gifts released in the coming months and years.

I am thankful for the continuing development of our relationships with our schools and for the increasing number of families and children’s work in the parish. This is definitely a gift and flies in the face of other church experiences of family and children’s work decline.

There are no words to describe how grateful I am for all your ministries. Your work is the ground preparation for what is to come. The harvest that has been planted and is currently being nurtured.

Looking forward we must pray and work for growth spiritually and constantly ask that the Lord will both inspire us to serve in new ways and that he will help us grow our gifts so that the work of being church here in Lower Peover will not rest on the few but be shared joyfully throughout the whole body.

So, thanks must be given to all those who do sacrificially serve in anyway. From the sides person welcoming team, the finances to the flowers, the bells, flags, our musicians, the brass polishing, to the care of the churchyard and so much more, so many of you have been quietly doing big and little things to keep things going in extremely difficult and unprecedented times.

We have so much to be excited about at

St Oswald’s! And I can’t wait to see where the Lord will lead us to as a family together!

What I want us all to take away from this and other reports given tonight is that we have so much to be thankful for as we venture into 2023-4 and this new season in the life of our church together. I’m so excited about all that God has in store for us, I hope that you are too!

God bless you, yours in Christ. *FrMurray*

**3. The PCC Constitution Report**

The Electoral Role Report (Jonty Geake)

**4a. Annual General Report**

(Secretary, Felicity Wilshaw)

This year at St. Oswald‘s has thrown us a few challenges but we have come through together as a stronger church. My last report ended at the

end of April 2022 when Father Murray was suffering from ill health and unable to carry out his ministry. Ann Barlow, our lay reader left us to live in Wales in May after years of wonderful commitment to the church With Ann’s departure, life still carried on at St. Oswald’s. Several members of the PCC worked really well as a team and took over the organisation of visiting clergy for services and weddings at Lower

Peover, organising the rota of readers, sides people and intercession readers and keeping parishioners informed each week of Sunday services by email through the church magazine. Information was also

added to the website by Mike Tabner. All PCC members contributed a lot of time and effort in supporting our church and I have been very grateful

for their support. Many other members of the congregation contribute a lot of time and effort in supporting the church and we are grateful for all

their help. Keith and Rodney both retired from their roles as churchwardens in July. In October, Norman Withenshaw was voted in as church warden in on a

casual basis by the PCC .It was excellent to have a churchwarden again and Norman has worked incredibly hard. Colin Gidman will be retiring from his post as treasurer after this meeting. We are sorry to lose him and are very grateful for his diligence in keeping our finances in such good order and providing us with bi-monthly financial reports. We have supported the Farm Community Network as our annual charity as well as the Hope central food bank for which we provide a basket in church for necessary foodstuffs. June saw the celebrations of the Queen’s jubilee with a full weekend of events including a concert with Linda Richardson and an invitation to join in some of the patriotic songs to celebrate the Queen's 70-year reign. Following the concert, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee beacon was lit and Royal fireworks were enjoyed there were walks and cycle rides undertaken from Allostock, Over Peover and Lower Peover to Plumley for a BBQ lunch. On the Sunday 5th June there was a praise and thanksgiving service for the Queen's 70 years of service and Whit Sunday. A Big Jubilee Lunch was enjoyed by some on the playing field of Lower Peover school ,a bit of a washout but the tea, cakes and ice creams sold were very welcome, There was also a teddy bears Parachute Jump from the church tower and escorted tours of the bell tower led by members of the bell ringers team. Flower arrangements in and around the church were enjoyed by many visitors. The Annual Fete was held on the school field in early July which was a

happy occasion and a good day for the community to get together. This was all brought together by the capable hands of Joan Drye and her committee. The annual quiz was set on the subject of wildlife in Britain this year and provided hours of fun!

Father Murray‘s phased return started in July and it was excellent to see him back at the altar. Both parishes celebrated his return at the benefice

service at the end of July. The weekday Communion service restarted in early September We heard the very sad news of the Queen’s death in early September. The church marked this significant event with muffled bells, opening the church for private prayer and placing the official portrait of the Queen in front of the high altar standing behind a tall cabinet on which there was a book of condolence for people to sign and leave messages. The church flew the Union Flag at half-mast, which was raised to full mast when the King is officially proclaimed and then lowered to half-mast again until the morning after the Queen's funeral. Services were held on Sunday June 11th containing prayers of thanksgiving for the Queen and intercessions for the new King. The harvest festival was well attended and it was great to see our friend, the sheep Tarquin outside and for the children to sing using actions in the service. The church was beautifully decorated and the gifts of harvest produce were gratefully received by the Salvation Army. The benefice service was held at St Lawrence’s at the end of October and a service of Light to commemorate the faithful departed was held on All Souls day. Remembrance Sunday began with the usual outdoor observance. The service of Nine Lessons and Carols was well attended-many

thanks to the choir, the readers and David, our organist for a lovely celebration in words and music. We held a Modern language Candlelight Midnight Mass with Carols on Christmas Eve and a Christmas Day Modern language Christmas ‘All Age’ Interactive Family Worship which was great fun. This was followed by a short said Service of Holy Communion. One of the most encouraging parts of church life this year has been the continual growth of the children’s church which is going from strength to strength. This is led by Rosie Tabner and Rebekah Norbury and Sofia Manley. They meet in church at 11a.m and stay for the beginning of the

service. Then after a blessing by Father Murray, they go to the Little House for their activities, returning for a blessing or Holy Communion and a to talk about their what they have been doing and show any craft activity. At the All age services at the beginning of each month, the families are involved in leading the family prayers and singing their own

song with. The 3rd Sunday of the month session is now focused on singing. Advent and Christmas were special times for the children as they were involved in lighting the candles on the advent wreath and bringing presents to less well-off children and receiving a gift themselves from Father Murray at the Gift service. They also participated in dressing the crib on the Sunday before Christmas.

On Christmas Day many of the children, parents and leaders were involved in a dressed up nativity and thoroughly enjoyed it. We also have the Posada (the Holy Family) who moved around the families of Children's Church and make their way back to St Oswald's in time for Christmas Day Pastoral relationships with the staff governors and the Children at Lower Peover Church School have continued to build over this year. The children from the school are coming back into church and enjoyed their Harvest and Christmas services. Mr Bradley from the school is in charge of the links with church and has been attending the 11am service regularly. Father Murray has been back in the Little House for prayers and a song on Thursdays. Many of the children from the little house nursery and school attend children’s church and all age services. The church has been beautifully decorated for all special services, thank you to everyone involved. Lynda Boag – Munroe has carried out a sterling job of editing the parish magazine. A few hard copies of the parish magazine are now available in church for those who are not able to access the online version. I would like to thank our organist David Tredwell for providing us with beautiful and sensitive music through our services. Two of our church members, Sally Geake and Sally Aspin, have continued to organise the collections of essential supplies to be

taken to the Macclesfield Ukrainian Aid Collection Point. This is wonderful work and thank you so much to all who have contributed to this appeal .

2023 began on an optimistic note. Congregation numbers have not only recovered from Covid but are now growing gently too! The Plough service was excellent with a very good attendance and positive feedback In February, Mrs Sue Jennings took up the post of parish administrator which has been a great help to Father Murray, the parish and the benefice.

Lent and Holy week were commemorated with special services on Thursday evenings culminating in a celebration of the last supper on Maundy Thursday with foot washing, followed by stripping of the altar. Palm Sunday services included the blessing and distribution of palms. Good Friday included the Good Friday liturgy – the proclamation of the Cross. An early Easter Communion and the blessing and lighting of the Easter candle was held at 7am. The sung Holy communion with a choir

and a special Easter Children’s Church with Easter egg hunt, songs and fun was held at 11am. This was a wonderful Easter celebration. The midweek service of Holy Communion held in the Shakerley chapel has developed over the last few months to include prayer and anointing for healing and wholeness. The Wednesday congregation has grown substantially, and we now have to think about the layout of seats to fit everyone in! In April, Rosie Tabner is setting up a weekly parent and tots group in Plumley village Hall which will have a Christian foundation with a strong connection to St. Oswald’s. There are plans for a family communion in April/May with more involvement from the children.

In May there will be a hog roast with an Abba tribute band and pay bar in the marquee in George Dutton’s field to celebrate the coronation of King

Charles and tickets are sold out already! Finally, on behalf of the PCC, I would like to thank Father Murray for all his work and dedication to the parish. He is a marvellous vicar and support to all and it is wonderful to have him back full time.

**Vicars note:**

We thank Felicity for her generosity and ministry across the benefice during her time serving as Secretary.

***4b)*****General Safeguarding Report:** *Vicar:*

Safeguarding report 2022-23

Safeguarding is important and is raised at each PCC Meeting. Details of the safeguarding officers in the benefice and direct links to the diocese continue to be available both on church noticeboards and are also readily available on the church website.

There have been no Safeguarding issues raised during the past year.

This role has been covered in the Benefice by Tracy Wallace. We thank her for her ministry.

Serving members of the Clergy- Wardens- PCC and those exercising other ministry in or for the church are asked to complete their training asap.

Any new PSO will also need to complete Basic, Foundation and Leadership safeguarding training. This is provided through the Diocese.

Organisation reference: 8286A106000

Organisation code: Lower10600

**Vicars note:** Despite Ms Wallace now standing down St Oswald’s has been blessed by having Tracy Knott come forward an offer her expertise and take on this role for the parish. Tracy is a regular attendee at the 11am services and comes with her family. She works with safeguarding within the education system.

**5. Financial Report**

Treasurer (Colin Gidman)

The Treasurer’s Report with the Parochial Financial Statement for the accounts have been prepared by our treasurer Colin Gidman. The trustees accounts have been examined and have been returned as in order meeting all legal requirements pertaining to the charities Act 2011 and Section 145 (5) (b) Copies of the accounts have been circulated, a copy is displayed, and individual hard copies are available. *(Please see the treasurer)*

Treasurer’s Report

The 2022 accounts for St Oswald’s Church, Lower Peover have been examined by Paul Edwards, Independent Examiner and no matter has come to his attention which gave him reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep records in accordance with section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 as also contained in the Church Accountancy Regulations, have not been met. The accounts have been

presented to and approved by the PCC. The assets for 2022 are £158,376.14 which is £24,723.21 higher than the assets for 2021. However, a significant reason for this increase was a result of discussions with Chester Diocese whereby our Parish Share was temporarily reduced from £52,947 to £37,545 per annum. This will have to be renegotiated each year. Also due to the Vicar’s

illness, his expenses and stationery costs were greatly reduced in 2022. Income in 2022 was greater than in the previous year but for the eighth year in a row we still have a trend of our expenditure exceeding our income. In 2022 we had a popular and successful fete which raised £3,856.25 for the church. The One Hundred Club continued to flourish making £2,946 for us in 2022 and £44,300 since its inception. The Redwood Bank gave us a greater interest rate compared with

the Central Board of Finance. We had numerous weddings and funerals which also provided welcome revenue. Thank you to all the visiting clergy who helped us maintain these services during the Vicar’s absence. As I retire from my post as Honorary Treasurer, I would like to thank all those who have helped and supported me in this task since 2014. From the outset I have tried to keep the church’s finances good order in much the same way as I do my own. Money is set aside in the Restoration and General Accounts for such time as we may be faced unexpectedly with a huge bill. I hope that you can appreciate that the job of treasurer has sometimes been difficult and onerous. Having an overview of the finances on a daily basis has meant that I have often found it difficult to communicate my deep concern when expenditure greatly exceeds our income. To try to address this in some way I was able to negotiate a reduced Parish Share and the PCC agreed to a moratorium on

expenditure after the pandemic, which had seen our income plummet. Unfortunately, our income has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and our expenditure continues to exceed our income.

Looking to the future my worry is still that with a Grade 1 listed building to maintain, an aging congregation and much reduced giving, the next few years will be a financial challenge. However, I know my successor will do her utmost to maintain our finances as I hope you will agree I have done with due diligence.

Colin Gidman Hon. Treasurer

April 2023

**Vicars Note:** Colin Gidman is due to stand down after a long period of service as treasurer after this APCM. The PCC thanks the Colin for his diligence and great dedication in keeping the church accounts in such good order and also offers its thanks to the auditor for examining the accounts.

The warden has successfully presented Mrs Geraldine Jones to the PCC to take on this role. And although away visiting family today, she will be beginning this role formally after these meetings.

We thank her for standing and for the preparatory work she has already undertaken with Colin Gidman in preparation of taking over this important ministry.

**6. Fabric/Church Wardens Report:**

As you are all aware we progressed through much of 2022 without formal wardens in place, the work being undertaken as far as possible by dedicated volunteers. I took formal office late in 2022 so

this short report is prepared on that basis. 2022 was a very busy year for the Church in that as reported elsewhere there were some 26 weddings solemnised, in excess of 30 funerals and/or full burials or burials of ashes and 14 baptisms. A portion of this was a process of “catch up” after the period of Covid and the restrictions it imposed

and this will probably result in a reduction of activity for 2023.

Fortunately, there is nothing to report relating to any thefts or damage and the Church has been kept open during daylight, as far as possible. There was no work undertaken to the main church building during the year and the maintenance work undertaken was limited to very minor and routine matters to achieve a safe and functional environment. A short but severe period of frost resulted in the sextons store and toilet being out of use for a short time due to frozen pipes. Fortunately, the system thawed without bursts or damage to equipment. All statutory and

insurance requirements have now been updated and put in place. We have been fortunate to have new hymn bookshelves made and fitted at no cost by a neighbour, utilising sections of timber from the pews removed for disabled access. The use of this timber is required as a condition of the original faculty, there is of course more left which is in safe storage for future maintenance and use as required. I appreciate this is intended to be a report on past events, however, looking forward may I take this opportunity to remind you of the outstanding work from the quinquennial inspection of 2021. I have had a preliminary meeting with the Architect and have agreed the minor works raised have largely been attended to. There is a significant section of work required to the exterior of the building which will involve detailed design and specification, contract formulation and management.

All this is achievable with the expertise that is available, what is not available is the funding required for the works. It is possible to phase the works without significant additional costs but I would request the PCC members start to address the funding issue whilst in the meantime the preliminary work scope and specifications are prepared. A major repair and refurbishment program of work was undertaken around the turn of the century, hard to realise but that work is now 20 – 25 years old. Decorations are the obvious visual requirement but there is as usual ongoing timber repairs required and indications of beetle infestation in places which will require addressing. Whilst not serious at this stage attention is required to prevent future major expenditure.

As the building is grade 1 listed all work must be properly designed and managed to correct and approved standards. This does have some impact on cost but is a necessity when dealing with buildings of this nature. We are fortunate that from previous works the exterior of the building was drawn up in

detail, much of this information can be reused to reduce significantly the design and preparation

costs. As noted at the start of this report, in the absence of Churchwardens the day to day work was

undertaken by dedicated volunteers and we must express our thanks to them for the work done in

maintaining the functioning of the church both for worship and in its wider service to the community. There are a number of people involved and whilst not wishing to diminish the efforts of many.

I would particularly mention Terrence Rathbone for his extensive work in the Churchyard, the retired Churchwardens and a relatively new recruit Angela Ashworth who very regularly cleans. There are of course teams who act as welcomers, (formerly called sidesmen) provide and maintain flowers, produce coffee after services and those who just come and carry out routine works which tend to go unseen but nevertheless provide a vital contribution so thank you to one and all. Having thanked all for their efforts in the running of the Church and services etc. may I also thank you all for the support and help I have received, it is much appreciated. In turn I and on your behalf, would like to thank Father Murray for his work and ministry. He arrived at a difficult time during the pandemic and also had a period of illness, which gave rise to further difficulties. Since his return he has made a huge difference to the work and worship of our Church. I know through my dealings with families how much his ministry is appreciated. The dedication and effort put into his work as a minister is second to none and this is reflected not only in the services we all experience, but also in the significant number of weddings funerals and baptisms undertaken.

Norman Withenshaw

Churchwarden.

April 2023

**7. Deanery Report:**

*The Parish has been without a deanery representative since Mandy Spencer stood down earlier this year. We therefore do not have a deanery report to share this evening.*

**8. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

**8a. Deanery Synod Representative** (3yrT)

The Parish has is blessed again this evening by Miss Sue Lake coming forward to stand for nomination to take on this role and represent St Oswald’s at the Deanery Synod. We thank her for offering herself to the ministry of St Oswalds in this way.

Proposed: Seconded. Vote.

**8b. Election Of Parish Council Members**:

(Electoral Roll Officer and PCC Secretary will offer current role status and changes).

**Ex Officio Members**

Father Murray Mr, Withenshaw, Sue Lake.

**Elected 2020**

Mrs L. Boag-Monroe, Mr G. Coates

Mrs S. Hankinson, Mr T. Rathbone

Mr C Gidman, Mrs J. Drye, Mrs F. Wilshaw

**Elected 2021**

Mr G. Dutton Mr J. Geake Mrs G. Longinotti

**Elected 2022**

Mrs P. Adlington,

**Changes:**

Mr Brian Drye, Mr C Gidman, Keith Phillips, Mandy and David Spencer are standing down.

*We thank them for their support and ministry during their time serving on the PCC.*

Those to be re-elected or elected in 2023 should they wish to stand are as follows.

Mr Fowler co-opted Oct 22

Mrs G. Jones co-opted Jan 23

Mrs L. Boag-Monroe. Mr G. Coates

Mrs S. Hankinson. Mr T. Rathbone

Mrs J. Drye. Mrs F. Wilshaw, Mrs Angela Ashworth.

Miss Sue Lake (ex officio as Synod Representative).

*Legal Note on PCC numbers: Representation Rules:*

(a) if there are no more than 50 names on the electoral roll, **6;** (b) if there are more than 50 but no more than 100, **9**; (c) if there are more than 100, a further three per hundred names and, where the number of names on the roll is not divisible by 100 without fraction or remainder, for the fraction or remainder, Up to a maximum of **15**.

Those needing to be elected/ re-elected will be elected here.

Proposed: Seconded: Vote:

**8c. Sides persons/Welcomers** –

Current Sides persons list to be confirmed by Church Wardens/Secretary. Any notices of change to Sides Persons/welcomers should be noted here.

Mrs Pamela Adlington, Sallyann Stonely, Miss Sue Lake, Mrs Sally Geake, Mr Terence Rathbone, Mr Gerald Coates Mr George Dutton, Mr John Atkins, Mr Joe Hague Mr Mike Ashley, Mrs Neris Bradford, Mr Brian Drye

Mr Edward Garnet, Mr Ian Garnett, Mr Peter Wainwright, Mr Tony Garnett, Mr David Spencer, Mr Stephen Knowles, have stepped down.

**Those needing to be elected/ re-elected will be elected on mass alongside the electoral roll officer at the next PCC Meeting*.***

**8d. Financial Accounts Auditor**:

Proposal to appoint an Auditor and Independent Examiner. *(Paul Edwards)*

Proposal: Seconded: Vote.

*We will ask the treasurer to approach the endorsed examiner to formally agree to take on this role.*

**8e. Election of Safeguarding Officer.**

Proposal to appoint Tracy Knott as the new parish safeguarding lead for St Oswalds.

Proposal: Seconded: Vote.

**9. Any Other Business:**

*Notice of Items for AOB will have been given prior to this meeting. The Chair is not aware that any AOB for this meeting has been presented.*

**10. Date of Next APCM Meetings:**

April 2024: Venue and time TBC.

**Close with Prayer:**