

**THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY AND ST. ETHELFLAEDA, ROMSEY with ST.
SWITHUN'S, CRAMP MOOR**

**The Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens and the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Romsey Abbey on
Sunday 22nd May 2022 at 11.30a.m.**

AGENDA

- 1) Opening prayers
- 2) Apologies for Absence

VESTRY MEETING

- 3) Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on 19th May 2021 (*draft minutes are below*)
- 4) Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- 5) Minutes of the APCM held on 19th May (*draft minutes are below*)
- 6) Election of six members to the parochial church council for three years, 5 members to serve for 3 years and 1 member to serve for 2 years
- 7) Membership of Deanery Synod – all 6 members are within their term so there are no elections this year
- 8) Report from the Electoral Roll Officer
- 9) Election of the Electoral Roll Officer
- 10) Parish Reports – PCC Committees (*below*)
 - a) Church Rooms Committee
 - b) Deanery Synod
 - c) Fabric Committee
 - d) Financial Resources Committee
 - e) Health and Safety Committee
 - f) Magazine Committee
 - g) Mission & Giving Committee
 - h) Pastoral Committee
 - i) St. Swithun's Committee
- 11) Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2021
- 12) Election of Independent Examiner
- 13) Group reports
 - Abbey groups*
 - a. Assistant vergers
 - b. Bellringers
 - c. Catering Team
 - d. Choir
 - e. Home Groups
 - f. Mothers' Union
 - g. Net Carbon Zero
 - h. Parish Lunch
 - i. Romsey Abbey School
 - j. Sewing & Knitting Group
 - k. Sidesmen
 - l. Stewards
 - Associated organisations*
 1. Christian Aid
 2. George's Trust
 3. Music in Romsey Abbey
 4. Triangulate

- 14) Vicar's report
- 15) Question time
- 16) Closing prayers

AGENDA ITEM 3

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting for the Abbey Church of St Mary and St Ethelflaeda with St Swithun's, held in Romsey Abbey on 19th May 2021

Chairman: The Revd Thomas Wharton

The Vicar opened the meeting with prayer.

Copies of the Vestry Meeting minutes of 9th September 2020 were circulated with the Annual Report before the meeting. The Vicar asked the meeting whether he should sign the minutes as a correct record of the meeting. All agreed.

ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

The Vicar introduced the election of church wardens.

It is the custom in our parish for churchwardens to serve for four years. Ms Julie Carlton has served for the past year and is willing to be re-elected.

Mr Christopher Pritchard has served for three years and was willing to serve for a further term. He was proposed by Mrs Susan Pritchard and seconded by Ms Julie Carlton.

Ms Julie Carlton was proposed by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner and seconded by Mr David Butcher. There being no other nominations, the Vicar declared Mr Pritchard and Ms Carlton elected.

They were formally accepted by the meeting for presentation at the forthcoming Archdeacon's Visitation.

The Chairman concluded the Vestry Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4 ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

AGENDA ITEM 5 MINUTES OF THE APCM HELD ON 19TH MAY 2021 OPENING PRAYERS

The Vicar, the Revd. Thomas Wharton, took the chair opened the meeting.

APOLOGIES

There were 46 present and 12 apologies. Various members of the congregation had given notice that they would join the live stream of the meeting.

(Agenda Items 3 and 4 are recorded in the Annual Vestry Minutes).

MINUTES FROM 2020 APCM

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Wednesday 19th May 2020 were taken as read and agreed unanimously. The Chairman signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

6. ELECTIONS

Parochial Church Council (PCC). The PCC may include up to 15 elected members. There were 6 vacancies, all for three years. Mrs June Diane Hargreaves and Mr George David Johnson had reached the end of their term of office and were willing to re-stand.

The following nominations were received:

Mr David Auger, proposed by Mrs Juliette Bowden and seconded by Mr Christopher Pritchard;
Mr Anthony Cross, proposed by Ms Julie Carlton and seconded by Mr Christopher Pritchard;
Mrs June Diane Hargreaves, proposed by Mrs Margaret Lilywhite and seconded by Mr G. David Johnson;
Mr George David Johnson, proposed by Mrs Pamela Leech and seconded by Ms Sarah Hargreaves;
Ms Chloe Jenvey, proposed by Mr Christopher Pritchard and seconded by Mrs Fiona Jenvey;
Mr Martin Seymour, proposed by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner and seconded by Mr Christopher Green;
The Vicar proposed that these nominees be elected en bloc. All voted in favour.

7. DEANERY SYNOD ELECTIONS

The APCM may elect up to 6 representatives to sit on Deanery Synod for the three-year term of Deanery Synod. Deanery Synod members are ex officio members of the PCC.

The following nominations were received:

Mrs Adrienne Mordan, proposed by Mrs Glynne Beasley and seconded by Elizabeth Butcher.

Mrs Patricia Kerridge, proposed by Mrs Jane Arden and seconded by Mr Michael Wallace;

Mrs Elizabeth Wagner, proposed by Ms Julie Carlton and seconded by Mrs Christine Brazier;

and from the floor

Dr Patricia Brown, proposed by Mr Nigel Herriott and seconded by Mrs Pamela Leech;

Ms Julie Carlton, proposed by Mr Paul Quinnell and seconded by Mrs Glynne Beasley.

Mr Anthony Cross, proposed by Ms Julie Carlton and seconded by Mr Christopher Pritchard.

The Vicar proposed that these nominees be elected en bloc. All voted in favour.

8. REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

The Electoral Roll Officer (ERO), Mrs Jane Russell was unable to attend the meeting and provided a written report which was read to the meeting by the PCC secretary.

Handover from Andrew Walkling as ERO to Jane Russell completed by 19th March 2021.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Andrew for his support and his efficiency in ensuring that the handover was as smooth as possible. The documents that he has passed on to support me as I begin my role, have proved invaluable.

Revision of the Electoral Roll begins on 21st April and lasts until 4th May. During this period, a copy will be available for view near the South Door in the Abbey. As St Swithun's remains closed for public worship, a copy is available for viewing on the footer of the Parish website.

Notice of Revision of the Electoral Roll has been made in the April edition of Open Door and on the weekly bulletin. An article 'How to join the Electoral Roll' has also been submitted for publication in the bulletin this week.

A full and final report, will be prepared as soon as possible after revision ends ahead of the APCM on the 19th May.

To ensure the accuracy of the information held on the ER it is important that any changes are provided to the ERO for the details to be updated and should not be undertaken by others.

The ER in Romsey now forms part of the parish database and had proved its worth, and the importance of keeping details up to date, during the lockdown for enabling contact to be maintained with members of the parish. This also ensures that ER data is held securely, in compliance with GDPR.

There were now 446 names on the roll. There was an electoral roll revision in 2020 and this resulted in 9 changes.

Jane Russell (Electoral Roll Officer)

Jane Russell was thanked for her report.

9. ELECTION OF ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

Mrs Jane Russell has volunteered to take over the task of Electoral Roll Officer from Mr Andrew Walkling, and was proposed by Dr Patricia Brown and seconded by Ms Sarah Hargreaves. Agreed unanimously. The Vicar thanked Mrs Russell for her hard work and conscientious approach to the task.

10. PARISH REPORTS

Reports were received from the following committees and associated organisations and taken as read before the meeting.

The vicar thanked all those who had submitted reports and thanked the groups for continuing to meet during another challenging year.

PCC Committees

- a) Deanery Synod
- b) Abbey Development Group
- c) Children and Young People
- d) Church Rooms Committee
- e) Church Together in Romsey – No written report.
- f) Fabric Committee
- g) Financial Resources Committee
- h) Friends of Romsey Abbey Music (FORAM)
- i) Health and Safety Committee
- j) Magazine Committee
- k) Pastoral Committee
- l) Social Committee
- m) St. Swithun's Committee

Mr Paul Ellis noted that the essential nature of the work of the Romsey Abbey Technical Support team had been amply demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and suggested it should report directly to the PCC. The Vicar acknowledged the importance of live-streaming to ministry, A review of governance was underway and this would be considered as part of that work.

There were no other questions or comments on committee reports.

Mr Paul Ellis proposed acceptance of the reports. Mr David Johnson seconded. The meeting voted in favour.

11. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020

Mr Tim Rogerson (TR), not a PCC member but appointed Treasurer in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, reported that accounts had been available on line for 4 weeks, in St Swithun's, and in the Abbey for 3 weeks.

TR set out the breakdown of income and expenditure in the accounts and then summarised the content of the report.

Total restricted funds stood at £615k (up from £600k in 2019).

General Fund:

Income: Planned remained constant at £197K (£199K in 2019). The PCC is grateful to those who continued their planned giving during lockdown.

Service collections were down to £27K (from £42K in 2019). Donations were increased by 240% to £51K from (£15K in 2019) and the PCC is thankful to those who responded to the appeals. Fundraising activity was down by 85% to £8K (£54K in 2019) and investment income was marginally increased to £76K (from £73K in 2019)

Total income was £395K down by £58K on the previous year of £453K.

Expenditure: The largest items were £211K for Common Mission Fund (CMF) including the £15k paid to support the House for Duty priest in King Somborne, in return for the additional stipendiary clergy post. Expenditure on buildings was down, as were Governance costs.

Service costs had decreased to £24K from £48K in 2019 as had staff costs. £18K was received from the government furlough scheme.

Charitable giving had decreased by 20% down to £16K.

Total expenditure was £395K down from £446K in 2019.

The end of the year result was a surplus of £1 down from a surplus of £7K in 2019.

The General Fund balance was £94K, up from £78K in 2019.

Some Restricted Funds had increased due to growth in investments. Total funds stood at £3.6 million.

In summary, the overall results are very satisfactory. The parish has now been in surplus for 11 consecutive years. CMF has been paid in a timely manner.

The Treasurer thanked all those who supported him in ensuring that the PCC's finances ran well especially the Treasury Team, and FRC, the clergy, Church Wardens and the PCC.

For 2021 the Diocese is reducing the amount payable as CMF. The draft budget shows there may be a small end of year loss but the Treasurer will ensure that costs are controlled. Again 2021 may be a year of limited fundraising opportunities.

Jane Horne asked why the Gift Stall showed a loss of £3K.

TR replied that the gift stall makes a gift to the Abbey Appeal Fund and this is accounted in the next financial year, so in 2020, there had been significantly less activity for the Gift Stall, but the donation relating to 2019 had still be made.

There were no further questions on the accounts.

The PCC had approved the accounts at its meeting on 21 April 2021. Mrs Elizabeth Wagner proposed that the accounts be adopted. Ian Clark seconded. All voted in favour.

Thanks were expressed to Tim Rogerson, the Treasurer and the FRC whose work is greatly appreciated in the management of the parish finances.

12. ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

It was not currently clear whether an audit or independent examination of the 2021 accounts would be needed.

The auditor Mr Chris Goodhead attended the PCC meeting on 21 April at which the PCC approved the accounts.

Mrs Liz Wagner proposed that Knight Goodhead be appointed as Independent Examiners (or Auditor if necessary) for the 2021 accounts, seconded by Ian Clark. All voted in favour.

The Vicar thanked Mr Rogerson for all the detailed work, knowledge and experience he brought to the role of Treasurer.

13. REPORTS SUBMITTED BY GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PCC AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Abbey Groups

- a. Bellringers
- b. Catering Team
- c. Children & Family Support Worker activities
- d. Church Rooms Committee
- e. Electoral Roll Officer
- f. FRC
- g. Health & Safety Committee
- h. Magazine Committee
- i. Mothers' Union
- j. Parish Environment Group
- k. Pastoral Support Team
- l. Romsey Abbey Choirs
- m. Romsey Abbey C of E Primary School
- n. Sidesmen
- p. St Swithun's
- q. Tour Guides

Reports were taken as read. Mr Paul Ellis proposed the reports be accepted, seconded by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner. All voted in favour.

Associated Organisations

1. Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund
2. Friends of Romsey Abbey
3. Children's Society
4. Christian Aid
5. George's Trust
6. Music in Romsey
7. Triangulate
8. Deanery Synod

Reports from Associated Organisations were taken as read. Mr Paul Quinnell proposed the reports be accepted, seconded by Mrs Glynne Beasley. All voted in favour.

14. VICAR'S REPORT

What a year!

Thank you Pam, our PCC Secretary, for collating all the reports that give us an aerial view of our parish life over the past year, and to Tim for your excellent report and annual financial statements.

Despite a year of disruption and loss for all of us due to Coronavirus, there have been notable things to remember and take heart from: lockdown worship recorded from gardens, living rooms and kitchen, the remote choir, foodbank support, pastoral care calls and arrands, Averil Bamber's support of St Swithun's, the new Calling Window installation, the amount of technology we have all had to come to terms with 'you're on

mute!' the arrival of Sally and Lee and farewell to Janet Wallace as Church Warden and Amanda and Adrian Taylor.

Thank you to all the parishioners for your continued prayers and support and your response to our appeals, to the stewards for enabling the Abbey to remain open as and when it has been possible, to the staff, ministry team the tech team and the committees that have continued to work on behalf of the parish throughout this period – especially thanks to Chris and Julie, for real support and wise council throughout a challenging year.

This year I first want to highlight our new parish mission statement:

LIVING LOVING SERVING
In the heart of Romsey

LLS is more than a catchy strapline but something I want us to embed as part of our culture, our values and our outward focus, in all areas of our parish life.

It is helpful to add the words 'in community' to get the focus:

Living in the community, Loving in the community, Serving in the community. Our faith has an outward focus and ultimately a visible impact in the wider community through Living, Loving and Serving.

Living

Living and sharing God's life as much outside the church as inside. For us that includes supporting the life of our town through culture – music, arts, as a major cultural venue in Hampshire.

Through our tourism – by attracting and welcoming visitors, as tourists, pilgrims or for educational purposes.

Through commerce – using, developing our buildings and resources to support local business and commerce.

Through community – using our gifts of community and friendship.

Loving

Our faith and shared life should reflect God's love through Compassion – for those in need, for the disadvantaged and poor.

Through loving our town – loving and being committed to the flourishing of our town and community

Through loving each other as part of a diverse church community, as Christ loved us.

Serving

Serving the needs of others before ourselves, enriching peoples' lives and putting God's Kingdom first.

Living Loving Serving in the heart of Romsey.

I hope all areas of our worship, musical life, social lunches, our committees, our policies and PCC decisions have an element of LLS.

I will also give an update on our Parish Mission Plan (pMAP). Despite a year of disruption through Covid some of our 6 priorities have made progress through working groups, which are ongoing.

pMAP Objectives(working groups)

pMAP #1 to provide more opportunities for people to discover and grow in faith and live out their Christian calling.

Discipleship Group has worked on this.

pMAP #2 to diversify our worship and create further opportunities to engage families, young people and the missing generation.

Children & Family Support Worker has been engaged on these issues. The junior and senior choirs along with Quavers and the successful establishment of the Abbey Vine worship.

pMAP #3 To use our resources to support social action and environmental projects in the local community and wider world.

North Churchyard enhancement work with TVBC and the wildflower meadow. The Environment group has looked at ways of reducing our carbon footprint. The Mission & Giving group have identified a charity of the month and the administration of the Hardship Fund is being reviewed.

pMAP #4 To improve our communication, visibility and welcome as a major church venue within the parish and wider community.

Introduction of Church desk as an operational management tool and the establishment of the Historical Interpretation Group.

pMAP #5 To improve our church buildings in a way that will enable our future mission plans and preserve our heritage for future generations.

At the last APCM I said that re-starting the Abbey Development Plan was a priority and would happen. I do want to give an update on this. I propose that now we are emerging from lockdown we officially re-launch the Abbey Development starting with a public presentation and consultation ahead of the summer holidays.

I suggest a few principles:

While we need to draw on and acknowledge the valuable work already done on the Development Plan we are also needing to recognize that we are in a different place, with different circumstances, situation and time.

- It needs a fresh start with no fixed idea as to the direction it will eventually take
- It has to be for the benefit of the wider town and community as much as for our own purposes
- It has to be in keeping with our values and purpose of Living Loving Serving

I propose we agree a date, possibly in July, which gives us time to prepare initial presentation and invite representatives from the town and potential interested stakeholders to officially launch this project. I do earnestly think this will go ahead. How it will transpire we don't know but we need to be both ambitious and open to new opportunities and insights.

pMAP #6 To review the structure and focus of our governance.

Finally we have the joy of looking forward to the ordinations of firstly Lee, as priests on 3rd July and Fiona Jenvey and Mich Lajeunesse on 4th July, both at Winchester Cathedral.

Romsey Abbey (C of E Aided) Primary School – we are delighted that it has been announced today that Mark Harris, who is currently Acting Deputy head teacher, has been appointed Headteacher. Congratulations to Mark and we are really excited to continue working with him and the school as we continue the next chapter in our life.

15. QUESTION TIME

It was asked if the TV screens on the pillars are temporary.

The Vicar replied that in a time of pandemic and time of needs we must respond. The skills of the tech team have enabled communication and worship to continue in different ways as a result of lockdown. The screens are a useful addition for a variety of events and help the congregational experience.

Another member of the clergy team commented that it provides greater accessibility to the service for the congregation especially those at the back of the church.

Further comments were made on the trip hazard of the wires and the need for the congregation to look at the focal point of the service not the screens.

A question was asked about the Abbey Development project and asked if tourism was a new initiative.

The Vicar answered that a Development Committee will be formed which will need representatives from the town and other stakeholders as well as the church. It is essential to know the needs of the community.

There was a vote of thanks to the Vicar for his excellent report.

16. CLOSING PRAYERS

There being no further questions, the Vicar thanked all who had provided reports and attended in person or on line and the meeting finished with the Grace.

AGENDA ITEM 10

PARISH REPORTS – PCC COMMITTEES

a) Church Rooms Committee

Meetings were held on: 09/09/2021 and 24/11/2021

The Meetings in the of Church Rooms Committee were not held until September 2021 with the objective of continuing to encourage usage of the Church Rooms, allowing for the Parish needs. All groups returning to the Church Rooms were risk assessed for prevention of Covid. Unfortunately the Health Visitors decided not to return after Lockdown. However further fitness classes for adults and children, have been added to the programme. The Children and parents groups were restarted and expanded and Music groups were restarted after lockdown. Two settees are in place in the hall for more one to one discussions. Opportunities have been taken to raise funds. Parish Lunches, baptism parties, teas and providing coffee for events, have continued. The Committee are grateful to the Parish Lunch Team, the Catering Team, the Sunday Coffee teams for their work. Problems with the cooker in the kitchen, mainly the gas supply were identified and a search for an appropriate cooker and induction hob with the same capacity as the current one were started. Funds from the Parish Lunch Team and the Friends of Romsey Abbey were donated towards new curtains for the Hall, which were completed in Lockdown. The Church Rooms continues to comply with the standards of: Action For Children H&S Inspection Checklist for Outreach Venues. These are thought to be relevant to any group hiring the Church Rooms.

Jo Whitfield - Chairman of the Church Rooms Committee

b) Deanery Synod

In May a Eucharist was held at Romsey Abbey to start a new Triennium for the Synod. A Short Synod meeting was held after the service, where the elections for the Clergy and Lay members were made and the synod updated on matters arising from the previous three months.

The October meeting was held at Stockbridge Town Hall where they synod discussed three questions.

(i) What changes has covid brought to your Parish, (ii) What do you want to do, and seen done, in Romsey Deanery and (iii) What would be helpful for Deanery Synod to learn about, discuss and decide. This brought forth many ideas, which will be discussed in future meetings.

In February our meeting was held in Romsey Abbey where two main topics were discussed (this was taken from ideas given in the previous synod meeting). The Area Dean gave a talk on church structure and Rosie Ward of St Thomas Church, Lymington gave a presentation on how their church had achieved a gold award on Eco Church. She gave ideas on how this can be attained and also information on the resources available.

There have been several pastoral changes in the last year. The Rev'd Victoria Ashdown has left the benefice of Ampfield, Chilworth and North Baddesley. This vacancy has now been filled by the Rev'd Victoria Lawrence, who had been an assistant priest in the benefice for a number of years. The parishes of Sherfield English and Wellow have fallen vacant due to the retirement of Rev'd Chris Pettet. These parishes are part of a pastoral scheme to create a new benefice of Thorngate and Blackwater. These will comprise the parishes of Sherfield English, Wellow, Lockerley, West Tytherley, East Tytherley and East Dean, with a new House of Duty Priest being added to the Ministry Team of the proposed benefice. This scheme is still going through the set legal process and has to be approved by the Church Commissioners before moving forward. The Rev'd Tom Benson is the new Rector of the Braishfield, Awbridge, Farley Chamberlayne, Michelmersh and Timsbury and Priest in Charge of Kings Somborne.

Christine Brazier Deanery Synod Secretary.

c) Fabric Committee

Julian Vallis resigned as Inspecting Architect in October 2021, and Louise Salman (nee Rendell) a partner in the St. Ann's Gate Architects Ltd. Salisbury has been appointed.

Louise has completed a Quinquennial Inspection Report 2022 and has submitted this to the Fabric Committee. It is very comprehensive and she has recommended commissioning consultants to report on special areas of the Abbey i.e. the plaster vaults in the aisles. Other items in her report will be considered by the Fabric Committee, and she will be asked to prepare a specification and obtain quotations for the most urgent work.

Colin Avery has completed the stonework repairs within the Abbey notably the re-nosing of stone steps.

A Faculty has been received for handrails on some upper access stairs and Colin Avery; the work has also been completed and certified by the outgoing architect Julian Vallis.

A new carpet has been laid in the Ringing Chamber.

Quotations have been sought for a new mat in the South Door Lobby.

A Safety Certificate has been issued for the dry riser.

Minor repairs to paving in the North Driveway and South Garth and copings have been carried out.

The Diocesan Synod has guidelines to reduce carbon emissions to net zero. An ad hoc group, outside the Fabric Committee is working on this.

BHM have undertaken remedial and additional electrical work., and alterations have been made to the lighting programme.

The lightning conductor system has been serviced.

After two burglaries, new window bars and locks have been installed.

In the north end of the North Churchyard apple trees have been planted and the beech hedge lowered for a portion nearest the east gates as part of an enhancement project for the North Churchyard

An Open Day was held in July 2021 to consider the Abbey Development Project and a subsequent meeting of the PCC in January 2022 discussed the Statement of Needs, which will be finalized by a PCC meeting in early May 2022.

Pam Leech, Chair of Fabric Committee

d) Financial Resource Committee

FRC met six times, as usual, in 2021; all meetings were online. FRC continued to review Business Continuity Plans, Financial Procedures & Policies, Risk Register and Succession Plan as required. Gift Aid and VAT, via the Listed Places of Worship Scheme, were reclaimed

Some income streams, affected by lockdowns in 2020, started again in 2021 with Music in Romsey Abbey events from May, Romsey Festival in July and Christmas Fair in late November. A third contactless donation point was added in July 2021 and is positioned near the Calling Window. Donations for 2021 from all contactless points totalled £12,640: a three-fold increase on 2019 indicating the importance of contactless technology as fewer people carry cash.

Our thanks to Tim Rogerson, in his role as PCC Treasurer, for his prudent budgeting, invaluable advice, guidance and for maintaining robust financial accountability.

Liz Wagner, FRC Chair

e) Health & Safety Committee

Although the Committee did not meet during 2021, there was plenty of H&S activity. The COVID safety measures for our visitors, congregations and concert audiences had to be kept under regular review as Government restrictions came and went. Regular inspections of the building and grounds continued. In addition, using funding from the Culture Recovery Grant, a group of 9 staff and volunteers attended emergency first aid at work training and other on-line courses were purchased for our staff and volunteers on other health and safety topics such as food safety, work at height, manual handling and lone working. In addition, the PCC signed up to be a "Mindful Employer" which comes with access to independent support for staff and also approved a new PCC Wellbeing policy to help us look after our staff and volunteers.

Julie Carlton, Chair of Health and Safety Committee

f) Magazine Committee

Following the resignation of Liz Hallett as Chairman the Magazine Committee has been in its current line-up for 10 months with Rowland Davies as Chairman. The Committee quickly coalesced as members took on new tasks or continued in their previous roles, making for good co-operation and efficient working practices.

In the second half of 2021 Abbey activities were re-starting after the pandemic and this led to an increasing flow of contributed reports. All members of the Committee also write reports on parish events. In addition, subjects thought to be of particular interest to Christians are included in the magazine.

The January 2022 issue highlighted the changes in design and direction introduced incrementally in 2021 and completing in that issue. The number of subscriptions remains stable and the number of advertisements has increased, a good indication that both readers and advertisers are happy with our work.

Rowland Davies

g) Mission & Giving

Following guidance from the General Synod to all parishes, Romsey Abbey PCC allocates monies from its annual budget to give to external charities. The Mission Giving Committee's (MGC) main purpose is to advise the PCC which charities to support, and how much should be given to each one. In 2021 the PCC agreed to make grants to 23 charities totalling £20,000. The total was split broadly equally between local and overseas charities, and also between Christian missions and community social action. The committee was set up by Nigel Herriott when he was churchwarden, and has been ably chaired by him since then. He has stepped down recently, and the PCC and committee want to express our appreciation of his considerable input over the years. The committee is looking for new members to join our deliberations as we endeavour to support the mission of local charities and the worldwide Church.

h) Pastoral Committee

The work of the Pastoral team has continued throughout the various Covid restrictions. It is hoped that meetings may resume in the near future to provide support and guidance to the team.

Jill Aussant

i) St. Swithun's Committee

The year was dominated by COVID. The first service of the year was Pentecost on 23 May. From then until the end of September, seating was restricted to about 20 prebooked 20 places allocated according to a socially distanced seating plan. After September we relaxed the restrictions, but still required masks. Throughout the year communion was of one kind, the wafers being brought by the celebrant to the congregation at their seats. Averil Bamber continued to provide her wonderful meditations whilst the church was closed. The last one was sent to all the congregation on 19 June.

There were three funerals, one of which was a Romanian Orthodox funeral led in Romanian by an Orthodox priest.

In March the toilet was refurbished, new taps were installed in the kitchen and a new water heater was provided for both the kitchen and toilet.

Richard Pratt

AGENDA ITEM 13

GROUP REPORTS - ABBEY GROUPS

a. Assistant Vergers and Servers

The Verger, Robyn Cleveland, and the volunteers who support her with verger cover and as servers, have had another busy and successful year in the abbey. The further easing of Covid restrictions has seen an increase in weddings and funeral/memorial services, and our regular abbey services became more well-attended and closer to “normal” as time has gone by. As always, Robyn is especially grateful for the help and cover from Brian Normington and Gillian Busher, and weekday serving from Phyllis Day. We welcomed two new servers to the Sunday team, Lily Thompson and Sam Halford, who hit the ground running and have adapted well to the changing services. Robyn is planning both a social get-together and a post-Covid training session for the servers in the upcoming weeks.

As the Verger of Romsey Abbey, Robyn takes her role as “butler in God’s house” very seriously, and takes so much pleasure in seeing all of you on Sundays and during the week. Thank you very much for your support!

Robyn Cleveland, Verger

b. Bellringers

The bell ringers are responsible for ensuring the Abbey’s fine ring of eight bells are rung for services, weddings and other occasions and that the bells are rung and maintained to a high standard.

During part of the period covered by this report the bells at many churches were silent for the longest time since World War II due to the Coronavirus pandemic as social distancing rules closed churches and prevented ringers meeting inside. Open ringing at the Abbey ceased on 15 March 2020 and resumed on 23 July 2021, a gap of 16 months and 8 days. However during this period, once services resumed, the Abbey bells were chimed using the Ellacombe Apparatus without breaking social distancing rules. The review of ringing in 2021 can be broken down into ‘During restrictions’ and ‘Post-restrictions’.

During restrictions:

Once Sunday morning services could be held in the Abbey the Ellacombe was rung for 15 minutes prior to the service. Other special ringing events included:

- On 23 March the Tenor was tolled following a minute’s silence on the National Day of Reflection to mark a year of lockdown.
- On 10 April the Tenor was tolled half-muffled 99 times in memoriam of Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh.
- On 17 April the Tenor was tolled half-muffled for 15 minutes prior to the funeral of Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh
- On 26 June the Ellacombe was rung as part of a worldwide celebration of the bicentenary of the invention of the Ellacombe Apparatus

Post-restrictions:

Open ringing resumed in July 2021 preceded by an article in the Romsey Advertiser to celebrate the return of the bells and a reminder of the normal ringing times. As well as the normal Sunday service and practice night ringing, we rang for 14 weddings, a half-muffled quarter peal for Remembrance Sunday and a date touch of 2021 changes in lieu of the traditional local band Christmas peal. We rang handbells at the Abbey Christmas Fair and we rang in the New Year at midnight on 31 December.

Pleasingly our large band of dedicated and enthusiastic ringers all returned to the Art after the lockdown and we plan to recruit a small number of learners to ensure the longevity of the band.

Alistair Brown Tower Captain

c. Catering team

The Catering Team catered for 32 events in 2021. In May, as soon as was feasible after lockdown, the monthly Parish Teas started again. Refreshments for the monthly Baptism preparation resumed in June. Many other Parish functions were catered for including the Light Party, refreshments during the Ethelflaeda Festival and All Souls. Outside catering functions included 2 Civic Functions, a cream tea for Nightingale nurses, a memorial service and afternoon tea for the 2 coaches of visitors for 9 Lessons and Carols. The pandemic still influenced the organisation of these events so numbers were reduced, booking system in place and guests were socially distanced. Nevertheless, the team served about 1500 people and made a profit of around £3,000.

Thanks to the wonderful team of bakers and helpers without which these events would just not happen.

Liz Wagner

d. Choir report

As COVID restrictions have continued to be relaxed during the period this report covers the choirs have started a consolidation and growth phase. So we started what I wanted to do two years ago when I was first appointed. An open day combined with the links I have been making with the local schools has seen the numbers of boys and girls increase to make a more sustainable footing for each group with certainly room for more singers. Quavers our training choir has also continued to thrive. Our back row singers have continued to sing at both services each Sunday, socially distanced at first and with small numbers and then gradually doing more services with the trebles. Highlights have included singing Choral Evensong at Southwark Cathedral in January, the Christmas and Easter services and a joint evensong with King Edward's School. In the early part of this year we interviewed and then appointed Richard McVeigh as our new Assistant Director of Music. A big thank you must go to Tim Rogerson for the wealth of playing he has undertaken in this period concerned.

Martin Seymour - Director of Music

e. Home Groups

Journeying Together

'Journeying Together' is a new version of a 'home group' which started in January 2022 and is led by Revd Dr Mich Lajeunesse. The group's aims are to share experience of the Christian journey in an inclusive way; discuss the Bible and other inspiring books; pray and grow in faith. Currently there are about 20 of us, meeting on Zoom, but from May this year we look forward to gathering at the Wisdom Centre. So far, we have been inspired by two of the great journeys recorded in the Bible, of Abraham and of the Magi, and we have been challenged by reading Isabelle Hamley's book 'Embracing Justice'. We finish each meeting with prayer and a short service of Compline. Howard and Jan Green organise the group and we welcome new members, via howardgreen1@btinternet.com

Howard Green

The homegroup that traditionally met at 10 The Harrage continued to meet fortnightly by Zoom during the Covid lockdowns of the first half of 2021. Various problems meant the group ceased meeting for a few months, but managed a social gathering before Christmas. In 2022 we have changed to meeting on Tuesday afternoons in Love Lane. We would welcome others to come and try out our friendly and supportive group discussing Bible passages and current affairs from a Christian perspective.

Katy and Ian Clark Romsey 501819

f. Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union, like many groups has had a very quiet couple of years! Obviously because of the pandemic we were unable to meet for much of 2020 and 2021. The committee kept in touch with members as best they could either by phone or mail. We ventured a couple of meetings towards the end of 2021 but then had to stop in December because of the rise of the omicron variant. However, 2022 is looking much more promising with a full programme planned for the months ahead.

Our membership has held up well with all existing members renewing in 2022 and, happily, we have been able to welcome three new members. Members of the branch look forward to be able to submit a more positive report come 2023!

Jennifer Phillips – Branch Secretary

g. Net Carbon Zero

We develop the Abbey's plan for using less energy each year - reducing and eliminating its global warming impact. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says the planet must cut non-renewable energy consumption by 50% by 2030 and to zero by 2050 (our bishops want zero by 2030!). We must start NOW. Our plan covers the immediate steps needed and the long-term solution.

Our gas heating causes most of our carbon emissions. Long-term we need to replace it with a renewable-energy based system - a long and expensive task. Insulating the Abbey roof would deliver early, continuing benefit. Similarly, all remaining non-LED floodlights should be replaced with LEDs.

For the long-term plan, we need energy consultants to calculate the energy we can save. Then we can design the necessary renewable energy heating system (probably with ground-source heat pumps).

Let's get started!

Roger Rowe

h. Parish Lunch

Lunches are organised once a month and restarted on 8th July, 2021 after a gap, due to Coronavirus, of 15 months. We started cautiously, seating only 4 to a table, but soon upped the numbers to 6 per table and then in December, back to our previous arrangement of 8 people.

All lunches are freshly made, using locally sourced ingredients, and we decided to put the price up to £5 per head, which is very good value for 2 courses, plus tea or coffee. We accrue funds over a period, and in October we donated £1,800 to the Abbey, which we hope will be put towards a new stove in the kitchen of the Church Rooms, as the hob often does not work, and we are then obliged take the food to cook in other homes .

The effort that Adrienne Mordan and the team put in is very much appreciated by all our lunchers. Thank you all.

Liz Holloway

i. Romsey Abbey C of E (Aided) Primary School

2021 was full of challenges with the ever-changing impact of Covid and appointment of a new headteacher. Despite the challenges, the school continued developing. The 9-week lockdown at the start of the year caused us to balance face-to face provision for many and high-quality remote learning for pupils at home. We are working hard to close the gaps in learning caused by Covid.

I took over as Headteacher in September from Mr Langford who returned to his role as Deputy Headteacher. Having been Teaching and Learning Coach at the school for 5 years, I hit the ground running providing the best possible education for every child. Empowering pupils to achieve great things and making a positive contribution is rooted in our Christian values of Love, Trust and Forgiveness. 'Thinking Deeply' and 'Thinking Back' are now areas of focus ensuring learning is challenging, meaningful and retained in children's long-term memories.

Mark Harris - Headteacher

j. Sewing and Knitting Group

During lockdown our members were very busy knitting and crocheting. When we met in September we were delighted to receive over 250 articles. Hats and booties, matinee jackets and beautiful cot blankets were given to Princess Anne Maternity Unit. We delivered hats, mittens and scarves to The Sailor Society at Woolston and a wide range of clothing and blankets to the Basics Bank at the Southampton City Mission in Millbrook .

In the autumn we enjoyed a new challenge. We made breasts to be used for breast feeding demonstrations in the maternity unit at Addenbrookes Hospital . Martha Johnson requested them as she was there on learning experience towards her midwifery degree.

Maureen Batten and Anne Hewett

k. Sidesmen

Four sidesmen have resigned, Colin and Rosemary Davis, and Jane and Colin Russell, and we thank them for their time serving as sidesmen.

We welcome three new sidesmen, Rowena Naile, James Hartley-Binns and Emily Heron.

There are currently forty three sidesmen and the churchwardens are very grateful for their loyal service.

J. Diane Hargreaves

I. Stewards

The stewards' primary role is to welcome visitors to our Abbey. Even with the limited hours and travel restrictions in the first half of the year, we had 33,880 visitors in 2021 (compared to just under 42,500 in 2019). Having facilitated the re-opening of the Abbey initially for prayer and later for tourism during the "stop start" that was 2020, the stewards rota began to settle down as the opening hours increased during 2021. We used some of our Culture Recovery Grant to advertise for new stewards and recruited more than 15 new volunteers. More volunteers are always welcome to fill the 42 slots per week. Contact Diana Strudwick if you are able to offer a couple of hours per week or per fortnight, have reasonable mobility and enjoy meeting people.

Julie Carlton

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

1. Christian Aid

Romsey's Christian Aid Committee works locally to raise awareness of the global work of Christian Aid and to hold events to raise funds for the charity. The Committee has representatives from Romsey's Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed and Abbey/St Swithun's churches.

The local committee has continued to meet online, holding its usual three meetings during 2021. Fundraising continued to be greatly curtailed because of the pandemic. Fundraising activities included: e-recipes sold instead of Lent lunches, market stall, book sale, buckets collection, sponsored walks and a cycle ride. A grand total £6539.01 (£4,324.87 in 2020)

In addition, the PCC's Mission & Giving fund donated £1000.00 in December. There is a vacancy on the Local Committee for another Abbey/St Swithun's representative.

Sincere thanks go to those who continue to contribute and support to help Christian Aid's vision of ending poverty & Injustice worldwide.

Liz Wagner

2. George's Trust

Over the past year George's Trust has continued to function in whatever way the restrictions of the time would allow. It has been difficult as like so many Charities fundraising has been limited, but George's Trust is more fortunate than others in that we have been able to sit tight with very little outgoings and wait.

Towards the end of the year were able to do some fundraising events and started off in September with a team of ten family and friends walking the Rotary Test Way Walk in Memory of my son George O'Brien who would have been 30 years old on that weekend. Supporters as always rallied behind us with great sponsorship and we raised over £1000. In October 2021 we held a Market Stall in Romsey, where we sold Homemade Chutneys, Marmalades and Jams, which proved to very popular, look out for us again this year. We finished the year with our amazing Christmas Concert in Romsey Abbey, as always the highlight of our fundraising events. Despite all the restrictions, which included the loss of the mulled wine, the evening was as magical as ever. We were also in the great position to be able to present the last part of the £50,000 pledge to Immunotherapy Cancer Research and gave Dr Chris Hanley, a senior post-doctorate Research Fellow in Southampton University Hospital, a cheque for £15,000. Dr Hanley then told the audience about the vital work that they do in Southampton and praised George's Trust for its amazing help over the last three years.

As for the new current objective, George's Trust is looking forward to helping Southampton Hospitals Trust to refit and add an isolation ward within the Teenage Cancer Unit in the Southampton University Hospital. We will be back with the Teenage Cancer Ward and feel it will be good to help refit the ward that we originally gave a £104,000 to build. Events are starting to mount up throughout the summer and up until the end of the year, as we tentatively get back to some sort of normal life.

I would like to end by thanking Romsey Abbey staff and community for their continued support of George's Trust, the Trustees and myself are very grateful to you all.

Jane O'Brien

3. Music in Romsey Abbey

Music in Romsey Abbey is the team of volunteers that manages the booking, administration, ticketing, front of house and back stage activities for the wide range of concerts held in the Abbey each year.

After twenty-one cancellations in 2020 due to the pandemic, with only four events held, we were very pleased to be able to support a fuller concert schedule from May 2021 onwards, with only nine cancellations.

In 2021 the Music in Romsey Abbey team supported 17 events, including six in the Romsey Festival fortnight, postponed from 2020. Audience numbers were somewhat reduced, but there were still over 300 present for the Romsey Youth Choir's wonderful Christmas concert.

We were delighted to welcome returning performers such as Southampton Concert Orchestra and The Gentlemen of St. John's College, Cambridge, as well as new-comers including the Gabrieli Consort with their spectacular "Gabrieli Roar" performance of Haydn's Creation involving their professional players and singers along with 65 school children - a truly memorable concert.

We operated a reduced fees structure due to the pandemic, but despite this were able to raise more than £11,000 for Abbey funds.

In 2022 the team is supporting over twenty concerts, and we do hope that members of the congregation are able to join us to enjoy some of the wonderful performances planned.

The Music in Romsey Abbey team relies on the support of many volunteers who put in a huge amount of work before, during and after each event and we are enormously grateful for their hard work and dedication. Please get in touch with Chris Green if you are interested in helping out in any way.

Chris Green

4. Triangulate

During 2020 the Abbey with Triangulate took the decision to postpone signing the review to remain a charter signatory to the Mindful Employer initiative. We had originally signed up to this in 2009 so to put this on hold was a significant decision, and one brought about partly due to the restrictions caused by Covid but also due to new personnel in the Abbey. We wanted time to consider the implications and to re-commit to the principles associated with the charter.

In July 2021 the Abbey Ministry Team invited Bridget Brook to speak about Mindful Employer at a team awayday. Following this the application was made and the charter was again signed for a period of three years. Mindful Employer Plus, the 24/7 helpline for staff and volunteers was purchased and staff and the PCC were given the information with Bridget speaking at a PCC meeting in September to explain the benefits.

The focus of our annual Mental Health Sunday service this year looked at the impact of Covid on children, from a personal, educational and family perspective. Due to the restrictions in place at the time the speakers were recorded and the film was shown during the sermon slot. Mark Harris, then Deputy Headteacher at Romsey Abbey Primary School spoke with Rev Thomas Wharton about how the school was adapting to the impact of Covid both in the classroom and school setting, as well as providing support for home learning. Meghann Hewett, a secondary schoolteacher spoke with Bridget Brook about how older pupils and their families were coping with the disruption to their education, including not taking public examinations.

The PCC again supported Triangulate, as one of their partner charities, with a financial contribution. This is much appreciated as is the support of the congregation.

Bridget Brook - Trustee