**The Parish of Bentworth, Lasham and Shalden (BLS) Easter Vestry Meeting (Meeting of the Parishioners)**

**1800 Thursday 1 May, 2025 Shalden Village Hall**

**Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Tony Brooking, Andrew and Cynthia Buchanan, Ian Champness, Revd David Chattell, Cathy Dumelow, Hilary and Mervyn Dunwoody, Antonia and Maurice Goor, Mary Green, Helen Hilditch, Sue Jamieson, Sarah Miskella, Jean Osgood, Peter Owen-Jones, Liz Preece, Peter Rankin, Millie Shaylor, Jane Shirvell, Luke Taylor

1. Opening prayer led by David Chattell
2. Apologies: Lynne Baxter, Michael Campbell, Anthea and Michael Del Mar, Kirsty Ennever, Jill Hurley, Bruce Nichol, Ingrid Owen-Jones, Henry and Rosanne Wilson
3. Election of the Church Wardens: The following were elected by a unanimous vote.

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| **Nominee** | **Proposer** | **Seconder** |
| Catherine Dumelow | Elizabeth Preece | Jill Hurley |
| Sarah Miskella | Peter Rankin | Antonia Goor |
| Peter Rankin | Kirsty Ennever | Michele Rankin |

**The Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

1. Election of PCC members: The following were elected by a unanimous vote

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| **Nominee** | **Proposer** | **Seconder** |
| Kirsty Ennever | Jane Shirvell | Peter Rankin |
| Elizabeth Preece | Catherine Dumelow | Jill Hurley |

1. Election of Deanery Synod members: The following were elected in 2024 and have agreed to stand for the second year of their three-term office:

Michael Campbell, Mervyn Dunwoody, Antonia Goor

1. Review of the Annual Report and matters arising:

* Tony Brooking questioned the format of the accounts sheet and why there was no balance sheet for the extension at Bentworth. Mervyn Dunwoody replied that the balance sheet was in the advised format and the extension was not part of BLS. In the BLS General Fund there is £3000 at present.
* Tony Brooking asked about residual funds in the Bentworth extension budget and Mervyn Dunwoody responded that the remaining funds are being used to upgrade the heating where unforeseen problems have arisen.

1. Electoral Roll 2025. This now stands at 123 for the parish of BLS. Kirsty Ennever was thanked for compiling this. David Chattell explained, in answer to Millie Shaylor, that the Electoral Roll and Common Mission Fund (CMF) are directly linked, with the diocese planning a review of the BLS contribution.
2. Presentation on Diocesan Finance. David Chattell presented slides previously prepared by Colin Harbidge (Diocesan Chief Operating Officer). entitled ‘A Consultation on Diocesan Finance’.

The income and expenditure are derived from and spent as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| Income sources as a % of the total | |
| Parishes | 78 |
| Assets | 13 |
| Grants and Reserves | 9 |

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| --- | --- |
| Expenditure as a % of the total | |
| Ministry Support | 70 |
| Parishes and School | 10 |
| Diocesan Support | 13 |
| National Support | 7 |

With reduced collection rates for the CMF there is a projected operating deficit. There has also been a decline in Planned Givers over the last 10 years.

2013 – 14,020 donors

2023 - 9,281 donors

As this scenario is replicated in many dioceses, questions were raised about the role of the Church Commissioners, deemed to be a wealthy body, in supporting dioceses and specifically the funding of more clergy. David Chattell responded that questions had been asked in General Synod about the use of funds by the Church Commissioners to make reparations for the transatlantic slave trade which a Thinktank Report felt was an ‘inadvisable’ use of funds. David Chattell suggested we might approach Colin Harbidge on how the Church Commissioners can help our diocese.

Mervyn Dunwoody confirmed that in BLS many donors still prefer to give to an individual Church’s Fabric Fund rather than the General Fund of BLS and the parish is working to reverse this trend through clear explanations of money usage.

1. AOB: Sarah Miskella thanked David Chattell for his invaluable input at this meeting and noted the kindness and generosity of all the POTR ministers who support our services.
2. The meeting closed at 1855 with a prayer.