



The Astwell Benefice

St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury & St Lawrence Radstone
St James the Great Syresham,
St John the Evangelist Whitfield,
St Mary and St Peter Lois Weedon & Weston with Plumpton
St Mary the Virgin Wappenham
www.astwellparishes.org.uk



Minutes of the BPCC MEETING Monday 9th October 2023, 7.15pm, Wappenham Village Hall

BE opened the meeting with a Prayer.

1. **Present:** Mike Streten, Cliff Netten, Alice Palmer, Bill Elkington, Judith Elkington, Sue Timmis, Penny Bonner, Frank Hunter, Sarah Rudkin & Peter Oliver
Apologies: Sheena Warren, Wiggy Smith, Claire Bonner & Paul Stothard
2. **Approval of minutes of previous BPCC meeting, 10th July 2023 (attached):**
These were approved unanimously, *but PS to set up a Whatsapp group to let people know if a service has been moved or cancelled.* **Action PS**
3. **Brief updates by Committee Chairs and Churchwardens/representatives:**
 - a. **Finance** (AP - see attached report) LW & Whitfield will probably not be able to meet their Parish Share totals from last year.
 - b. **Worship:** (PS – see attached report) It was agreed that retired priests should be given an honorarium or gift for their help during the vacancy. Re PS's future permission to take HC by extension - it was hoped that the new Bishop might be less rigid on the rules around this. **Action AP**
 - c. **Social and Fundraising:** (SW - see attached report) Murder Mystery now being held at Helmdon only, on 3rd November. BE to provide the new poster to those that want it. **Action BE**
 - d. **Pastoral Care:** (WS - see attached report) It was agreed that it would be useful for the BPCC to know *how many* people the Pastoral care team were visiting/involved with. **Action WS**
 - e. **Safeguarding:** (JE – see attached report) Judith was congratulated for ensuring that for the first time the Benefice is 100% covered as regards DBS checks!
 - f. **Hope Centre** (AN – see attached report). BE said he would tell AN about an alternative gate/entrance at Oasis House in case he was unaware of it. **Action BE**
BE also mentioned that on Fridays 2 -3pm Wolverton Mission is selling surplus food at Helmdon Reading Room, with proceeds going to the Hope Centre. Food is very reasonably priced and everyone should be encouraged to go **Action All**
4. **Astwell Benefice Church Council Reports:**
 - a. **Helmdon** (CN - see attached report): DAC has now given permission for removal of the organ and pews, so that re-development can go ahead as planned. Harvest services/events had been successful with lots of kids and enthusiasm.
 - b. **Lois Weedon:** (FH- see attached report) new coffee mornings were raising good money; would like more than 2 services a month, attendance is low but steady.
 - c. **Syresham** (AP - see attached report) First application for spire works had gone in that day (£60-100k) and Trust funds cannot be touched.
 - d. **Wappenham** (PO - see attached report)
 - e. **Whitfield** (ST/CB - see attached notes)

5. Plans for the arrival of the new Rector

Induction/Institution at Helmdon Church 7pm on 7th December. Church seats 120 people.

- CWs/Reps to ascertain (by email/face-to-face invitation) asap which parishioners and community leaders (ie. school heads, PC chairs, chapel ministers, local dignitaries etc) wish to attend.
- BE will invite the Benefice Patrons, and other priests etc from the Deanery.
- David Wright has asked if the Choir can sing (maybe during Communion?)
- Father Matthew Robinson, Rural Dean, will organise a rehearsal.
- CWs and Reps to make sure they have a set of church keys and their staves available.
- Discussion about food & drink afterwards – wine (FH) & soft drinks will be served; ideas on food varied from just crisps etc to finger food on trays– TBC, when it is known approx. how many people are attending.

Action All

6. Any Other Business

- PO asked if the BPCC had formally announced appointment of new Rector – it had been formally announced in church and in the Pews News. He also asked if there were any plans for a coordinated welcome for the new Rector, besides the Induction. He would be meeting people at Christmas services, but perhaps parishes could invite him to their own welcome events after Christmas/New Year.
- AP mentioned the possibility of a joint Benefice-wide insurance policy, but said she had been told this would not work, as all the churches are separate entities, with too many variables. She would ask about insurance for ‘Benefice’ events/situations only.
- WS – email to the BPCC re some church members (and others) not feeling involved and informed about what is happening in the Benefice. It was agreed that the minutes of Church Council Meetings would be made available as appropriately as possible, ie. on church noticeboards, websites etc in the future.
- BE said that Choir attendance was growing, particularly some new young members. The aim is to sing at as many Benefice services/events as possible over Christmas.
- BE said he had done a talk about Astwell’s ‘united benefice’ structure at a recent Deanery Synod, which had provoked a lot of interest and discussion.
- BE said he recommended changing electricity supplier annually, to keep costs down – Helmdon uses ‘Exchange Utility’ to help them get the best price.

Action AP

7. Date for next BPCC Meeting: Monday 29th January 2024, 7.15pm at Wappenham Village Hall

The Grace was said and the meeting ended.