



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 Benefice PCC MEETING held on Monday 22nd April 2024

Present: HW (Chair), AP, PS, ST, SW, CB, FH, MS, BE, SR
HW opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. **Apologies:** PO, JE, WS, CN & PB
2. **Approval of minutes of previous BPCC meeting,** held 29th Jan 2024
These were approved, subject to the following amendments/matters arising:
 - BE said that the Helmdon Larder was continuing, using new sources of food, Fridays 2-3pm in the Reading Room
 - PS asked for a copy of the article BE had mentioned about Parish Councils & church fabric repairs **Action: BE**
 - APCM will now take place at Helmdon Church, as RR unavailable.
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3. **Approval of 2023 Draft Annual Report & Accounts:**
Approved, subject to some final amendments and additions. It will now be finished and printed/published. **Action: SR & AP**
 - AP asked how often the Benefice Safeguarding policy was updated; BE said it was whenever Peterborough issues updates, but HW said he thought it was more often than that, and also asked if there were any other policies, such as Health & Safety, which should be covered. It was decided that the BPCC need to look further at these. **Action: HW**
4. **Update from parishes on vestry meetings etc & preparations for APCM:**
There was general discussion and some confusion about the various annual requirements re. vestry meetings, election of churchwardens, electoral rolls etc. It was decided that HW would look at this further and try and come up with some simple guidelines for future use. SR gave out the notice of the 2024 APCM for all to display in their churches **Action: HW**
5. **Brief verbal updates from committees & parishes:**
Syresham – wish to have their Harvest service & supper on 22nd Sept @ 5pm; they are writing to their Electoral Roll members asking to increase their giving.
Wappenham – had a very successful concert on 20th April, raising about £800
Helmdon – had a good Quiz Night on 19th April; final @ LW on 10th May
Social & Fundraising – SW mentioned the Grand Draw - it was decided this would be held publicly at Helmdon's weekly coffee morning 11am, 2nd July at Reading Room (AP to broadcast live on Benefice Facebook page??). SW to send SR details of prizes etc for the PN & website. **Action: SW/SR**
FH – said that Tove Valley Broadband were now paying LW £300/month, and Wappenham £400/month for 2 years for hosting their equipment.
PS – said he was to carry out a thorough review of service attendance across the Benefice, starting with Helmdon. FH said he had a spreadsheet of figures for LW which might help. **Action: PS**

6. **Any Other Business:**

- BE said that he would not be re-standing as Lay Chair at this year's APCM, and that he would only stay on as churchwarden at Helmdon for one more year. It was decided that the BPCC would elect someone as the new Lay Chair at its next meeting (1st July 2024)
Action: All
- BE said that he had attended a useful presentation about the new 'Sum-up' machines, which were being subsidised by the Diocese. Helmdon is going to purchase one. A discussion then continued about the newly introduced Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and how giving could be increased. BE to let others have more information if they wanted it.
Action: BE
- PS thanked BPCC members for their gift for his work during the Benefice, which he had put to good use!
- HW expressed a wish that all members of the Benefice who took services should have the opportunity to discuss the gospel more deeply and fully. He said he would like to see greater engagement with and a greater apprehension of scripture; that maybe the Benefice had become too 'eucharistic' and that maybe the Benefice should have only one Eucharist per week, leaving time for other types of service. How should this be discussed more widely (at parish/Benefice level?/away-days/Saturday morning meetings/at Worship Committee?) A lengthy and wide-ranging discussion was then had, during which several members approved of some of HW's thinking. It was decided that HW would produce a paper about how to take this forward. **Action: HW**

7. Date of next meeting is Monday 1st July 2024, 7.15pm at Wappenham V Hall

8. **The Grace** was said and the meeting ended.