**The Astwell Benefice**

*Helmdon with Stuchbury and Radstone, and Syresham with Whitfield,Lois Weedon with Weston and Plumpton and Wappenham*

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Syresham Church Council – Minutes 11/11/24

**Present:** Alice Palmer Margaret Miller Brenda Faragher David Wright Kathleen Brunning Sallie Connery David BIllingham

**Apologies** :

**Minutes of 4/9/24** Were accepted as a true record.

**Matters Arising**

Welcome packs – two have been given out – two more prepared. Please keep an eye open for folk moving in.

Yew Tree – in the churchyard has been inspected and can wait before it needs attention.

Organ Note – David has put a note on the organ for the tuner.

Others all complete or covered below.

**Chair’s correspondence & notes**

All covered below

**Financial Report – how are we doing?**

BF reported that we have paid £12,100 towards the Parish Share so far, together with the extra money received directly to the benefice we have paid 70% of our share to date. Last year we paid £13,414.95 in total. BF thought we could possibly pay another £2000 in December depending on the results of the Christmas Fair. AP said she is hoping for an extra £3000.

Our regular income has increased and collections are on a par with last year. We have received £2054.81 in gift aid and £908.62 in donations.

The steeple fund stands at £30,724. We have received grants of £1300, a VAT reclaim of £3086, £6056 from the Trust funds and £2000 from the Friends of St James.

We have £5088.90 allocated to other Quinquennial works – such as the windows.

There is £10077.84 in our savings account.

MM commented that she is ready to do the gift aid.

**Fund Raising**

The Christmas Fair committee have been working hard for December 13th. We need bottles for the bottle stall but already have plenty of toys and soft toys. Other stalls are gifts, bric-a-brac, books and bears, mulled wine, refreshments, cakes and a craft corner for children.

*Astwell Festival* – we have been asked to provide flowers in church – Sally & Kathleen have already agreed. There will be lost going on starting on May 30th 2025 to June 7th. There will be silent discos in church on the Saturdays, a cricket match and many other things to enjoy.

The acapella group *Note-Ability* will be visiting Syresham on June 21st/

**Trust Report**

We have enough money in the account to pay the maintenance for next year. More is due in December. None has been received from Maud Payne yet.

The Hammond Trust has £4,113.71 SC will arrange a meeting of the committee to distribute gifts as well as bibles for school and cake for staff.

**Worship**

The Remembrance and All Souls services were well received and met a need. The cakes in the pub after Remembrance were very successful and doubled the donation to the British Legion.

We have very busy November and December with Christmas events:

Messy Church November 24th

Christmas trail December 1st – could anyone make some buns for the tea at the end of the trail.

Carol service on the 22nd in Chapel

Christingles 3:30 – the quiet one and 4:30 on the 24th.

Christmas Eve Communion 9pm led by Rev. Hugh

Christmas Morning service 10:30 led by Paul Stothard

The Christmas card will be available next week BF MM KB AP SC & DB all offered to help deliver.

**Friends**

The Poppies are on display in church. Our thanks go to all those who have been involved, especially Janet Cox for attaching most of them and DB for putting the display up.

Upcoming activities include:

Walk & Soup on November 16th Start 10am in church or join for lunch.

Members Party December 13th – after the Fair!!

Vanessa Murby Concert January 5th

**Quinquennial & other works**

Sycamore tree to be removed on November 21st

Boiler room – the heating was checked and a button had been pressed – otherwise in working order.

Pest control – there is no evidence of mice or rats in the church or boiler room. There is no point removing moles until next year. ACME will book visit in February

Steeple we are still waiting for the planning to complete. We expect this to happen by November 19th but have had no word from the builders on a start date. We expect to have a £20000 loan at the end of the work.

The Sound system was fixed – the microphone was tuned to the wrong frequency which has disappeared since it was installed.. We agreed to join a maintenance scheme at the cost of around £150 per annum

**School**

MM provided a fruit cake last term. AP will buy some chocolates for this time and SC will arrange a tray-bake to be provided by Julie Turnham and paid for by the Hammond Trust.

They have an Academisation presentation on November 27th to try to join their preferred academy.

**Pastoral Care**

We discussed various needs around the village. KB will consider a tea party date.

Action KB

**Safeguarding**. SC NB & DB need to complete training

**AOB –**

DB asked about redoing the electoral role – we agreed this could be left until next year when we will need to compose a letter to deliver to all members of the roll – outlining both what we offer and what we need – financial support…

**Date of next meeting : January 20th 1pm @ Vine Cottage.**