**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 4/9/24

**Present:** Alice Palmer Margaret Miller Brenda Faragher Rev Hugh White David Wright Kathleen Brunning

**Apologies** : Sallie Connery David BIllingham

**Minutes 24/6/24** were approved.

**Matters Arising**

Welcome packs – updated leaflet was shown we are just waiting for societies to approve their entries and it will be distributed. Please can everyone keep an eye open for people moving in.

Letter to parishioners – written and sent to various members of the electoral roll but there had been no increase in giving. There is however one new generous regular donation.

BPCC suggestions presented but not discussed except that there will be a series of meetings in October on Prayer. Starting the first Wednesday of October in the Chapel Sunday School.

Fair – see fundraising below.

STEP – completed free by Robert Swinford. Thank you chocolates delivered!

BF asked if we could ask Robert Swinford to deal with and overhanging branch of Yew.

Action AP

Baptism – AP found that Joshua Turnham was baptised on 28th January 2018 but the baptism was not recorded.

**Chair’s correspondence & notes**

Permission has been sought and granted for a bench by Irene Hawkins grave. Her headstone will follow. They Wyness’s would like Gillian and David to be placed in the churchyard at some point.

See below for the church works.

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

Figures are better than last year with increased collections. We have one new regular standing order, but one contribution is being decreased. We have also had some donations from funerals and baptisms. The Steeple Fund continues to grow and is now over £30,000 in the bank with more to follow once work starts. Thanks to the Friends for their donation of £2000.

We raised £1788 at the fete. We have paid £9050 of our parish share to date and agreed to top this up with an extra £2000, which will take us to 63% of our total. Still over £6000 to find.

Action BF

We expect utilities to be more expensive over the winter. AP will ask the trustees if we could use some money to put the heater on in the vestry – which is getting mouldy. We have also made charitable donations to the Syresham Times and NHCT.

DW commented that there is a buzzing on one of the organ stops and asked when it was last serviced. BF reported that the last service was November 23 so one is due soon. AP suggested putting a note about the buzz in the organ so that the people who service are sure to see it.

Action DW

**Fund Raising**

We agreed that Alice Palmer and Brenda Faragher should report the results of the raffle to the council.

Paula Whitehouse has said she would be happy to bring the choir along to sing at the Christmas Fair after school on a Friday – this would mean her giving up some teaching slots on that Friday. We decided to hold the fair 3:30 to 5:30 on December 6th.BF will arrange a meeting

Action BF

Note-Abillity have offered to come and do a concert in church on June 21st next year. This will be after the Astwell Festival. HW commented that there shouldn’t be events competing with the Festival but thought this was far enough away. AP will consult.

Action AP

**Trust Report**

Quilter is now managing both Trust funds. We currently have £1863.64 in the savings account under Friends for maintenance. We should get further income at the end of September and December and AP proposes to pass on money to our current account in early January.

We have £1100 in our maintenance account at present. AP will pass the next lot of maintenance money from the Trust account in January at the start of the accounting year.

There is also £29000 capital funds held in this account. We would need to get permission from the Trustees to access this in an emergency.

**Worship**

We enjoyed all the birthday anniversary bell and patronal celebrations in July and welcomed two new boys into the church family in August & September. We also hosted two large funerals for Irene Hawkins and Andy Hawkins.

Harvest – 4pm September 22nd – in support of DEC. This means a High Tea rather than supper. Margaret will provide cake, Brenda, quiche, Kathleen sausage rolls, Irene carrot & cucumber sticks and small tomatoes. Others to be asked. AP has found a CofE service we could follow.

Action AP

All Souls – 7pm Monday 4th November. There was some discussion about whether it should be moved to a Sunday but we left this for the Worship Committee to discuss for next year preferring to stay as already set for this year.

Remembrance will be as normal – 10:55 outside the pub.

 Christmas - Carols in Chapel 6pm on December 22nd, Christingles 3 & 4:30pm on Christmas Eve and Communion at 9pm. Family service 10:30 on Christmas morning.

**Friends**

The Friends are planning to display all the Knitted/crocheted poppies outside church this year. Work is ongoing – all help welcomed.

**Quinquennial & other works**

 The architects hope that work on the steeple will be carried out in October

We are STILL waiting to hear from Christian Terndrup about the sycamore. The faculty was extended to the end of September.

**NOTE** CT has now been in touch – the quote has increased as we can’t have access through the Priory garden.

AP has been spoken to Dean Brown with regard to the table store – it is built and is waiting to be installed but he has been unwell and unable to finish off the work.

NOTE DB has also been in touch he plans to put the table store in place very soon.

Our Quinquennial Spreadsheet shows there is still further work to be carried out particularly on the windows. We will look at this once the steeple is complete and we have a clearer idea about the income from the Trust Fund.

**School**

AP provided strawberries, scones and cream to the staff – much appreciated. They are still waiting to apply for Academisation.

Margaret will make them a fruit cake this term.

**Pastoral Care** There are a lot of folk suffering with cancer, bereavement and other illnesses at the moment. They will receive harvest gifts/flower at/after the All Souls service. We will think about another tea party.

Action KB

**Safeguarding** AP has redone the Basic Course and started on the next level. SC NB & DB need to complete training

**ASTWELL FESTIVAL 31st May – 8th June 2025.** Rev. Hugh talked about some of the planned activities including cricket matches, craft workshops a play….. He asked us to start talking about the event. Any extra ideas can be fed to the committee via Andrew North.

**AOB – none.**

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

**Sometime in November it was agreed that AP would consult SC and DB about a good time as they are working.**