

My Dear Friends,

We will be having our APCM on the 28th of October at 19:30 via Zoom and I thought I would write to you just to highlight the purpose of doing this, in as plain and simple a way as I possibly can, as it can often seem extremely complicated, especially in this strange Covid19 world.

Like everything, this is not the way any of us would want it, however, as you seem to do time and time again, I know the fantastic congregation of St Margaret's will rise to the challenge with what - I am discovering - to be a great sense of good heartedness.

As I'm sure many of you know, the APCM is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. In truth, and under normal circumstances, it actually comprises of two meetings - the 'Vestry Meeting' which elects the churchwardens for the coming year, and the APCM itself which is the business meeting of the church, a sort of AGM for St Margaret's.

It's a meeting we're legally required to have, but this year due to Covid19 it will take place NOT on or before the 30th April (as it normally would), but on the 28th of October.

To make matters simple, the Vestry Meeting will take place the day before on the 27th October, also at 19:30. Julia will kindly organise and chair both the meetings. Notices of the meetings were posted on 11th October 2020 and are formally displayed at church, the parish centre and on the website, including the zoom access links.

The APCM is open to members of the church electoral roll, to vote on the appointment of PCC members, Deanery Synod representatives and also to accept the audited accounts of the church and formally receive a number of other documents ie: the revised electoral roll.

It is often seen as a very formal meeting, which it is in many ways, but it is also an opportunity to catch up with the events of the last year and to explore the vision for the coming year together.

Most of all it's a CELEBRATION of all that God has been doing in the life of St Margaret's Church and the Parish Centre, as we look forward in hope to the coming year.

WHAT IS THE VESTRY MEETING?

This is the first of the two meetings and is usually relatively short. Its purpose is to elect the churchwardens. Both of our current Churchwardens have requested to stay in post and this delights me. This has been a very difficult time for me to come on board as the new 'Priest in Charge' and they have shown me huge support. I was a churchwarden for over ten years myself and so I know how difficult it can be. What John and Dorothy clearly demonstrate is a love for our church and the community we serve.

But of course, if anybody did wish to put themselves forward, forms for the nominations for churchwardens can be sent to you electronically, or paper copies can be carefully placed within the church (having been given the adequate time of 72 hours to become free of potential Covid19 infection). Given the current challenges it would be appreciated if nominations are received by myself 7 days before the meeting ie: by 20th October 2020 to allow for proxy voting to take place for those that are unable to join the Vestry meeting via zoom, if required.

Therefore, candidates for Churchwardens will be announced one week before the Vestry meeting itself and any votes (maximum of one per person) should be made directly to myself only, either in church on Sunday, electronically or by post. Closing date for voting will be up to the meeting on the 27th October, when people at the meeting, who have not already voted, can vote via polling in the meeting.

THE APCM

The agenda for the APCM will be as follows:

Opening Prayers (Vicar)

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the previous annual parochial church meeting (the minutes of the last meeting have been approved and signed).

Matters Arising

THE REPORTS (These will be concise as we are on Zoom)

- (i) The Vicar's Report
- (ii) The electoral roll – changes in membership (Julia to report)
- (iii) Annual report – what the PCC has done in the last 12 months (Dorothy to report)
- (iv) Financial report (Paul to report)
- (v) Annual fabric report (John Farrent to report)
- (vi) Deanery Synod report (Lynda to report)

THE ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

As mentioned above for Church Warden nominations, in the current circumstances, it would also be helpful if nominations for either Deanery Synod representatives or for the PCC could be received seven days before the APCM ie: by 21st October, forms are available electronically at request or at church in paper form following 72 hours notice. This will enable us to provide an opportunity for those not able to join the APCM by zoom to vote via proxy ahead of the meeting, via either email or post. Those attending the meeting on zoom will be able to vote via a simple electronic polling system in the meeting if they have not taken the email/postal vote already.

Candidates for Deanery Synod and the PCC will be announced a week before the meeting itself and any votes should be made directly to myself only, either in church on Sunday, electronically or by post. Each person has one vote each for the roles of Deanery Synod representative and 5 votes each for the PCC members, this being the number of places available, maximum of one vote per person per candidate. Closing date for voting will be up to the meeting on the 28th October when people, who have not already given their votes to me previously, can vote via the polling system. This will give everybody the opportunity to vote fairly. Again, I will announce the results on the evening.

Election of representatives to Deanery Synod

Election of PCC members

We will then set another PCC meeting for early November where we will appoint sidespeople.

Any other business

Closing prayers

ANNUAL REPORTS

We will make our annual reports (which were already prepared) available through our website and these can be sent to people electronically if they wish. If anybody doesn't have a computer, a paper copy can be sent to them prepared by somebody wearing gloves and sent out 72 hours after it is prepared. Its route in the Royal Mail is at the risk of the recipient.

At the meeting, which sadly will need to be kept fairly tight, reports can be made verbally over Zoom.

Obviously we will open and close in prayer.

Just to be above board and for tradition only, a copy of the reports will be symbolically displayed for at least 7 days in the church, though obviously these cannot be handled (these dates include a Sunday when there is a service at the church).

In addition to the financial statements and the Annual report, which the PCC will have approved already, certain further reports will also be presented to the APCM: These include the Electoral Roll, the churchwardens report on the fabric, the goods and ornaments of the church, and the proceedings of the deanery synod.

Please remember these reports are dated to April, new reports moving forward will be considered for 2021.

TIMINGS

The legalities surrounding the APCM mean we posted an announcement at least two clear Sundays before the meetings, we display a formal laminated notice of the Meeting of Parishioners and the APCM at both the church and at the Parish Centre. At the same time, we display the renewed electoral roll. The electoral roll renewal was announced in church at the beginning of September and the revision completed at the end of that month.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A previous PCC meeting earlier in the year received and finalised financial statements and specified reports. The financial statements, accounts and accompanying reports e.g. examiner's report have been independently examined. It has been approved by the PCC.

Again, this will be symbolically displayed in or outside the church for at least seven days, including one Sunday when there is a service at the church. Obviously this is a paper document, and so displaying it will be for traditional purposes. If anybody wishes to have a copy it can be sent electronically or by post.

CONCLUSION

Like almost every element of life in 2020 nobody really wants to do things this way, however, it needs to be done and does meet the requirements of an APCM. I know you will all understand why we have had to do it like this.

Faith is such a huge comforter at this present time and my prayers are that you are all blessed with safety and peace. Let's look boldly together at the future and know that we are never in this alone. We have God, and we have each other.

'The Lord is my light and my salvation- whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life- of whom shall I be afraid?' Psalm 27:1

Warmest regards

Revd Nigel