

**MINUTES OF ST OSWALD’S CHURCH  
ELECTION OF CHURCH WARDENS’ MEETING  
HELD VIA BLUE JEANS AND CHURCH  
SUNDAY 16 May 2021**

**Attendees:** 50 members of St Oswald’s Congregation  
(All Electoral Register members)

**Apologies:** Yvonne Douglas-Morris, the Randall family

**Opening Prayer**

The opening prayer was led by Rev’d Alison Brunt

**Notices convening the meeting**

Taken as read

**MINUTES OF 2020 CHURCH WARDEN'S MEETING**

The minutes were recorded as an accurate reflection of the minutes.

Proposed by: Nick Lock

Seconded: Yvonne Lewis

**ELECTION OF CHURCH WARDENS**

There were two nominations:

Nick Lock Proposed by Debbie Lock

Seconded: Bevon West

Tracy Fagbemi Proposed: Bevon West

Seconded: Peter Haylock

These nominations were approved by all attendees and the newly elected Church Wardens will assume their responsibilities following commissioning by the Vicar at the first available opportunity.

Alison agreed for Tracy and Nick to be nominated as Church Warden and thanked them for being willing to stand as Church Wardens.

Alison declared closed the election of the Church Wardens

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)  
HELD VIA BLUE JEANS AND IN CHURCH  
SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021**

Covid restrictions did not allow a public meeting to take place outside of a service of worship. This meeting was therefore held during the notices of the Sunday Eucharist. The report was circulated in advance with the instruction that questions and nominations must be submitted in advance of the meeting.

**Attendees:** 50 attendees (All Electoral Register members)

1. Apologies for absence: Gloria Douglas-Morris, Randall family.

**2. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on the 15 November 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate report of the meeting.

Acceptance of the minutes:

Proposed by Peter Haylock

Seconded by Molly Gopee

**3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

No matters were raised.

**4. Consideration of the Electoral Roll Report**

The Electoral Roll had been revised for the meeting. There were 167 members of whom 95 live in the parish and 72 are non-resident.

We remembered with thanks those who had died since the Electoral Roll was updated in 2020 as noted in the report.

The members accepted the Electoral Roll Report as read.

Alison thanked Anita Christ for her work in compiling the Electoral Roll. Anita agreed to continue as Electoral Officer for another year.

**5. Consideration of the Annual Report on the Proceedings of the Council**

There were no questions asked. The report was accepted as read.

Alison thanked the PCC Secretary, PCC members and everyone involved in the running of the church, and thanks to the members who will be retiring this year.

Judy Morris was thanked for her work as Safeguarding Officer and all the other responsibilities that she has taken on board during the Covid pandemic.

Also thanked were Alistair for the IT system, those responsible for clearing the garden and the cleaning of the church, all of which helped to keep our costs down.

Thanks to all who were responsible for delivering the Harvest gifts, Alistair and Anil for delivering church leaflets. Thanks to Bevon, Judy, Eddie and Leonora for their service.

Bevon and Jenny were thanked for their work in the hall. It is clear that they always go beyond the call of duty in their work.

**6. Consideration of the Annual Report on the Finance Affairs of the Parish and of the Annual Independent Examined Accounts for the year ended 31.12.2020**

The accounts were duly accepted by the meeting with no questions raised.

Glen Dawson was thanked for producing the accounts for 2020 and sending them to the Diocese concluding her work as treasurer over the last 4 years, for which she was further thanked. Dawn Blair was thanked for taking on the role of treasurer and for completing the transfer of our accounts to Unity Trust Bank.

Judy Morris was thanked for examining the accounts

Thanks to Peter Haylock for his difficult work in endeavouring to set up the online banking.

The regular payments are still being made, but in order to cover our outgoings we need to increase and continue our regular giving. Thanks also to the Finance Team.

Thanks to Sylvia James for banking the money, Roy Gopee who diligently signed cheques and Judith Kitchingman the stewardship recorder.

**7. Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of St Oswald's Church 2020**

The report was accepted by the meeting as read with no additional questions. The building and fabric group: Nick Lock, Chris Avery and Tracy Fagbemi were thanked for their work for checking on the regular maintenance and project work. Also the cleaning teams, the garden volunteers and those who decorate the church on special occasions.

**8. Consideration of the Report from the Deanery Synod**

The report was accepted as read.

**9. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives**

There were no elections this year so the following will continue to serve as Lay Members of the Deanery Synod:

Judy Butcher     Maudlyn Riviere

Tracy Fagbemi   Yvonne Nwanokwu

**10. Election of PCC Members**

The only nominations received were duly elected as PCC members for the coming term of three years.

Judith Kitchingman

Chris Avery

Sonia Rumbelow

Villia Benn

Alison and the congregation offered their congratulations to the new members.

**11. Appointment of Sides-people**

Sides-persons are no longer elected at the annual meeting but it was noted that the existing sides-people will be appointed at a PCC in meeting in due course.

**12. Appointment of Independent Examiner for the accounts**

Judy Morris agreed to continue as Independent Examiner of the accounts.

**13. Vicar's Report and overview of ministry in the parish**

All those named in the report, and those un-named, whose work is mentioned, were thanked for all that they had done throughout the year.

Thanks to the Back to Church Team for managing the risk assessment process for keeping the church safe.

Thanks to all who have been supporting worship.

Thanks to the SPAs - Glen, Bevon and Anita for keeping in touch with people. Vee Benn the co-ordinator of the children's church, and those who beautify the church.

Thanks to Sylvia James and her team who have been very proactive in keeping the POP-In-Club activity alive. Thanks also to Phoebe Hope for her work with Women's Fellowship.

Thank you to everyone for keeping in touch and maintaining your giving and for attending church meetings.

### **13. Any other business**

There was no other business to discuss

Alison declared the meeting closed.

14. The meeting ended with a closing prayer and the grace.

Alison declared closed the election of the Church Wardens

## **Introduction**

It has been yet another odd year in the life of St Oswald's and yet, by God's grace, we keep going and continue to thrive. Our service attendance numbers in person fall only slightly short of what they were pre-Covid and we always have a small group joining from home. There are a number of new people joining us almost week by week, some have stayed with us and although others may ultimately decide that St Oswald's is not the worshipping community for them, they are always struck by the welcome they receive. From this I recognise with joy that through these difficult times people are being inspired to seek out and join a church either for the first time, or for the first time in some months or years.

We have been able to run many of our usual events and have been inspired to do new things. Personal highlights are the Music Festival which brought enjoyment to church members and the wider community, the Sunday Lunches and the Young Voices Matter event which, although I missed it because of my sabbatical, I know was a great occasion in the life of our church. However, much of what goes on in the life of the church is very ordinary and there are many people to whom we can be grateful for their commitment.

I am delighted that this year's annual meetings can be held in person and that there will be some opportunity for discussion and thanksgiving together and a chance to thank the many people who contribute to the life of the church.

Please do read this report and be grateful for all that has been done by our church over the last year and I hope that you may be inspired to take part in our ongoing ministry to our parish, the wider world and to one another.

With love and prayers

Alison

## **Report of the proceeding of the Parochial Church Council 2021-2022**

### Meetings and membership

The PCC met 11 times from 19 May 2021 to 4 April 2022 via Blue Jeans with one of these meetings being held face-to-face.

The Standing Committee met between PCC meetings and when any matters that need to be dealt with and their recommendations are put to the PCC. The Standing Committee consists of the Vicar, church wardens, Treasurer and the PCC Secretary. Sub-groups have met to discuss specific issues for example finance, church fabric matters and mission, and then report their outcome of the meetings and proposal to the PCC. The Return to church met and carried out risk assessments.

The PCC meetings have been chaired by Rev'd Alison Brunt and the meetings were well attended. The main topics discussed were Finance and Safeguarding and the Covid19 pandemic as a number of mission projects that are outlined below.

The following officers were appointed at the first meeting on 19 May 2021:

Joint chair: Nick Lock, Tracy Fagbemi

Secretary: Maudlyn Riviere

Treasurer: Dawn Blair

Treasury Team: Sylvia James, Judith Kitchingham

Standing Committee: Vicar, Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary

Independent Examiner: Judy Morris

Deputy Warden: Sonia Rumbelow

Tracy was admitted to office as warden. Following the election Anil Den sadly stepped down as Deputy Warden.

During the first PCC meeting on 19 May 2021 Louise Gu was co-opted a member.

### Key activities

National Day of Reflection: We marked the second anniversary with prayer focus on the prayer tree. Several people from the neighbourhood came and joined in the time of silence.

Mission Report: In July 2021 we applied for and received a Diocesan Mission Grant of £4,000 to support a musical activity during the summer.

Harvest Festival. This was held in church. Donation for harvest gifts were delivered to homeless charities and members of the community.

### Black History Month 2022

As well as our 'Young Voices Matter' event, October 2021 also saw the launch of our 'Exploring why Black lives matter' publication, collating the writings of members of St Oswald's on the legacy of slavery and racial injustice. A member of the congregation gave a talk on a similar theme during a Sunday service, and the music of a number of Black composers was introduced, sung or played at services throughout the month.

### Music Festival and mission project

We were pleased to be offered a Croydon Area Mission grant for the purpose of outreach through musical activity, beginning with a music festival during the week of our patronal celebrations. Three events were held. First a free outdoor concert by a Steel pan orchestra which attracted many people from the community, including the Mayor, local councillors and the Archdeacon for a very enjoyable evening.

In contrast we had a concert of Baroque Lute music in church – introducing many of us to this unusual instrument. The festival ended with a grand St Oswald's patronal festival concert featuring the St Oswald's choir, Streatham voices, Beaufort String Quartet and Soloist James Greer.

In October the Japanese Pianist Kana Firomoto, who performed a wonderful piano Recital. She played some lovely classical music by Chopin, Elgar, Vaughan-Williams. More recently, we had a wonderful organ recital by Marilyn Harper, showing off the newly refurbished organ to its full extent. These events have been supported by the 'seed' funding of the Mission Grant and it is intended to continue to offer musical events on a regular basis. Where events are paid for by tickets – surplus revenue is used to fund further musical activity.

### ABRSM music exams

We have made the church available for the ABRSM to host some of their music exams. This has the benefit of drawing candidates into the church building where they are welcomed warmly and also raises a small amount of revenue for the church.

### Sunday Lunch

We had our first Sunday Lunch in September and there were three later ones which were warmly welcomed. The aim is to hold these on the last Sunday each month although arrangements have changed from time to time to accommodate special events.

There is no charge for the events and everyone is invited, but donations are welcomed.

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at PCC meetings. But there were no significant issues reported during the year.

In accordance with the House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church' safeguarding policy statement, the PCC has adhered to the church's safeguarding policy.

The PCC has had a high regard for Covid-safety and has regularly reviewed and updated its position on expectations and support for congregation members during services that are in line with Church of England guidance

## **Electoral Roll Report**

The total membership roll for 2022 for St Oswald's Norbury Parish is 158 as at 27 April 2022. Of this total 88 live within the parish and 70 are non-resident (NR) and reside outside the Parish.

13 people were removed from the roll. These included 4 people who have died, one who has been ordained 7 who have moved away and one who has chosen to worship at a church closer to their home.

We are pleased to welcome 4 new members

### **Electoral Roll figures from previous years:**

2022	158
2021	167
2020	163
2019 (full revision)	163

The electoral roll officer is Anita Christ.

## **St Oswald's Finance Report 2021**

This is my first year in the role of Treasurer. It has been a new experience for me. On a monthly basis, I attended regular budget meetings to review the status of the accounts.

At the beginning of the year, it was agreed by PCC to change our bank account. In February 2021, the NatWest Bank account was closed, and funds transferred to Unity Trust Bank Plc. We set up two online bank accounts specifically for the Church and Hall to encourage members and suppliers to make payments directly by Direct Debit or BACS transfers and to allow us to do the same. Upon request we still do make payments using cheques.

### Major expenditure this year

In March we purchased a second hand grand piano for the church. Later in the year we had major organ repairs. We plan to take some capital out of the CCLA investment account to offset the cost of this purchase and the maintenance repair as in our policy for capital work.

From May this was the first positive balance for the year, where giving appeared to increase.

In July we applied for a Mission Grant of £4,000 to support an outreach for the local community through music with a Music Festival which took place in August 2021. These were not intended as fundraising activities but money raised through ticket and refreshments sales is kept within the fund to support future events of a musical nature. Events included Steel Pan concert, Piano and lute Recitals and a festival concert which linked St Oswald's Choir with a local community choir these were well supported and enjoyed by all who attended.

### Overall position

With various contributing factors it was clear we were not breaking even. Unfortunately, even with fundraising, increased giving and hall income we were unlikely to close the gap. A proposal was made to the PCC and it was agreed to reduce the Parish Support Fund contribution for 2022 from £50,000 to £45,000. This was agreed in October, and although the explanation was accepted, Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance looks forward to receiving an increased pledge next year.

The impact of the pandemic has seen that expenditure exceeded income. Having said that, there was an increase in Planned Giving and Collections from the previous year. We are hopeful that we would be in a stronger financial position for 2022.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Finance team for all your support.

## **Report on the fabrics, goods and ornaments of St Oswald's Church 2022**

The past year been spent on catching up fabric issues delayed due to Covid and restoring the organ to full working order as well as the usual program of maintenance for the Church and Hall.

The organ underwent its biggest maintenance and restoration since it was installed, the connection between the keyboards and organ loft is now an entirely digital system and the high pressure bellows were restored as they had worn out. This work necessitated a new electrical supply to the organ loft which has been installed. This was at a cost of £13,000 which, although a lot of money will make the organ playable for many years. A second hand Bechstein grand piano was purchased during the spring and we accepted the gift of a better piano for the vestry, relocating the old church piano to the hall and disposing of the vestry piano in exchange for a donation towards the removal costs. The pianos have been tuned this year and new lights donated to illuminate the main piano.

The light outside the side entrance has been repaired and will be automatic switching by the end of May: the fire extinguishers in both hall and Church have been serviced. A new monitored alarm system with video has been installed in the hall

During Storm Eunice two fence panels in the Hall garden were blown over and a tree down – the tree has been removed and the fence panels will be replaced by the end of May. It has been noticed that the property in Virginia Road, which has extensive building works going on, has allowed soil to build up next to our fence and is rotting the base – this needs addressing in the coming year

Choir vestry damp – the primary issue here is that over the years successive re tarmacking of the path have brought the level up to the damp course. The plan is to excavate this material and install a surface drain but finding a company to do this is very hard at present. The internal vestry will be refurbished in October and a new insulated floor installed along with redecoration and new lighting

The hall signage purchased before Covid will be installed in May and its position adjusted to be better lit.

The Hall kitchen and toilets particularly the ladies are in need of complete refurbishment and the PCC will address this in the coming year. A new commercial standard fast cycle dishwasher has been installed as part of this refurbishment.

The five year electrical testing and yearly PAT testing of the Church and Hall will be completed by early June. This would have been completed but the electrician's van was broken into whilst he was working in the Church.

The last Quinquennial review had no major issues but the stone removed for the heating has been replaced and the recommended high level works are being undertaken in June. The next Quinquennial is due next year

The Chancel lights are coming to the end of their working life and as they are halogen (now being phased out) the PCC has a quote for replacement which it will action in the coming year.

## **Worship and Pastoral Ministry Report**

Worship is at the heart of our life together. It is an essential part of our life that we are able to gather to worship God and that no-one should be put off coming to church through concern that they will not be safe. We have taken a consistently careful approach to ensure that all who wish to come to regular church services can be confident that they can do so without fear that they will find themselves in too close proximity to others. Preparing covid safe worship has been challenging and there have been many revisions of our service resources to make it all work – but it is good that we can now sing and receive the sacrament in an almost normal way at the Sung Eucharist and that there is provision for those who wish to worship in a more open and quiet space to be able to do so at the Sunday 8am and mid-week services.



Our Sung Eucharist has been well supported by the music offered by Ann Hubble and the choir which is going from strength to strength under Ann's direction . More choir members are always welcome – especially men! It is also good to have the support of members of the congregation who read and lead intercessions each week and also those who are more in the background, the serving and welcoming teams, those who decorate and clean the church in preparation for worship, those who produce notice sheets weekly and service booklets as required and, critically those who organise the rotas for all of these activities.

It is good to note that the size of our congregations gathering to worship in church is 80-90% of the attendances that we experienced before Covid struck and, according to the contact registers which we kept when we were obliged to do so, more than 150 people came to regular services – although not all at the same time.

We continue to offer worship by Blue Jeans, although inevitably, as the majority of people return to church the tailoring of worship for those based at home has become less practical.

One of the great joys has been the continued offering of online Morning Prayer and the short 5 minutes at 6pm prayer in the evening. This is an important ministry to and of the church and this parish. Whether you live in or out of the parish you are prayed for by the name of your residence at least once every month in our prayer cycle.

### Ministry

We have been blessed with a dedicated ministry team comprising of Rev'd Alistair Forster (Assistant Curate), Leonora Davies (Reader), and Glen Dawson, Anita Christ and Bevon West – all Southwark Pastoral Auxilliaries (SPAs). All have contributed in the leadership of worship and in pastoral ministry and provide good support to our congregation in church and at home. Home visiting has been limited, but has been made up for, as best we can, by support from the pastoral team on the phone and regular written communications by email, text and occasional letter. As well as these people who have an authorised or accredited ministry we are aware of the friendship and support offered by many other members of the congregation to those who are unable to come to church or who have particular needs.

We are sorry though that we have recently had to say goodbye to Alistair who has moved on to serve in a new benefice and to Glen who decided to step down from her role as a SPA after many years of excellent support to the church community. We are grateful to them both for the enormous amount of work that they have contributed to the life of our church.

## **Report from the Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod met three times in 2021-2022. Once by Zoom and twice in person. St Oswald's was pleased to host the first in person meeting in October. St Oswald's has always been represented at these meetings and our representatives have reported back to the PCC.

Areas of discussion have included:

- Living in Love and Faith – a Deanery approach;
- A film recording the events for Black History month 2020 in the Deanery
- Public Spirit
- The work with Croydon Citizens on building a Citizens Alliance and on developing affordable housing
- Shared experiences of church life during the Covid Pandemic

St Oswald's has had a particularly prominent role in the Public Spirit work with young people and with the Black History Month activity.

During the year both the Area Dean and Assistant Area Dean moved on to new parishes. Mother Joyce Forbes was commissioned as Area Dean on 27<sup>th</sup> January and at the same meeting Rev'd Alison Brunt was appointed as Assistant Area Dean.

In the Synod meetings the key topics such as Public Spirit and the Croydon Youth Forum were discussed over the year. It was reported at the Deanery Synod meeting in January 2021 that Bishop Christopher in his address to Diocesan Synod commended the new Southwark Anti Racism Charter and described the charter as a 'boarding pass' for a new journey.

## **The Parish Hall**

It has been good to see the hall come back to life as groups began to return during the autumn, with most of our previous regulars being glad to be back. There have also been a number of private bookings, although we aim to limit the number of these held to avoid disruption to our neighbours. The hall management group has met and it was agreed that a plan should be made to facilitate refurbishment works to the toilets and the kitchen.

## **Pop-in Club Report 2021-2022**

Because of the Covid19 pandemic the club was closed for six months from mid-March 2020 and reopened in September 2021. Understandably because of health reasons some members are still cautious about coming out.

The attendances, however, remained encouraging as on average we have a total of 18 each week. Sadly two members have passed away, but on the brighter side we have gained four new ones.

The numbers of activities have been slightly reduced for a while and some members are happy to use the opportunity to just sit and talk among themselves.

Our Christmas lunch was enjoyed by about 35 which included some families and friends, and the afternoon was rounded off by some carol singing.

## **Women's Fellowship Report**

The Women's Fellowship started meeting again in September when it was considered safe to do so. There are currently 15 members and we would always welcome more people to join us. We are currently meeting in the main hall which allows members to sit in a more socially distanced arrangement. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month and have enjoyed excellent speakers on a range of subjects, a church service before our AGM and our Christmas visit to Park Place (Toby Carvery) where the staff look after us very well.

## **Children's Church Report 2022**

Children's Church was able to resume regular in-person Sunday sessions in the hall in September 2021. The numbers attending have been lower than previously in part due to young people growing up and moving on. However, we have welcomed 'new recruits' and 4 – 6 young people attend most weeks, some alternating with being part of the choir in church.

The young people engage positively with the weekly Bible teaching and enjoy opportunities to express their understanding creatively. Committed support from parents really helps the young people to participate well, with at least 2 adults at each session.

This past year, the young people have contributed to All Age Worship in church with readings or performances, making decorations for Harvest, Advent, Christmas, and Palm Sunday, and reading personal tributes on Mothering Sunday. They put on a fantastic 'Young Voices Matter' event on 16 October 2021 for Black History Month, raising awareness of how young people across the world

have spearheaded positive change in their communities. St Oswald's welcomed an audience from churches across the Croydon area to the event, including young people, parents, clergy and supporters. We were especially pleased that Archdeacon Rosemarie Mallett and Councillor Alisa Flemming (Croydon Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning) were able to attend and make presentations. Our young people gave their thoughts on issues of racial justice, intergenerational communication, protecting the environment and homelessness. It was really pleasing to see their confidence to speak and perform to an audience, and the event was warmly received.

Some of our secondary-aged young people attended a meeting of Croydon Youth Forum in June 2021 to discuss 'The Climate Crisis', and Bishop Jonathan's Barbecue in September 2021 to discuss 'Living in Love and Faith'. They very much enjoyed opportunities to learn about the issues and connect with other young people from churches across Croydon.

Our secondary-aged young people have also continued to attend meetings of Public Spirit, the group set up for young people in Croydon North Deanery to learn how to combine Christian faith with social action to improve lives. The most recent event was a 'Listening Dinner' at St Stephen's Church on 19 March. At this event, our young people met others from several churches in the Deanery to talk to the adults present about their experiences and concerns on issues of youth safety. They suggested ways institutions such as the church, schools, the police, government and parents could improve the lives of young people. One of our young people, was nominated to speak on behalf of Public Spirit at the Croydon Citizens Mayoral Assembly on 21 April, ahead of the election of the new Croydon Mayor, and gave an excellent presentation.

It is pleasing to see the commitment of the young people to learning about their Christian faith and how to speak up in a positive way to change things for the better.

## **Flower Fund Report**

Floral decorations in the church continued as usual and we celebrated all of the significant occasions below and reflect how much was spent.

Harvest	£150.60
Christmas	£ 55.00
Mothering Sunday	£ 25.00
Easter	£145.07

We were able to distribute 9 harvest floral arrangements to those who were unwell and 12 Easter floral arrangements and 6 small bouquets to church volunteers which were joyfully received.

This year we distributed 85 Mothers' Day posies. We received £694.000 and spent £533.95.

We are grateful to all who have made donations including the flower arrangers on the rota who have on occasion, covered the cost of the flowers themselves.