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Items for >imprint< no. 104: **Mon. 30th May 2022**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbans.org.uk. *Peter Young (Ed.)*

Church Annual Meetings, 3rd April 2022

Meeting of Parishioners

The purpose of this meeting, which was open to church members on the Electoral Roll and anyone resident in our Parish on the register of local government electors, was to elect our Church Wardens. Jonathan Carter had signified his willingness to stand again, but Meriel Dixon had given notice of her wish to stand down. Chris Patrick had been nominated and was happy to stand, but with the request that the day-to-day responsibilities of Church Warden could be shared with his wife, Sarah. There being no objection to this arrangement and no other nominations, the appointments of **Jonathan Carter** and **Chris Patrick**, jointly with **Sarah Patrick**, as **Church Wardens** was confirmed and Meriel was warmly thanked for her service over the past several years.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

This meeting was open to those on the church electoral roll.

A. Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll Officer, David Boyce, reported that the Electoral Roll now stands at **124** members, **47** resident and **77** non-resident in the Parish. This was a net increase of 1 compared with the report at the last APCM (5 additions and 4 deletions).

B. Reports

The meeting received the following reports: **Church Wardens'**, **Vicar's on behalf of the PCC**, and **Deanery Synod**. The Treasurer, Paul Collis, presented the **Financial Report and Accounts** from the 2021 financial year. He noted that despite a predicted

£18k deficit, the accounts had ended up with a near-negligible deficit, due to careful stewardship, and reduced expenditure. In response to a question about whether hire rates will increase due to energy cost increases, it was confirmed that new hire rates had been agreed and some allowance for increased energy costs had been made, but this will need to be monitored and readjusted later in the year if necessary. Due to the early APCM this year and workload of the Independent Examiners preventing prioritisation of the examination of our church's financial report, it was only possible for the APCM to receive the report at this meeting and it will have to come back once audited for formal approval at an extraordinary church meeting. It was proposed that Griffin Stone and Moscrop be reappointed as Independent Examiners for the coming year and no objections were raised.

C. Elections

Deanery Synod – The current incumbent representatives, Meriel Dixon and Jane Sellars were willing to continue for a further year, but the vacancy for the third representative remains unfilled.

PCC – There were 5 vacancies, 2 arising from previous years with partial terms and 3 members coming to the end of their terms this year. There were 4 nominations: **Dawn Kennedy**, **Sarah Patrick** (for a second 3-year term), **Beverley Taylor-Doe** and **Paul Collis** (previously co-opted as Treasurer, filling one of the 2-year term vacancies), so one vacancy remains. No election was required.

D. Open Forum

in the service before the church meetings, Jeremy had introduced the updated Mission Action Plan (MAP) and gave the opportunity for feedback during the forum. Much of the forum therefore related to the MAP and its 3 priorities: Unity of Fellowship; Community Visibility; and Resourcing the Mission. For the sake of brevity, the following are not a full record of the points raised, however all comments were minuted for discussion at forthcoming PCC meetings.

Unity of Fellowship: - included a request for people to offer lifts to church for less mobile church members; a comment that the term was too broad and open to too great a range of interpretation; a comment that unity and community are not necessarily the same thing.

Community Visibility: - much of the discussion was about restarting Alpha, e.g. the difficulties in organising, and intensive resourcing required, but all the same a really valuable tool for mission at a local level; many comments that it should be restarted, even if it meant not doing the meals or perhaps requiring other creative (e.g. online?) approaches.

Other topics: included a repeated request (that was made last year) for *opportunities to discuss things* as a church, apart from at the APCM; the possibility of a *church fund* for donations to help church members in difficulty with cost of living increases (e.g. fuel bills), provision of *advice/help to make claims* and the suggestion to offer the church as a *'warm space'*; the need to *update notices* both within the church and outside and the need to fill the *vacancy for a Communications Officer*; our reliance on *volunteers with the right skills* for various tasks needed in our church; and the hope to re-institute a number of the more *social church events* that had to be abandoned during lock-down.

E. Conclusion

The meeting concluded with prayer and a blessing by the Vicar, Jeremy. Next year's annual meetings will be on **Sunday 23rd April 2023**.

DOES GOD REALLY CARE? – *Rev. Canon Dele Agbelusi*

You probably know someone who has one of those really sophisticated aquariums for tropical fish in their living rooms. It takes incredible energy and compassion to take care of those delicate fish. You have to feed them three times a day, change the water filters, monitor the water temperature, test the nitrate levels. You'd think the fish would be grateful. But every time your shadow appears above the tank the fish dive for cover. Out of ignorance they perceive their caretaker as a threat. Tragically, they see his acts of mercy as cruelty. No matter how hard he tries, he cannot convince them of his true intentions. He's too large for them, too different. To change their perception, to communicate his true intentions, to reveal his true character, would mean getting into the tank, not just caring for their "world" but actually being in it, becoming one of them. That is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. **If you want to know anything about God, Turn your gaze and thoughts to Jesus Christ. In Him, you see the compassion of God, you comprehend the holiness, justice, righteousness and mercy of God.**

You are able to see God in the picture of the gracious father, who ran towards his prodigal son to welcome him home– after the son had betrayed the family and wasted the wealth given to him by his father. Let me remind you of that story in Luke 15, how God is portrayed as one who allows us to make our own choices: In this story a son comes to his father and says, "Dad, go ahead and give me my portion of the inheritance." Or, in less polite terms, "Dad, I can't wait until you are dead to get my share of the inheritance. Give it to me now!" If my son or daughter asked such a thing of me, I would say, "Forget it. In fact, if that is your attitude, you just might not be included in my will at all." But amazingly, the father in the story consents and gives his son his inheritance.

The son, immediately after getting it, leaves home and begins to live it up. He frequents bars. He spends nights with prostitutes and in no time exhausted all that he had.

When he ran out of money, there began to be a severe famine in the land, and the boy, now broke and away from home, began to suffer hunger and want. He found a job feeding pigs, but it didn't pay well enough even to keep him well fed, and there was no one in that city who cared whether he lived or died.

Finally, the son came to his senses and said, "Here I am working in a pig sty and not making even enough to eat on. Back home even the servants do better than this." And so he decided, "I'll go back home. I know Dad won't take me back as a son, but maybe he will hire me as a servant and at least I will be cared for." How wrong!

He began his journey home with a well-prepared speech to ask his dad for pardon and a job as a paid servant. But when he got within eyeshot of the house, his father, who had been looking for him, saw him a long way off, and went running to him. The son saw his dad coming and prepared his speech, but before he could say what he had intended to say, the father had embraced him (in his dirty clothes) and kissed him.

Can you imagine the father running towards his son? **Privileged people in that clime didn't run, but the father in the story did the unthinkable, the same way God in Christ did the unthinkable by laying down his life for people who disown him, on the cross.** He gave him the best robe which was likely to be his own robe. God in Christ gave us the robe of righteousness which makes us acceptable as family. He killed the fattened calf for him, the type that is reserved for royal guests or great sacrifices, to celebrate the reconciliation to the father.

Would you believe that is the way God will receive you if you will come home to Him? He won't scold you. He won't hold you at arm's length. He won't hold a grudge against you. He'll just love you, forgive you, and accept you.

I think a lot of people stay away from God because they fear that He would reject them. But Jesus said, "the one who comes to Me I will never cast out" (John 6:37). If you will come to God, He won't turn you away. He will love you and accept you.

Perhaps you are that prodigal son who needs to come "home" to the waiting father, if your relationship with God is not as warm and close as it ought to be. On the other hand, you may think God forgot about you in the past and you have no incentive to ask for his love again. **Do not be like the ornamental fish, God has your best interest at heart. A little talk with Jesus might just be what you need. God really does care for you.**

Sermons at Christ Church – spring/summer 2022

The sermon series on **Elijah's Growth Journey** has now completed. If you need to listen to any of them again, they are still available on Christ Church's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyw1PLEnH1df2GzW3pZujyw>) as part of complete recorded videoed services, or (because you'd need to know which YouTube recording date to look for) perhaps more conveniently in audio-only format, on our church website (<https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/sermons> – click the 'More' button at the bottom of the main sermon page, or go to past sermon series directly at <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/past-sermons>).

A new series has now started on the **first letter of John**. Jeremy introduced the series on **24th April**, with a sermon entitled '**Jesus the Word**' (**1 John 1:1-4**), which is now on the website. The programme for the rest of the series is as follows:

1 st May	The cosmic battle	1 John 1:5 – 2:2
8 th May	An old commandment	1 John 2:3-11
15 th May	Words for men?	1 John 2:12-14
22 nd May	Not love the world	1 John 2:15-17
29 th May	Keep from straying	1 John 2:18-27
5 th June	Us and sin	1 John 2:28 – 3:10

12 th June	More about love (<i>OMF speaker</i>)	1 John 3:11-24
19 th June	Jesus in the flesh	1 John 4:1-6
26 th June	The love of God	1 John 4:7-21
3 rd July	Faith in Jesus	1 John 5:1-12
10 th July	Repeat after me	1 John 5:13-21

Caring for Creation



Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4)

C4 met again on 25th April and Jeremy joined the discussions, which included:

Plans to plant an oak tree in late September (coinciding with the Climate Coalition's Great Big Green Week, 18th-26th Sept) to commemorate the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee** and also its proposed siting (to be agreed by BAGAG and PCC) as well as its size.

Arrangements and promotion for our **SustFest22** event on **22nd May** (see flyer on p.7).

Eco Church survey initial results, looking at practical ways to promote improvements in **lifestyle** for our church members, including things we can do together around creation care, e.g. lift shares, walking/cycling to church where possible, clothes (and other) swaps.

The **Action Plan** mentioned in commitment no.2 of the Christ Church Climate/Environmental Declaration (see *>imprint<* [no.102](#), p.8 and the [Caring for Creation](#) page on our website), and the intent to submit a report outlining plans for improvement to PCC by the stated date.

Jane led the item on **Beliefs** and shared a video in which **Ruth Bushyager, Bishop of Horsham**, delivered a talk on the subject of, 'Why should we, as Christians, care for the environment?' She said that, apart from self preservation, all other reasons for protecting the environment come down to faith, which gives an account of the beauty of creation and a basis for morality. She broke this down into six reasons:

1. Because scripture (e.g. Genesis early chapters and Psalm 24:1) instructs us that we are stewards of the earth. The earth doesn't belong to us and we will give an account of our stewardship to the creator one day.
2. Creation reveals the creator. The earth doesn't simply provide what we need, it is also stunning in its majesty, beauty and wonder. We were created for God's glory and must protect what glorifies Him.
3. We have failed through pride, greed and selfishness and the world is broken as a result. There is brokenness between 1. people and God, 2. between people and people and 3. between people and the earth. But God came to rescue in Christ, and he doesn't only rescue people. He fixes the other two too in a holistic redemption, reconciling all

things to Himself and making them new.

4. Obedience to Jesus's commands. We are told to love our neighbour but who is our neighbour? It's more than the person like me or who lives next door to me. It is those suffering from climate change already, who are impacted by our actions. Love is sacrifice. We need to sacrifice commodity and convenience in order to heal the earth that we share. After all, it is our only home.

5. God is for justice. The comfortable lifestyle we enjoy is responsible for climate change. Those living in parts of the world that haven't caused it are suffering the most and are also most unable to solve it. God hates injustice and His heart is always on the side of the vulnerable.

6. Mission and Witness. This is a real opportunity to witness to non believers that we have hope in Christ as we work together to look after our world. Care for creation within Christianity is not negotiable. It is our faith.

This talk came from the webinar launching an initiative called Creation Care, which is a tool for households to assess their own climate impact. <https://creationcare.org.uk/>

Dates for future C4 meetings will revert to the third Monday of the month at 8pm, so the next is scheduled for **16th May**. Any church member is welcome to attend. The meetings are usually now held on Zoom and details will be supplied in advance via the Christ Church e-news.

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And do check out the [Caring for Creation](https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/caring-for-creation) page on the Christ Church website: either by going directly to <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/caring-for-creation>, or from the Home page, clicking the 'WHAT'S ON' drop-down menu and selecting 'Caring for Creation'. It contains links to the Sustainable St Albans website and the SustFest22 programme of events, our Climate and Environmental Emergency Recognition declaration, C4 activities, also Eco Church, Creation Care, Climate Stewards, Green Christian websites and others.

### ***A Rocha Field Notes Podcasts and Blog***

No further **Field Notes podcasts** have been posted since the last issue of *>imprint<*:

[Episode 20](https://www.arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/) is still the latest podcast at the time of compilation of this issue of *>imprint<*, but keep visiting <https://www.arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/>, or from wherever you get your podcasts, to get any updates or podcasts you haven't yet managed to listen to.

**A Rocha International blogs:** New blog anticipated around the beginning of May? (no new blogs have been posted since 1<sup>st</sup> March), but go to <https://blog.arocha.org/en/> to get any updates.

Christ Church



Caring for Creation



# 'Planting for God's Birds & Beasts'

*A fun, free, afternoon of activities for everyone!*

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2 – 4pm  
Christ Church, High Oaks, St Albans

*Come and spend the afternoon planting a wildlife border in the church grounds providing a source of food for birds, bees, insects, and bats. Make a bird feeder to take home; quizzes on birds & beasts; meet a mobile beehive; look at life through a microscope; enjoy tea and cake; take some seeds and compost home for your garden...*

[www.ccstalbans.org.uk/caring-for-creation](http://www.ccstalbans.org.uk/caring-for-creation)

**sustainability  
festival2022**



**Sun 15 - Tues 31 May**



**sustfest.org**

