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Items for *>imprint<* no. 105: **Mon. 27th June 2022**, please, by email at editor@ccstalbens.org.uk.

Peter Young (Ed.)

PCC meeting 9th May 2022

This was the first meeting of the 2022-23 PCC and new and returning PCC members were welcomed.

Under matters arising from previous meetings it was confirmed that the 2021 Accounts report received at the APCM had now been audited and would come back to the church for final approval at a short extraordinary church meeting. It was agreed that this will be done after the service on 19th June.

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4) will report to the PCC on its activities to date at the June PCC meeting. The siting for the sessile oak tree to be planted to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee had been agreed [*now planted, on 22nd May, see p.5*].

There was some discussion on communion administration under existing arrangements and how to avoid persons getting overlooked in receiving communion. The discussion also covered optimal ways to start re-introduction of people coming forward to receive, rather than receiving from their seats, acknowledging the reticence of several members of the congregation preferring to continue to socially distance.

PCC administrative documentation

Several required documents had been distributed to each PCC member as part of their 'PCC Pack', including declarations on Trustee eligibility and HMRC fitness requiring signature, proposed PCC meeting dates and Safeguarding training/responsibilities.

Appointment of Officers

The following appointments were made (*non*-PCC appointees marked *):

Lay-vice chair: Meriel Dixon

Secretary: Debbie Dorman* [Minutes secretary: Peter Young*]

Treasurer: Paul Collis; [Accountant: position still vacant]

Standing Committee: Vicar, Wardens (Jonathan Carter, Chris & Sarah Patrick), Sue Medlycott and Jackie Kenealy.

The following appointments were also confirmed:

Electoral Roll Officer: David Boyce*

Banking Officers: Mary Cottrell* and Doreen Collins*

Global Mission Action Group (GMAG): Jackie Kenealy, Iyabo Agbelusi*, Paul Bailey* and Peter Cooper*

Buildings and Grounds Action Group (BAGAG): Jonathan Carter, Meriel Dixon, Gillian Donald*, Chris Patrick, Jane Sellars

Staffing Committee: Vicar, Jonathan Carter & John Sear*

Assistant Church Wardens: Paul Bailey*, Hilary Boyce*, Mary Cottrell*, Meriel Dixon, Oliver Donald, Jim* & Jackie Kenealy, Eleanor Truscott*.

Sidesmen and Greeters (Stewards): 31 names in all were confirmed and approved, overseen by the Head Sidesman, Paul Bailey*.

Safeguarding Officer: Kate Kent*. Assistant Safeguarding Recruiter: Dawn Kennedy

Topics raised in the APCM forum

Opportunities for open church discussions – agreed a good idea; probably best to have them after a service, followed by lunch together; first convenient opportunity after approval of 2021 accounts on 19th June?

Mission Action Plan and Alpha – in view of the strength of opinion on the value of Alpha a few of the supporters will be approached to talk this through with Standing Committee, taking into account resourcing of sessions, and flexibility of approach and format. Comments on the MAP to be discussed by PCC on an ongoing basis.

Energy Poverty – this is a potentially complex issue, requiring further investigation and it was proposed that a possible strategy be discussed at a PCC meeting very soon.

Notice Boards and Communications – updating of internal written notices is already underway; it was agreed to update the incorrect information on the external noticeboard, minimal cost quotations having been obtained. The key post of Communications Co-ordinator is still vacant and will be brought for further PCC discussion.

ARE WE LIKE GRASSHOPPERS? - *Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi*

The Christian life is one of peaks and valleys and in order to experience the peaks of life, we oftentimes must learn to go through life's valleys and possibly "shadows of death" (e.g., tight finances, broken relationships, disappointments, ill health, deferred dreams etc.). Be rest assured, Jesus the good Shepherd is taking you to the high country, where the sun is warm, and the grass is lush. Every valley is a pathway to something better. As Psalm 84:11 says, "No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly." Or as Paul put it, "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good..." (Romans 8:28). The valley may not be pleasant, but the Shepherd is. He knows the way.

Come with me to the good Book, Numbers chapters 13-14. Moses had sent some men, leaders of the tribes, to spy out the land of Canaan saying to them "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land."

After 40 days of reconnaissance, they came back to the Israelites who were camped in the desert. "Sure enough," they said, "the land flows with milk and honey, **but we cannot capture it**. The nations who dwell there are strong, their cities are fortified and there are giants among them." Cries of despair rang out from the camp. "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this desert," wailed the panic-stricken people. "Why does the Lord bring us to this land to fall by the sword; our wives and children will be as spoils. The people even suggested appointing a new leader, one who would take them back to the familiarity of Egyptian bondage!

God had wanted to use those leaders to encourage the people to take possession of the promised land. After all, it was the Lord through miracles and heavenly might who had been fighting their battles. The land did have great potential as confirmed by the huge cluster of grapes that they brought back, so huge it took two men to carry it on a pole between them. They confirmed that the land was rich and fertile; and observed (though with great exaggeration) that the people who lived there were like giants and they looked like grasshoppers in comparison! Moreover, the cities were fortified. Wait a second. They forgot their mission. Their mission was to report on the possibilities, the potential – not how impossible it would be for them to surmount the problems that faced them because of the inhabitants. Does this sound familiar?

Who told them to assess the capability of the God who brought them thus far and had assured them that the land would be theirs? Grasshoppers? God's chosen people see themselves as grasshoppers.

Did you notice the "but" in the report of ten of the spies? **That simple conjunction is a bridge to fear. The word "but" has a nullifying action to faith.** "Oh, I believe God can do it, but..." Do you see the damper, the cold water that the word "BUT" throws on the fire of faith and optimism? I would have to say that a person who says "but" a lot might be near sighted. We see the obstacles up close but don't always look at the far away picture or goal.

I suspect Caleb and Joshua saw more potential than reality, because to a person of faith, reality is just potential plus time plus effort plus God. Caleb and Joshua also saw the giants in the land and the fortified cities. However, with God on their side, no giant can run them over, even if they are perceived as "grasshoppers". The other ten spies' report started out great but then they lost their focus.

Moses and Aaron fell flat on their faces, and Joshua and Caleb tore their clothing in mourning. But they did not remain silent. Joshua and Caleb, the two brave scouts gave a minority report: "The land we passed through to scout is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord desires us, He will bring us to this land and give it to us. But don't rebel against the Lord... the Lord is with us; do not fear them."

The people were not convinced and went so far as to threaten to stone Caleb and Joshua. Just then, God's presence appeared in the Tabernacle. God said, "Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your

fathers, except Caleb and Joshua because they have followed the LORD fully. Did you know that the pessimism of the ten men and their lack of faith was so devastating that all the adults above the age of 20 except Joshua and Caleb, died in the desert? That is what led to the 40 years of wandering in the desert.

Faith focuses on the possibilities, the potential, not the problems and it relies on God’s abilities, not ours. Faith is not content with the path of least resistance and always asks God for direction. **Will you trust Jesus to lead you through your valley to the plains and high mountains? He is able because He is the LORD.**

Michael Browne update



After Michael Browne’s visit and upon his return to Argentina he sent this note that I thought you might all like to see:

“I did enjoy visiting you at Christ Church: I enjoyed the service and felt very much in family. The journey home was fine, just very long, with a 5 hour wait in São Paulo (which I enjoyed, as it gave me a chance to practice my Portuguese) and then 7 hours in Buenos Aires, due to the flight I had booked originally being cancelled.”

He has asked for prayers, some of which will be in the Prayer Focus:

“(1) for Kevin settling in still in Felixstowe, and hoping to get a job as chef’s assistant in a seaside restaurant;

“(2) for a quick sale of our house here, where prices have dropped recently due to so many properties coming onto the market;

“(3) for the ongoing checking of the Toba Bible – we have our next team meeting in Córdoba from Sunday for 2 weeks.

“Many thanks! God bless! Michael”

Sermons at Christ Church

We are about halfway through the latest sermon series on the first letter of John. All the sermons preached so far, since 24th April, can be found on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyw1PLEnH1df2GzW3pZujyw>, within the complete services, or you can listen to audio versions of the sermons together with readings, extracted from the services, on the Christ Church website: go to <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/sermons> (or from the Home Page select **Media**, then **Sermons** in the drop-down menu). Sermons still to come:

June 5 th	1 John 2:28-3:10	<i>Us and sin</i>
June 12 th	1 John 3:11-24	<i>More about love</i>
June 19 th	1 John 4:1-6	<i>Jesus in the flesh</i>
June 26 th	1 John 4:7-21	<i>The love of God</i>
July 3 rd	1 John 5:1-12	<i>Faith in Jesus</i>
July 10 th	1 John 5:13-21	<i>Repeat after me</i>

Caring for Creation

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4)



C4 last met on 16th May and much of the agenda was around final preparations for Christ Church's event which was held on the afternoon of 22nd May, for the 2022 St. Albans Sustainability Festival (SustFest'22, from 15th– 31st May) – see below for more on the event itself.

The thoughts shared in the **Beliefs** agenda item were extracted from a report and study guide from a joint working group on climate change and theology convened by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, entitled 'Hope in God's Future: Christian Discipleship in the Context of Climate Change'. The reflection (and the following annotated highlights) concentrated on just four sections of one chapter of the report, headed 'Encountering the Word of God':

Christian hope in the context of climate change – there *are* grounds for hope because we have a *creator* God, who is bringing reconciliation to a world gone astray and redeeming all things in Christ and through the Spirit. However this does not absolve *us* from care and/or responsibility. (Genesis 3,4,6; Romans 6:1-2 and Ch. 8; Hebrews 6:18; 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 21:1-8)

The human vocation to love and do justice – loving our neighbour (Luke 10:25-37); feeding the hungry, welcoming strangers, etc. (Matthew 25:31-46); Jesus's Nazareth manifesto (Luke 4:18-19) and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12/Luke 6:20-26); God's warnings through creation (Jeremiah 4:24-26) to call us back to acts of love and justice.

Our non-human neighbours – God declares *all* creation good (Genesis 1); the post-flood covenant (Genesis 9:9-10) is for all creatures; the Sabbath (day or year) is not restricted to humans (Leviticus 25:5-7); God cares for all his creatures (Matthew 6:25-34); the union and interdependence of all things in Christ (Colossians 1:15-20, Ephesians 1:9-10).

God's judgement – on those who do not co-operate with his purposes (Matthew 25:31-46); the first and the last in God's kingdom – our world-view turned upside-down (Mark 10:31); our actions can rebound on ourselves as well as others (Luke 16:19-31).

sustainability
festival2022



Lots of activities took place in perfect weather at our SustFest22 event, '**Planting for God's Birds and Beasts**' on 22nd May. There was hedge planting (of birds/bees/bugs-friendly shrubs); a member of the local bee keeper association communicated the importance of bees and brought her 'portable hive'; visitors got involved in making bird feeders and creation-care bookmarks and other crafts; 'mini-critters' were investigated under the microscope; there were quizzes on insects and birdsongs; information on our lifestyle choices and challenges on what changes we can make; information/display of electric cars; and the event culminated in the planting and dedication of the sessile oak in the grounds to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.



Tea/coffee and cake was also on offer and visitors could take packets of seeds, or seedlings away with them. Although we weren't inundated with visitors, those who came seemed to enjoy themselves and we did greet a number of non-Christ Church visitors and a few (apart from the participants!), from Christ Church. If you missed out on this occasion we look forward to seeing **you** at our next year's event!!!

A Rocha Field Notes Podcasts and Blog

Two further **Field Notes podcasts** have been posted since the last issue of *>imprint<*:

Episode 21, posted on 4th May, introduces **Ken Yeong**, who works as Sustainability Innovation Manager at Earthworm Foundation, but previously worked in the corporate sector for Samsung, Logitech and Olympus, followed by a period at WWF-Malaysia. He is being interviewed by Peter Harris and Bryony Loveless on the topic 'Being an environmentally friendly consumer in a complex world' and about moving from the private sector to the environmental sector. Ken has also co-authored a chapter of "God's Gardeners: Creation Care Stories from Singapore and Malaysia".

In *Episode 22*, posted on 24th May, **Embert Messelink**, formerly National Director of A Rocha Netherlands for 18 years, but who has since stepped down to become a pastor, is interviewed by Peter Harris and guest host Rachel Mander on the topic 'Engaging head, hands and heart in the conservation effort'. He talks about the struggles and successes of his years as National Director and his hope for the future.

Listen to the podcasts at <https://www.arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/>, or from wherever you get your podcasts.

A Rocha International blogs: Two blogs have been posted since the last issue of *>imprint<*. The first was posted on 4th May. The author on this occasion is **Rodel Lasco** [*he was interviewed in the Field Notes Podcast, Episode 20 – see >imprint< no.102*], in a blog entitled 'Seek first the kingdom of God'. He lives in the Philippines, recently the target of tropical storm Megi, which claimed 42 lives and caused 17,000 to flee, and where Rodel acknowledges that 'climate risks and climate hazards are an everyday part of daily life'

The most recent blog was posted on 31st May, written by **Liz Marsh**, a PhD student at Edinburgh, studying the theology of hope in the context of ecological crisis. Her blog is entitled 'Is being a despairing Christian an oxymoron? Some lessons from Elijah'.

[If, like me, you need a reminder of what an oxymoron is, it can be defined as a figure of speech that combines contradictory words with opposing meanings – Ed.]

To read the latest blogs or to catch up on ones you might have missed, go to: <https://blog.arocha.org/en/>.

Hope in Action

The May newsletter has now been published and is on the Hope in Action website:

<https://www.hopeinaction.uk/regional>

Did you know that you can twin your bin? Find out about this, and more (including notice of a lunchtime talk by Kath Clough at Marlborough Road Methodist Church on 9th June, about how the climate crisis might unfold and how we can prepare; and Churches Count on Nature Week, 4th–12th June) by going to the Hope in Action newsletter archive to read this latest issue:

<https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87&id=2c2e8f5c7a>

Solar Panels

Here are the figures up to the end of April for the amount of electricity generated from the solar panels on our roof, and the amount we have exported to the grid and get credit for via the feed-in tariff. The amount of power we have generated that we have actually used ourselves is found by deducting exported from generated amounts, e.g. for April 2022 it would be 984 minus 444 =540KWh. However, remember that we still do *use* electricity from the grid (from our renewable energy supplier) as we cannot generate electricity all the time and currently have no means, e.g. batteries, of storing anything we are not using. The last update we gave in *>imprint<* no.100 provided figures up to December 2021.

Christ Church Solar Generation and Export

■ Generation: Kwh per month ■ Export: Kwh per month

