**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 22/1/24

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

**Apologies** : All present.

**Minutes 2/10/23 & 19/11/23** were agreed as accurate with adjustment to the dates and those present.

**Matters Arising**

Finances, School Cakes, Christmas Gifts – all covered below

Sue Knight needs to be added to the Pastoral Care list.

**Chair’s correspondence & notes**

**Steeple** –AP met with the architect and builders on Thursday 18th. The builders are still trying to source shingles – otherwise they are ready to go possibly in March. Financially we have £9,500 in the account (this includes a generous donation in memory of Ed), £1500 VAT refund expected, £19000 in pledges and other grants awaiting assessment which we hope will cover the loan of £45000. This still leaves us with around £5000 to find.

**Sycamore Tree** Christian Turndrup plans to remove the tree on March 20th. Rob Powell has agreed access via the Priory gardens. Logs will be left for parishioners to take.

**Other Quinquennial** Simon Elbrow’s team has finished work on the initial phase of works and has been paid. We will hold off further works until the Steeple is complete. We have around £5000 in the budget which may be needed.

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

The income from regular giving is less than last year, possibly due to parishioners leaving the village. Syresham rely on a few long-standing givers and encouragement is needed for supporters to give regularly.

*HW mentioned that PGS are visiting Lois Weedon with a road show – we could invite parishioners who don’t belong to PGS to go along to find out more.*

Action AP BF

Collections were up from last year and gift aid is also increased. Fund Raising was slightly down possibly due to our fetes being held on the hottest and coldest days of the year.

Our Parish Share contribution was £13,400 – up on last year but not meeting the £17200 allocated to us. Churchyard expenses included grass cutting, cemetery steps and pruning of trees in the cemetery. Fabric costs include the sound system, architects fees and quinquennial fees.

HW asked why charity giving had increased so much this year. This is partly due to recording the Remembrance collection, also we had an extra collections for the DEC work after the Turkey earthquake. Note – we also paid for both 2022 & 2023 Children’s society contribution in these accounts.

The accounts were approved for auditing unanimously.

**Action AP/BF to pass to Allison Allee**

**Fund Raising**

The Christmas Fair was a lovely occasion but poorly attended raising only £660.60 – we hoped for at least £800.

We discussed various possibilities for further fundraising. We agreed that we would be happy to join with a village open gardens in June for the fete this year. We would also ask Lisa, Katie and Nikki to join the committee to help run the fete.

The other possibility is to ask Mike Yallop if his choir would like to do a concert in Syresham.

**Action AP**

**Trust Report – accounts for Friends & Trustees**

Brian Miller has completed an initial application to set up a charity investment account with Quilter Cheviot. Income will be paid into a bank savings account, this will be available to go towards Church Maintenance. We have agreed £6000 to be paid towards the steeple. AP suggests we draw down the money for church maintenance at the start of next year rather than in July so that the Trust account matches the Church financial year. The church has £5,580 to carry into 2024, which should cover this year’s expenditure.

Maud Payne Trust is just ticking over at present, we will decide how to manage it once the Madge Payne has been sorted our.

Trust expenditure pages will be sent to the Trustees and Friends.

The Hammond Trust distribution of plants was much appreciated. We also bought books for the school children along with the chapel. We have offered £200 for a treat for the teachers in school. This was to be a pre-Christmas treat but will now be a Winter Blues treat.

**Worship**

Christmas services all went well and were well attended thanks to all who contributed.

**Ash Wednesday** interest was expressed in hosting and attending a service at 2pm on February 14th.

**Lent** The Worship committee will be discussing a lent course, we may be able to join with the chapel again.

**Good Friday** we will start with coffee and hot cross buns in church and process to the chapel finishing in silence.

**Maundy Thursday** – we agreed to host the meal again.

**Easter Day –** our 11am communion may include a baptism.

**Praise & Prayer** all invited to contribute. DW and KB are working on ideas/

**Time to Pray.** It was agreed that 10am would be a better time for Time to Pray on a Thursday. This will start from this week.

**Friends**

The Friends are busy planning the Pancake Lunch on February 13th in School. There is also a walk and soup lunch on April 27th and a Safari Supper June 1st.

**School**

The Hammond Trust gift will cover cakes for this term. BF will provide shortbread in April

**Action BF**

SC asked about the Foundation Governors. They are currently AP, Paula Green and Gill Blackledge is just starting. HW will be taking an active roll in school life joining the assembly group and meeting with children and Kate Clough on a regular basis. He is also available to chat to parents before school on a Monday.

ON the 29th the school is coming down to Church for a Candlemas Assembly. All are invited. Members of the chapel are taking part along with a real baby from Mums and Tots.

**Pastoral Care**

Sue P, KB & AP will be hosting two Pastoral Care teas in March. If anyone knows of folk in the village who would appreciate a visit please let KB, AP or HW know.

**Safeguarding**

KB & DW have completed courses – SC to do.

**Action SC**

**AOB**

DW asked about the dramatic passion reading. This will be done on Palm Sunday and repeated as our Good Friday act.

**Note:** The Worship committee decided that Palm Sunday and Good Friday services will be in separate churches as last year. Maundy Thursday meal will go ahead as usual. There will be a Lent Course run in the evenings in Syresham and afternoons in Helmdon. Days to be confirmed.

Please return last year’s Palm Crosses for making ash.

**Date of next meeting : Monday April 22nd 2pm @ Vine Cottage.**