

The Parish Church of St. Oswald, Croxley Green

11 April 2025

Dear Church Member,

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2025.

I am pleased to send with this letter a portfolio of documents in preparation for the above meetings which will take place on **SUNDAY 27 APRIL** at 11.30 am in the church.

We issue the documents before the meetings to give you an opportunity to think about the matters to be discussed, and I hope you will read and digest the contents.

An important part of the meeting is the election of Churchwardens and members of the P.C.C. Please consider carefully whom you feel should represent the congregation in this way. Details of current members are given in the document entitled Elections 2025 attached. If your name is on the Electoral Roll and you would like to stand, or nominate someone else, please contact the Secretary, Brian Thomson (01923 226850 or email secretary@stoswaldschurch.org.uk) for a nomination form or collect one from the back of the church.

It is important that we hear from you and I very much hope that you will participate if you can.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Riley-Braley (Revd) Vicar

Documents attached Agenda Minutes of APCM 2024 Budget 2025 Churchwardens' report Deanery Synod report Elections 2025



St. Oswald's Church Croxley Green Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held in the Church on Sunday 27 April 2025 at 11.30

<u>AGENDA</u>

Opening Prayers Apologies for absence

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

To elect Churchwardens for the year 2025/2026

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- 1. To approve the minutes of the APCM held on 21 April, 2024
- 2. To receive a report on the Electoral Roll
- 3. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the P.C.C. for the year ended 31 December, 2024
- 4. To note the budget for the year ending 31 December, 2025
- 5. To appoint an Independent Examiner for the year
- 6. To receive a Report from the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods, and Ornaments of the Church.
- 7. To receive a Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.
- 8. To elect a Member to the P.C.C.
- 9. To receive a Report on Safeguarding issues
- 10. Churchwardens' remarks
- 11. Any Other Business
- 12. Closing Prayers

ST OSWALD'S PARISH CHURCH, CROXLEY GREEN

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

HELD ON SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2024 IN THE CHURCH

Present: The Vicar, 1 Churchwarden and 33 parishioners

Apologies: 1 Churchwarden and 18 parishioners

Welcome

The Vicar welcomed people to the meeting and opened the meeting with a prayer.

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

Election of Churchwardens

Maurice Lisley was retiring after 5 years service as Churchwarden. Thanks and appreciation for his hard work and service were expressed by all.

Helen McAlpine agreed to continue as Churchwarden and Anne-Georgina Barnes had offered to serve as Churchwarden for the forthcoming year (proposed by Wendy Huth and seconded by Sue Barton. Both were elected unanimously to serve for the year 2024/25.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1 Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meetings

The meeting approved the minutes (proposed by Guy Parks and seconded by Gill Thomson). There were no matters arising.

2 Electoral Roll Report

The Vicar gave the Electoral Roll report in the absence of the Electoral Roll Officer, Brian Thomson, who had sent his apologies.

There were 102 names on the Electoral Roll, 3 members having died during the course of the year. A new roll would be required from 2025.

The meeting thanked Brian for his work as Electoral Roll Officer and expressed thanks that he was willing to continue in this role for the forthcoming year.

3 Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Annual Report was noted and there were no questions or matters arising from that report. The Vicar thanked all who contribute to the life of the church in so many ways, noting particularly the members of the PCC.

The Treasurer presented her report with particular reference to the Budget and Income and Expenditure for the church and hall. The accounts were presented in a different format from previous years in order to comply with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

The Budget for the year had included a deficit which, at the year end had proved to be less than expected. However, this was solely due to the income received for hall bookings. Thanks were expressed to Anne-Georgina and Rupert Barnes for their work over the year ensuring that the hall was let as much as possible and income from this source maximised. They would be retiring from this role shortly as a new team takes over.

The Treasurer explained that the expression of donations in the accounts differed from previous years, as 10% of donations is now entered as a "liability" for charitable giving to specific charities nominated by the PCC.

The amounts shown for church banking (p. 10 of the accounts) included 2 generous gifts for the refurbishment and remodelling of the church kitchen, which was key for outreach to our community. A community grant had also been given for this purpose as a result of intervention from a local councillor.

The Treasurer drew the meeting's attention to the projected reserves cashflow and the importance of the reserves; particularly to cover unexpected expenses that had arisen recently, including a new water tank and repairs to an emergency exit door in the hall, along with forthcoming repairs to the hall roof and completion of installation of a new audio-visual system in the church.

Questions and comments arising were as follows:

- When will the church kitchen refurbishment be carried out? It was explained that an application had been made to the diocese for permission to carry out these works. It was hoped that this would be received in time to carry out the work in the school summer holidays this year.
- A substantial part of the new/replacement audio-visual system was due to be installed in the forthcoming week. The cost of the system would be approximately £13,500 with a relatively small additional expenditure to complete the audio system when issues with the church's internet connection have been resolved. Installation of a camera was envisaged at some future date, the estimated cost of which would be £3,400.
- On the basis of projected expenditure from reserves over the next 2-3 years, it appeared possible that there would be significant problems in planning future refurbishment work such as the hall kitchen and floor, exterior decorations etc.as reserves would be depleted considerably. The PCC was urged to consider prioritising projects in terms of urgency. Thanks were expressed to all those who give generously and encouragement given to all regarding prayerful giving, attending fundraising events and bringing guests to such events.
- How did the Parish Share compare with other churches'? The Treasurer explained that this is comparable with other churches and covers the cost of our incumbent vicar.

• Thanks were also expressed to David Warman for his ongoing work to maximise Gift Aid.

The accounts were approved (proposed by Tony Barton and seconded by Colin Nunn).

4 Budget for the year ending 31 December 2024

The Budget for the year 2024 was noted, along with the aspiration to increase donations and other fundraising to result in a surplus by the end of the year. Gift Aiding and the Parish Giving Scheme were recommended.

5 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Heartfelt thanks were expressed to David Beak, who had audited the accounts and offered helpful advice to the Treasurer over many years. He would be stepping back from this role now.

Anna McLean was appointed to fulfil this role for the forthcoming year (proposed by Steve Carpenter and seconded by Kay Fearn).

6 Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

The meeting received a written report from the Churchwardens on developments in 2023.

Additional parking plans near Shaftesbury Court was raised, along with the upset and concern that had been caused amongst some tenants as a result. A meeting between tenants and Sanctuary Housing had taken place in September, with a representative of the church present, concerns had been discussed. It was regrettable that feelings had run high and some tenants had been upset.

It was noted that the PCC had made it conditional that additional parking was installed on church land by Shaftesbury Court in order for Sanctuary Housing to convert the warden's residence into two separate dwellings. This had been to help relieve pressure on the car park and on street parking. In addition to losing part of the green area around the flats, tenants were concerned about the safety of children and young people on their way to and from school, along the private footpath through church grounds.

The planning authority had approved a compromise scheme which included marking a clear path for pedestrians to maximise safety; but it was agreed that the PCC would consider whether any further measures could be taken to improve safety, such as closing the gate more often or improving signage on the gate.

Thanks were expressed to Maurice Lisley and Helen McAlpine for their work during the year.

7 Deanery Synod Report

The meeting received a written report from the lay representatives on the Deanery Synod. There were no questions. Thanks were expressed to Tony Barton, Guy Parkes and Richard Doughty for their commitment to this work. They would be continuing in office for the year.

The Vicar drew the meeting's attention to the occasional guest speakers at Deanery Synod meetings and urged attendance, especially in July 2024, when the speaker would be Paula Gooder.

8 Elections to the Parochial Church Council

There were five vacancies. Three nominations had been received: Anne Thomas (proposed by Gill Thomson and seconded by Phil Brading); Lynn Williamson (proposed by Brian Thomson and seconded by Clare Hook); Karen Pryse (proposed by Lynn Williamson and seconded by Stephen Carpenter). Vanessa Mackay volunteered to serve on the PCC (proposed by Anne-Georgina Barnes and seconded by Brita Blackwell). All were unanimously elected.

The PCC would be commissioned on Sunday 28 April.

9 Safeguarding Report

Val Edwards, Safeguarding Officer, delivered a report to the meeting.

The Safeguarding team continues to take action in line with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 with regard to the House of Bishops' Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults. This includes monitoring and assisting volunteers who are in a position of trust and/or working with children or vulnerable adults to obtain DBS clearance and appropriate training; and carrying out / advising on safer recruitment.

Members of the church were urged to keep the Safeguarding team informed about any update notifications they receive from the Disclosure and Barring Service so that accurate records can be maintained.

All were urged to report any safeguarding concerns that might arise to the Safeguarding team, Vicar of the Diocesan Safeguarding team (contact details at the back of the church).

Sincere thanks were expressed to Val, Gill Thomson, Catherine Farman and Alan Restarick for their hard work as part of the Safeguarding team during 2023. Gill had stepped back as Safeguarding Officer in September 2023, after 20 years service in that role. Alan would be stepping back from the team now. The Safeguarding Officer thanked both of these for their help and hard work.

10 Vicar's Remarks

The Vicar drew attention to two items that the PCC would need to consider in the near future:

Living in Love and Faith

General Synod had considered issues of identity, sexuality, love and marriage and approved prayers proposed by the House of Bishops for same sex couples who wish to come to church for a blessing following a civil marriage.

Prayers for this purpose had been approved for use at a service that is already happening, for example a regular Sunday service. There will be further discussion and consideration of prayers for use at a separate service held solely for this purpose at a future date. The PCC will need to consider how to respond to this and the Vicar has asked previously for people to let him know their views on these issues confidentially, to inform discussions by the PCC. An invitation was given to anyone who wished to express a view to the meeting; no one took it up. The Vicar reiterated his invitation to express views to him directly.

<u>Communion arrangements</u>

The Vicar invited views on whether the current arrangements regarding sharing / not sharing the common cup (introduced during the Covid pandemic) should stand; or whether there should be a return to previous arrangements.

A variety of views was expressed from maintaining the current arrangements to full return to pre-Covid arrangements for all aspects of services. Some suggested that there should be a paper vote at a service so all can express a view.

11 Any other business

The following issues were raised:

- What is happening regarding the kneelers? Clare Hook explained that there is a plan for dealing with the surplus kneelers since the pews on the north side of the church were removed.
- Vanessa Mackay asked if the members would like her to run a short training session to show how to use the defibrillator that has been fixed the exterior wall of the hall. There was unanimous support for this.
- Catherine Farman asked if the Pastoral Committee could reinstate having link people for the regular hall users particularly the uniformed organisations. Lynn Williamson and Clare Hook offered to do this and it would be given further consideration by the Pastoral Committee.
- Thanks were expressed for the fabulous Easter Garden.
- All good wishes were expressed to Les Lincoln.

The meeting closed with the Leading Your Church into Growth prayer and the grace.

		ACTUAL		BUDGE	
		2024		2025	
RECEIPTS		£		£	
Voluntary Rece	eipts				
	Planned Giving	50806		50000	
	Collections & other giving	1884		2000	
	Income Tax Recovered	12375	65065	12500	64500
Other voluntar	y Income				
	Donations		1906		2000
Receipts from	activities for generating funds				
	Magazine income		328		300
Receipts from	Church Activities				
•	Fees	1571		500	
	Café O	2526		2750	
	Remembrance book	200		200	
	Outreach	915		1000	
	Miscellaneous	196		200	
	fund raising in lieu of project	319		300	
	use of church		6267		5600
Receipts from		640	6367	650	5600
neceipts from					201
	Bank & CBF Deposit account interest		972		200
TOTAL RECEIPT	lo		74638		72600
PAYMENTS					
Church Activiti	es Diocesan Parish Share (Quota)	70200		70470	
	Clergy expenses	1500		500	
	Fees & Wages	289		80	
	Education, Books & Music	1555		1500	
	Outreach	300		350	
	Altar requisites	107		150	
	Administration	1100		1500	
	Communications	264		400	
	Sundry (inc bank charges)	454		750	
	Remembrance book	207		200	
	Stationery & Printing	119		450	
	Cafe O	17		40	
	Gifts	0	76112	100	76490
	Heating, Lighting, Insurance	6903		8000	
	Insurance	1393		1500	
	Laundry & cleaning	1259		1500	
	Minor repairs	649	10204	1000	12000
TOTAL PAYMEN	NTS		-86316		-88490
			00310		00490
(SHORTFALL)/I	EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS		-11678		-15890
(01101111112),			-11078		-15850
	<u>CHU</u>	RCH HALL			
<u>Receipts</u>	Church lettings	1059		1000	
	Non Church lettings	23944	25003	25000	26000
		20044		23000	20000
Payments	Wages & Cleaning materials	6745		6700	
	Heating, lighting, & phone	6235		6500	
	Insurance	968		1000	
	Repairs & maintenance				
	Rates	2279	19009	1000	1700
		1781	-18008	1800	-17000
EACESS OF KEU	CEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS		6995		9000
				I	

ST OSWALD'S CROXLEY GREEN

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC AND GOODS OF THE CHURCH

MARCH 2025

2024 was a busy year in the maintenance and refurbishment of the church and hall.

Following the installation of the new sound mixer desk in church in 2023, we received final permission to complete the rest of the upgrade to the church's audio visual system in April 2024. Shortly after that a fixed projector, two satellite screens and associated cabling and equipment were installed. Permission has also been granted for the installation of a camera in the future, when funds become available, which could be used to record or stream services or other events. We are particularly grateful to Mark Saunders for his research on this project and his oversight of the installation and subsequent adjustments to the equipment to make it work well in the church and meet our needs. This work has meant that the mobile projector no longer needs to be used, which increases safety when people are moving about the church.

In order to complete this project, it was necessary to upgrade our broadband connection, which was carried out in May. The WiFi router is now in church (rather than the hall) to ensure that the audio visual system works as it should do, which has also substantially improved the functionality of the Payaz giving station at the back of church. However, the signal is strong enough that there is still a good service in the hall. We are very grateful to Karen Pryse, Steve Carpenter and Mark Saunders for their help in arranging this.

Earlier in the year, we were extremely grateful to receive a generous anonymous donation which enabled us to purchase a purpose built table for the giving station at the back of the church.

In August 2024, we received permission to refurbish and upgrade the kitchen facilities in the church. Again, we are grateful for a very generous donation towards this work, and a Council grant to help. Works were carried out in October, including the installation of a new hot water boiler, additional cupboards and a fridge in the kitchen; moving the sinks and installation of a handwashing sink in the kitchen; and installation of a butler sink for the use of the flower arranging team. New fixed units have been installed at the back of the church, along with a mobile servery. This work has been a great benefit to our outreach work at Café O, and Donut and Hot Dog Clubs. It also means that refreshments following church services and other events in church can be served more easily and routinely. We are particularly grateful to Guy Parks for his drawings and research, and for overseeing the installation by the contractor in October.

Following another very generous donation specifically for the replacement of the church organ, permission was granted for this to happen in October 2024 and a new organ has been installed. The previous organ had been in place for many years and we look forward to many years of service from the new organ. Many thanks are due to our organist, Martin Robinson, for his work on this project.

Earlier in the year the water tank above the church hall kitchen sprang a leak and had to be replaced. In addition, the taps in the women's toilets in the church hall ceased to work and the opportunity was taken to install new basins and taps that could regulate the temperature of the water more easily. We are very grateful to Des Sedgwick for overseeing this work and liaising with the plumber for these and other works that were required during the year.

New flooring has been installed in the disabled toilet in the hall, following damage as a result of a leak. Many thanks to Tony Barton for overseeing this.

Additional works have been carried out to maintain the soffits, facias and roof on the hall.

During the year, negotiations have continued with Sanctuary Housing regarding installation of two new parking spaces at Shaftesbury Court. We hope that this work can be carried out in 2025. Again, we are very grateful for the time and effort that Guy Parks has dedicated to seeing this through.

In September, a protected tree in the church grounds started to drop branches, resulting in minor damage to a parked car. A barrier was put around the tree to avoid injury to the public and further damage to vehicles and an application was made to Three Rivers District Council to remove the tree as soon as possible. This was arranged within a short period of time. A new birch tree will need to be planted close to the site of the tree that was felled in due course – hopefully in winter 2025. The new tree will also be subject to a Tree Preservation order.

Throughout the year, there have been a number of clear up mornings and other events to carry out deep cleaning, tidying, maintenance and gardening. We are extremely grateful to all those who come along to help on these occasions and are keen to encourage others to help if they feel able to contribute to this important work throughout the year.

Helen McAlpine and Anne-Georgina Barnes March 2025

Deanery Synod report 2024-25

There is nothing like a rich seam of optimism to kick-start a new deanery year. Rev Miriam Mugan from All Saints, Croxley, host for our first meeting in 2024, reeled off a string of new initiatives designed to grow the church and make it more welcoming and flexible. Individual chairs replaced pews throughout the building, backed up by new lighting, heating and AV systems. The church's new Friday cafe was attracting around 60 regular attendees, and church attendance was increasing.

This was followed by an equally upbeat early progress report on the deanery-backed fledgling Trinity Project, formed in response to a growing need to support the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. Launched at the start of the winter term in 2023, the project attracted around 30 year 7 children at the first Donut Club (held at St Oswald's) - a weekly, then monthly event that gives the pupils a chance to reconnect with old primary school friends who are now attending different secondary schools in the area (eg Croxley Danes, Rickmansworth, Joan of Arc). Early adopters of various youth activities now include St Andrew's Church, Chorleywood, St Peter's, Mill End, and the Reach Free School at Mill End.

New church activities continued at Mill End with Heronsgate and West Hyde, which over three weeks gave airtime at the end of every service to each piece of mission and outreach done by the parish to encourage sharing of ideas. One scheme at St Andrew's was delivering Christmas cards by knocking on each door and inviting people to join in Christmas services - it brought in many new faces. St Mary's, Rickmansworth, launched a children's church and a prayer group, while Bovingdon set up a youth group for years 6 to 9 with 13 children signing up.

Meanwhile, concerns arose about a new centrally managed safeguarding system across the deanery leaving parish safeguarding officers overworked and raised worries about security of centrally held records. In response, meetings were scheduled deanery-wide to discuss the issue.

In July, at St Mary's Church, Rickmansworth, the synod was addressed by the Rev Canon Paula Gooder, canon chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral, who used bible readings and poems in urging us to embrace ordinariness. She encouraged us to pay attention to the ordinary times in between festivals and listen to others, be aware of being busy for the sake of it, take time out for ourselves to reflect, and find our own rhythm (eg. if we say we find it easier to pray while gardening, we should embrace it!)

Also, after several years as rural dean, Fr Simon Cutmore (from St Peter's, Mill End) announced he was moving to All Saint's, Hertford, as vicar. He was warmly thanked by the synod for his committed work as dean and his leading part in establishing the Trinity Project. A buffet was laid on to mark the occasion.

November's meeting (online) was mainly taken up by a talk from Rev Mark Rodel, diocesan deputy director of mission and ministry and associate minister in Harpenden. He focused on his work encouraging country parishes short on resources and often without a priest to recognise the important role they played in village life. He said the idea of good neighbours had much to do with faith. Folk might think the language of mission and outreach was not present in their parish, but it was already embedded in their village life; they shouldn't forget that the church was the centre of the community, and had been for centuries. He pointed to the vitality of villages during a vacancy and said a major part of his work was seeking out parishes' strengths. In short, his advice was: small churches are doing good work. Being a good neighbour is evangelism, and mission and ministry belong to the people not the priest. We should maybe say: "Not currently accompanied by a priest" rather than "in a vacancy"! and also not call those who are not ordained volunteers.

His message was not to get overburdened and lose confidence but ask what is God calling us to do? What is our focus? And would we like to consider linking Church and community (eg. why not befriend a pub?)

One year on in March this year, new rural dean Rev Canon Charles Burch (vicar of St Lawrence, Bovingdon) again stressed the sharing of ideas and activities, inviting all churches represented at the synod to verbally highlight their latest initiatives.

St Oswald's gave an update on the Trinity Project. Events at the church throughout 2024 included a new Donut Club for fresh year 7s, a Hotdog Club for year 8s (previous year 7s at St Oswald's), meetings for year 6s and Wonderland lunch break games/activity sessions at Croxley Danes. Charitable status had taken longer than anticipated and the goal for that is the end of this year. The project is still seeking a replacement for its chair of trustees (following Fr Simon Cutmore's Hertford move) plus one other trustee.

Among other deanery church activities, Bovingdon's youth group has gone from strength to strength with 18 children now on its books. The church also runs a weekly cafe and a food bank supporting 24 families.

Chipperfield and Sarratt's new vicar Rev Sarah Miles has started a toddler group attracting nine families so far. The church also runs a craft group (15 knitters) and a women's group open to anyone in the community; it has also organised a well attended bereavement course this year.

Two notable events at Christ Church, Chorleywood, included a well-attended Alpha course and a nativity with real animals. And St Andrew's put out a call for another regular volunteer to help run its Hillside youth centre, a splendidly redecorated and refurnished former church and an ideal safe haven for young people.

Richard Doughty

ELECTIONS 2025

At the meetings this year there will be elections for Churchwardens and a PCC member. The elections are an important part of the proceedings and it is hoped that you will consider carefully whom you wish to represent the congregation. If you would like to stand, or nominate someone else, please contact the secretary, Brian Thomson (01923 226850) secretary@stoswaldschurch.org.uk for nomination forms before the meeting or collect one from the back of the church. Approaches to potential candidates should be made before the meeting so that they have sufficient time to consider whether they wish to make a commitment of this nature. All those coming to the end of their term this year are eligible for re-election, should they wish to stand again.

1. CHURCHWARDENS

At the Meeting of Parishioners each year we must appoint two Churchwardens to serve for twelve months, although (if willing to stand for re-election and nominated in writing before the start of the meeting) they are eligible for re-election in subsequent years up to a maximum of six consecutive years. After six years' service, two years must pass before they become eligible to serve again; this restriction may however be waived if the Annual Meeting so decides.

The essence of the appointment of Churchwardens is that it shall be by joint consent of the Vicar and the Parishioners. If there are only two nominations, then both are thereby elected; if there are more than two nominations an election is held. Under certain exceptional circumstances it is permissible for the Vicar to appoint one and for the Parishioners to elect the other from the remaining nominees.

The current Wardens are Helen McAlpine and Anne-Georgina Barnes.

Who can vote?	 a) Any lay person who is on the Electoral Roll, or b) Any residents in the Parish whose names are entered on the roll of local government electors.
Who can stand?	Any person who is entitled to vote (see above), who is an actual communicant member of the Church of England and is 21 years old or over.
2. PAROCHIAL CHURC	

: Helen McAlpine and Anne-Georgina Barnes

The present Church Council consists of:

The Vicar	: Rev'd Robert Riley-Braley (Chair)		

Deanery Synod members

Churchwardens

(until 2026)	: Tony Barton, G	Buy Parks and Richard Dougl	nty
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Elected P.C.C. members:

Until 2025 : Val Edwards, Clare Hook, Margaret Cox

Until 2026 : Debbie Clifford, Steve Clifford, Jonathan Cox, Brian Thomson

Until 2007 : Anne Thomas, Lynn Williamson, Karen Pryse, Vanessa Mackay

St Oswald's has nine spaces for elected members of the PCC. This is less than previous years because the electoral roll is below 100. Normally, elected PCC members serve for three years, and one-third of the members retire each year with two thirds continuing so as to provide continuity. Three members step down this year which means that there is one vacancy for the three years 2025-2028. If nominations do not exceed the number of vacancies, all are declared elected. If there are more nominations than vacancies, an election is held (in which only members of the revised Electoral Roll may vote) and those with the highest votes are elected.

If an election is needed, each voter is entitled to the same number of votes as there are vacancies, and only one vote may be given to any one candidate.

This year Val Edwards, Clare Hook and Margaret Cox step down at the end of their terms. If willing to stand for re-election and nominated in writing before the start of the meeting, they are eligible for re-election for a further three years.

Brian Thomson

7 April 2025