

# The United Parish of Speldhurst with Groombridge and Ashurst

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 21st May 2025 at St Mary's Church, Speldhurst

**Present:** Martin Atkinson (Vice-Chair), Zak & Jane Bambola, Julian & Jane Bardo, John Buckle, Mike Bullett, Roger Carden, Archdeacon Nick Cornell, Adrian Dawes, Ian Firth, Carolyn Firth, (Secretary), Jane Floyd, John & Jenny Fitzsimmons, Rachael Foster, Zoe Green, Pauline Joyce, Tony Joyce, John Perkins, Julie Pinnell, Dawn & Glenn Pottow, Nicky Rees, Graham Riddick, Tom & Tracy Watson.

**Apologies:** Winston Blake, Sarah Bullet, George Carter, Jo Eames, Janet & Colin Crisp, Glyn Williams

**Prayer:** Ian opened the meeting in prayer.

**Archdeacon Nick** spoke about the vacancy and expressed his personal sorrow that there have been no applicants during the 3 rounds of advertising. He explained how the diocese is struggling with the low levels of available clergy due to the lack of people coming forward to be ordained and clergy resigning/retiring after Covid. He said that we will advertise once more to optimise the contract we have with the Church Times but at the same time he is working in the background for a more creative solution which he hopes to be able to share with us in the Autumn. There was a Q & A session.

### **Annual Meeting of Parishioners:**

**Appointment of Chair for this meeting:** Martin Atkinson was proposed by Tony Joyce and seconded by Mike Bullett.

**Appointment of Clerk:** Carolyn Firth was proposed by Mike Bullett and seconded by Julie Pinnell.

### **Election of Churchwardens:**

At their respective Annual Meetings of Worshippers, the following nominations had been made:

For St Mary's, Speldhurst:  
Ian Firth and Julie Pinnell

For St Martin's, Ashurst:  
Chris Lilly

All three were unanimously elected.

### **Notification of Elected Deputy Churchwardens:**

Winston Blake (Groombridge) and Tony Joyce and Jo Eames (Speldhurst) had been elected at the Annual Meetings of their two churches and these appointments were approved unanimously.

## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

### **1. Minutes of the 2024 meeting:**

The minutes were accepted and signed.

### **2. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

None

### **3. Election of Parochial Representatives to the United Parochial Church Council:**

The following members had been nominated at their respective Annual Meetings:

#### **St Mary's, Speldhurst:**

Martin Atkinson, Adrian Dawes, Carolyn Firth, Dawn Pottow.

The four members were duly elected.

Carolyn Firth on election to the Deanery Synod subsequently withdrew her nomination resulting in one casual vacancy for St Mary's.

#### **St Martin's, Ashurst & St John's Groombridge:**

There were no nominations.

### **4. Election of 1 Deanery Synod representative for one year.**

Carolyn Firth had been nominated at St Mary's Annual Meeting and was duly elected. There were no other nominations.

Polly Joyce and Glenn Pottow (St Mary's) continue for the remaining one year of their three year term.

### **5. Appointment of Independent Examiner:**

It was unanimously agreed that Foot Davson should continue in 2025 (proposed Martin Atkinson, seconded Mike Bullett).

### **6. Electoral Roll:**

The 2025 Electoral Roll numbers of the United Parish were received as follows: Speldhurst **124**; Groombridge **17**; Ashurst **25**. Total: **166**

### **7. Annual Report of the Proceedings of the UPCC:**

The report in the Annual Report & Financial Statements document was received.

### **8. Annual Financial Reports, including aggregated accounts for 2024:**

The aggregated accounts for the United Parish were presented. The financial report and accounts were proposed for adoption and unanimously approved. Thanks were expressed to everyone involved for their hard work in preparing the accounts.

### **9. Report of the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod:**

The report of the Annual Report & Financial Statements was received. Reports on the activities of Deanery Synod had also been presented at the Annual Meetings of the three churches and these had been accepted.

### **9. Annual Churchwardens' Reports to include reports on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Churches**

Reports on the activities in the three churches as detailed in the Annual Report & Financial Statements were received. Thanks were expressed to John Fitzsimmons and David Crundwell and to everyone involved in the running of our parish churches.

### **10. Any Other Business:**

None.