

ST MARK'S CHURCH, HITCHIN

Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting held in church on 12 March 2017

Present: A record of those present was made in the attendance book.

Apologies for absence: Received from Bill and Alice Poole, Roger and Naomi Morris, Steve and Patricia Livings, Linda Nunn, Kevin and Pauline Banks, Ann Wakefield, Rupert Russell

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Vicar welcomed everyone present and thanked everyone who had contributed to the preparation of the paperwork. The above apologies for absence were accepted.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 April 2016

These had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were accepted as a true record of the meeting of 12 April 2016.

3. Election of Churchwardens

The Vicar thanked Louise Wills and Tricia Reed for the superb job they had done as wardens and, in particular, for the huge task they had undertaken in creating an electronic version of the church inventory. Their work will make the task of updating the inventory a much easier one for future wardens. Nominations for the position of Churchwarden had been received in advance of the meeting for Joy Bennett, proposed by Tricia Reed and seconded by Daphne Wakefield, and Louise Wills, proposed by Hannah Isher and seconded by Deena Jenkins. There being no further nominations, both were elected *nem con*. The Vicar thanked Louise for her willingness to serve for another year and Joy for being prepared to take on the task.

4. Election of Assistant Fabric Wardens (2) and Deputy Wardens (4)

Nominations for the position of Assistant Fabric Warden had been received in advance of the meeting for Kevin Banks and Clive Rogers, both proposed by Tricia Reed and seconded by Melvyn Redd. There being no further nominations, both were elected *nem con*. The Vicar thanked Kevin and Clive for taking on this new role. Similarly, nominations for the position of Deputy Warden had been received in advance of the meeting for Roy Dixon and Daphne Wakefield, proposed by Louise Wills and seconded by Judy Page, for Sandra Stokes, proposed by Andrew Par and seconded by Judy Page and for Melvyn Redd, proposed by Mike Davies and seconded by Maggie Mellersh. There being no further nominations, all four were elected *nem con*. The Vicar thanked Roy, Daphne and Sandra for their willingness to carry on for another year and Melvyn for being prepared to resume the role after a break.

5. Nominations for Election at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of:

(a) Deanery Synod Representatives (2)

After 30 years of service as a Deanery Synod Representative, many of these years in the role of Lay Chair, Mike Davies was stepping down. The Vicar thanked him formally for his long and faithful service.

Nominations for the 2 vacant posts had been received in advance of the meeting for Louise Wills and Gail Young, both nominated by Deirdre Parr and seconded by Andrew Parr. There being no further nominations, both were elected *nem con*.

(b) Parochial Church Council Representative (1)

Sandra Stokes was nominated by John Richardson and seconded by Tricia Reed. There being no other nominations she was elected *nem com*. The Vicar thanked Sandra for her work over the past year and her willingness to serve again.

(c) 'Churches Together in Hitchin' Representatives (4)

The following nominations were received: Helen Richardson, nominated by Andrew Parr, seconded by Tricia Reed, John Skeeles, Alison Smith and Anne Watson, all three nominated by Austin Smith and seconded by Tricia Reed. All elected *nem con*.

6. Review of the Church Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll has a total number of 147 people consisting of 108 households. This represents an increase of 10 people and 3 households.

7. Receipt of Child Protection Register

There is no longer a requirement for the register to be formally presented by a Warden at the AGM. Instead, a report must be presented to the APCM and a separate Safeguarding report is included in the AGM Reports booklet (see page 6). The Vicar thanked Pauline Banks, St Mark's Safeguarding Officer, for all her work in this area.

8. Election of Keeper of the Electoral Roll

The Vicar thanked Jean Jenkins who, having carried out this role for a number of years, was now standing down; the Vicar was grateful to Maggie Mellersh who was willing to take over the task. Maggie was proposed by Tricia Reed, seconded by Deirdre Parr and elected *nem con*.

9. Election of:

(a) Treasurer of the DCC

No nominations had been received for anyone on the electoral roll. Jim Weist, who had carried out the role for the past 14 years, was willing to continue. It was agreed that, at the first meeting of the new council, he would again be co-opted onto the DCC as a non-voting member. The Vicar thanked Jim for having done a superb job as treasurer and for his willingness to continue in the role. She also wished to record her thanks to Eddie Cullum for his work as Recorder of Giving and to Jim Weist, Joy Bennett and Tricia Reed who, in Eddie's absence following his recent illness, have been dealing with the weekly banking.

(b) Secretary of the DCC

Deirdre Parr was proposed by Stephen Livings, seconded by Michael Orton, and elected *nem con*.

(c) DCC members to serve until AGM 2020 (4) and AGM 2019 (2)

The following were elected to serve until AGM 2020: Peter Watson, proposed by Anne Watson, seconded by Tricia Reed; Valerie Chamberlain, proposed by Sandra Stokes, seconded by Roger Morris; Kate Goodwin, proposed by Pippa Lally, seconded by Tricia Reed and Frances Fisher, proposed by Deirdre Parr, seconded by Joy Bennett. There being no other nominations, all four were elected *nem con*. The following were elected to serve until AGM 2019 to fill the places left vacant by Andy Smith who had moved away and Joy Bennett who had been elected Warden: Deena Jenkins, nominated by Daphne Wakefield, seconded by Patricia Livings, and Daphne Wakefield, nominated by Deirdre Parr and seconded by Stephen Livings. There being no other

nominations, both were elected *nem con*. Nine people had in fact offered to serve on the DCC but as no-one wished to have an election with the attendant implications of making those not elected feel less valued, three of the nine had agreed to offer themselves in 2018 instead.

10. Election of Welcomers (formerly called Sidespeople)

Louise Wills presented the list of welcomers as follows:

Kevin Banks	John Fishlock	Clive Rogers
Pauline Banks	Michael Orton	Lesley Russell
Val Chamberlain	Deirdre Parr	Peter Russell
Mike Davies	Rita Pettyfer	Rupert Russell
Pam Davies	Barry Pywell	Cynthia Satahoo
Roy Dixon	Stephanie Pywell	Sandra Stokes
Eileen Duckett	Helen Richardson	Daphne Wakefield
Carol Fishlock	Dianne Rogers	Louise Wills

John Field proposed the above be elected, seconded by Clare Banham. Elected *nem con*.

The Vicar was pleased to welcome Eileen Duckett as a new member and Barry and Stephanie Pywell as returning members of this team which has a really important part to play in church life.

11. Churchwardens' Report

Report circulated in advance of the meeting. The Wardens added the following: the major works referred to in their report will start on 24 April 2017 and should not interfere with the running of the church. This work should make the church watertight. Margaret Hammond and Joy Bennett are going to fund a new bell rope complete with sally to replace the rotted rope.

12. District Church Report to Parish Annual Meeting

This report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and it was agreed by church members that, after the electoral roll numbers had been entered, it should go forward to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting as a reflection of the life of St Mark's over the past year.

13. Treasurer's Report

The report, accounts and budget had been circulated in advance. With the forthcoming major repair work in mind, the Treasurer had set a deficit budget. The money to cover this large deficit will be taken from reserves. The Centenary Fund had been set up to meet the expense of modernising the hall and in 2016 the fund had paid for the blinds

John Field proposed that the accounts and budget be accepted without amendment, this was seconded by Stephanie Pywell, and agreed by all present.

14. Election of Auditor

The Parish and individual church accounts are audited or examined together. It is not yet known whether our joint income as a PCC will exceed £500,000 this year and, therefore, the accounts would need to be audited. If the joint income is under this figure, the PCC will be required to appoint an independent examiner. The meeting agreed that the nomination of the firm of Bradshaw Johnson to audit or examine the accounts as required should be carried forward to the Annual Parish Church Meeting.

15. Reports

Church members had been asked to read the Annual Report prior to the meeting which meant that this was the opportunity for the author of each report to add anything to what had been written or for members to ask questions. Discussion/comment on parts of the Annual Report was as follows:

Pastoral and Bereavement Groups – Val Chamberlain offered personal thanks to both groups and, in particular, to Mike Davies.

Baptism Visitors – Linda Sandy, the Baptism Co-ordinator, made a plea for people to consider joining the ‘woefully small’ team of visitors whose task is to make contact with the baptism family in advance and to be a smiling, welcoming face at the baptism. Linda had been a visitor for 20 years and the Baptism Co-ordinator for many of those years. She had enjoyed it immensely but felt the time had come to stand down so would be looking for someone to replace her in June.

Children’s and Young People’s Groups – the Vicar commented that it was good to see the children’s and young people’s groups growing larger and thanked everyone involved in helping run them.

Flower Arrangers – Joy Hukin and Diane Porter have now permanently taken on the task of co-ordinating the team and were pleased to welcome Val Chamberlain as a new member. The Vicar thanked Joy and Diane for filling in for Ann Wakefield and being willing to take on the task permanently. She also wished to record a debt of gratitude to Ann for her many years of co-ordinating the team. She thanked the team for its work and urged anyone who would like to get involved, particularly at festival times, to contact Joy or Diane.

Fellowship Groups – Andrew Parr stressed that all the groups would be delighted to welcome new members. On behalf of the Daytime Fellowship Group, Clare Banham thanked Frances Fisher for stepping in to cover for Jeni during her maternity leave.

Music – The Vicar thanked everyone involved in any way in making music at St Mark’s.

PCC Report – in response to a question about ‘Inclusive Church’, the Vicar explained that it is a mainly Anglican organisation working on a wide range of inclusion issues including, but not limited to, poverty, gender, ethnicity, mental health, sexuality and disability. By signing up formally to the organisation, a church like St Mark’s, which aims to be inclusive, is making a very public statement about its stance on these issues. St Mary’s has already agreed to become an Inclusive Church and members of the Inclusive Church Working Group will visit St Mark’s after Easter to talk to the congregation on the subject.

16. Vicar’s Remarks

The Vicar reiterated her thanks for the support her family had received from the church during this last year. Andrew Parr spoke of the enormous appreciation and admiration St Mark’s has for her and assured her of our continuing support.

17. Mission Action Plan (MAP)

The Vicar gave an update on some of the priorities for the next three years as stated at the AGM in 2016:

- i. to launch a monthly informal evening service on the first Sunday of the month: This has been running since April last year but numbers have been low.
- ii. to go out into the area we serve delivering 'Prayer Cards': the delivery rota has always been covered and there has been positive feedback from a number of people either saying they appreciate getting the cards or asking for prayer.
- iii. to investigate the possibility of running a 'holiday at home', a holiday club for adults who can't otherwise get away: two DCC members visited St Catherine's and St Paul's Church in Hoddesdon to look at their very successful model. It was felt this was too big a project for St Mark's at this time so the idea has been put on hold.
- iv. to increase our links with sheltered housing/residential homes for the elderly in our area: the monthly communion service at Westmill Lawns is well supported by approximately 15 St Mark's people who regularly attend.
- v. to offer one-off short talks to complement the Fellowship groups which mostly meet fortnightly: this was also put on hold as it was felt we currently lacked the people and/or time to run them.

At the last DCC meeting, the Vicar had raised the issue of church growth. It is a great joy to have grown as we have to the point of often being full on a Sunday but we now face a dilemma; do we stay as we are or do we think about how we might grow? The Vicar suggested we have 2 options

- a) to create more space in the building which would require looking seriously at extending or
- b) to go out into the parish to take the good news to the people of Bearton and Westmill.

The vast majority of the people on our electoral roll are from Bearton. To try to engage with people in Westmill, the Vicar would like to try to set up Messy Church in Oughton Primary and Nursery School which is at the heart of the community. This would introduce people to the Christian faith in a gentle, non-threatening way. Oughton's headteacher would be happy to have Messy Church in the school once or twice a term and the Vicar is well-known to the school families but a team of people would be needed to run such a venture. The idea was generally welcomed by the meeting but the Vicar asked people to pray about it both seeking to determine if it is the right thing to do and also whether they should get involved individually.

18. Questions

There were no questions.

19. Any other Business

There was no other business.

20. Election Results (if any)

There were no elections at this AGM.

The Vicar thanked everyone for staying on and joining in. She looked forward to what the next year will bring.

Closing prayers were led by John Richardson.