

St Matthew's Annual Church Meeting 21st May 2017

Agenda

1. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising
2. DCC & Deanery Synod elections
3. Finance Report
4. Seven Video
5. Vicar's Report
6. AOB and Questions

Minutes

The meeting started with worship and prayer, and the reading of Romans 12:1-8.

Chris explained that the meeting takes place as part of our worship as it is about church life as a whole, not just the business side of it.

St. Matthew's is part of team ministry, so there is a team meeting (APCM) and then each church has its own meeting.

Some roles were filled at the APCM, like wardens, and some will hopefully be filled today.

We will try to get the business out of the way first and then look at what God might have in store for us as a church. There will be time for questions at the end.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 2016 ACM were agreed, with no matters arising.

2. Election to the District Church Council & Deanery Synod

St. Matt's has two leadership bodies – the DCC is the legal body and the Leadership Team is made up of staff and a management team who each oversee areas of church life.

At the APCM wardens were elected and Deanery Synod representatives would have been if there had been enough nominations.

Michelle Shirley has stepped down as warden and Bee Shaw has taken over. Chris thanked Bee for being willing to take on this role.

Mary Wilson was elected as a Deanery Synod representative. There is still one vacancy for Deanery Synod. The way the Church of England works means that anyone elected would be on Deanery Synod, DCC and PCC.

There are two vacancies for church representatives on the DCC. One vacancy is because Bee is now a warden and one is because the 3 year cycle is up for Jane Richardson. Thank you to Jane Richardson for her 3 years served on DCC.

Chris asked to take nominations from the floor.

No-one volunteered to be a Deanery Synod representative.

Matt Fryett volunteered to be on the DCC – he was nominated by Matt Taylor and seconded by Ed Tranter. Jane Richardson is willing to stand again for DCC. She was nominated by Dedo Rampe and seconded by Dee Harper.

3. Finance report

Kate summarised how the church's finances have changed over the past few years.

In 2015 our income was only slightly lower than expenditure. A small amount of the gift day money was used to cover this deficit (£1,500).

2016 saw similar expenditure but lower income, so the year ended with a deficit of £9,300, which was again covered by money from the gift day. This left the gift day pot at £17,300 at the end of 2016.

2017 projected expenditure is slightly higher than last year, and projected income slightly less, leaving a projected deficit of £15,300.

However, following a letter regarding appointing new staff earlier in the year, around £10k per year has been pledged and for which standing orders have been increased. However just over £4k per year has stopped (people who've left the church) - resulting in the overall £6k per year increase. In the majority of cases, these increased have been made in April, so it's likely to make a difference of around £4,000 this year.

Another £8k per year has been promised (but hasn't yet materialised). Assuming this does from June, then we'll hope to see £4k of this in 2017. This would reduce the deficit for 2017 to £7,300, leaving £10,000 still in the gift day pot at the end of 2017.

Kate finished by saying thank-you to everyone who has increased their giving or promised to increase their giving, and went on to say that this puts the church in a much better position for 2018.

Chris Wicks asked Kate to explain the gift day pot for those who weren't around when that took place. Kate explained that back in 2015, the church was unsure about the state of its finances, and talked about investment in our children and youth and how important that is. The gift day was allowing that to continue into the future and brought in just over £28,000.

Ed Tranter asked whether St. Matt's is still recruiting for both positions with Jon and Claire leaving. Kate replied that the letter sent out in March to the congregation was asking for people's opinions on that. The overall reply was that we should recruit for both. Kate is confident the money is there to do that.

Mike Harrowing asked whether Kate is expecting a deficit or surplus in 2018, to which Kate replied that she is hoping for us to break even if everyone who has promised to increase their giving does so.

Chris offered his thanks to Kate for all her hard work.

4. Seven video

Chris explained that Jon has stepped down from overseeing the 7oclock service, so there is one report from Jon and one from the team who have taken it on – Katy Johnson, Catherine Root, and Rob Wilson.

A video was played explaining how Seven works and its format and vision.

Chris then explained that there have been some experiments with Seven, and it has come to the point of having a new Leadership Team and a different format. It offers more space for worship, has brief teaching, ministry, and some of them go to the pub afterwards. It is about developing community and is for anyone who would like to come.

Liz Johnson added that the video didn't do it justice. She said that there are great short talks, and it is a real blessing to a lot of people.

Chris added that equally the 5pm service is more traditional and liturgical, with tea at 4.30pm, and the service at 5pm. There is something to suit everyone hopefully.

5. Vicar's report

Chris started with saying thank-you. Thanks to Bee for taking on the role of warden and to Michelle Shirley who has stepped down. She was mostly at the 7 o'clock service but also brought expertise to the HR side of running the church. She made a massive contribution and will be missed.

Clare Caless stepped down as Administrator in the summer last year and Hannah has taken on the role. Claire moved all the way to Hereford to get away! A huge thank-you to her for all she did. Mary Wilson has stepped down from the Leadership Team and overseeing house groups for 8 years. Thank-you to her.

Chris has enormous gratitude for those who do the same roles week in and week out. Some roles seem glamorous and others don't, but they all matter – Leadership Team, DCC, cleaning, gardening, giving lifts, house group leaders, Revive, children and youth volunteers, welcome team, worship team, PA, AV – the list goes on!

Chris suggested that St. Matt's gives well over 200 volunteer hours a week, so thank-you to everyone!

Chris then went through some of the highlights of the past year – continued growth of children and youth, Mark Lavender's ordination (the 4th from St. Matt's in a decade), Love High Brooms, multicultural evening, and church weekend with Nicola Neal. He then talked about Jon and Claire leaving which led on to talking about change.

Chris talked about change in the world as a whole and in our nation, and also in our Christian lives. We are changed when we become Christians and are then transformed throughout our lives. Change is not something we should fear but something we should embrace. There are many different reactions to change – some love it and see it as an adventure, while others fear it and the uncertainty it can bring.

Chris then went on to talk about 3 areas of change which will dominate church life over the next year or so.

1. The Team Ministry

St. Matt's is part of a team ministry – a partnership with St Peter's and Christ Church in Southborough and St. Lawrence in Bidborough.

The team was set up for maximum independence for each of the churches. With Gerald (Team Rector's) retirement, it is time to rethink ministry.....

- a) New team rector could radically alter how ministry is done
- b) Need for a change – the top of the team needs to minister more cohesively in Southborough, especially with the Southborough Hub coming soon
- c) There is the question of where St Thomas fits into that
- d) The Rural Dean believes it is clearly time to review
- e) The idea is to establish St. Matt's as a separate parish, which will remove duplication and free our decision making, but will give us control over our own destiny
- f) This does not mean we cannot cooperate with Southborough churches but part of the intention is to free us to work with other churches too where we see shared needs and opportunities – notably St Philips and also possibly St Luke's.
- g) Please pray - the DCC and Leadership Team both believe this is the natural step for us.

2. Change in staff

The biggest impact will be felt by Jon and Claire's departure.

We are still in the appointment process for both posts. We are close to being able to announce an appointment for Children and Families Minister. The interviews for Youth Minister have been delayed to the end of next month. We still hope to have both posts filled in time for the autumn term.

Change is inevitable, whoever takes up these roles. They will not be clones of Jon and Claire and we wouldn't want them to be. We want to build on the foundation that has been laid and we want

continuity in our values – but whoever takes up these roles will have different strengths and weaknesses, they will bring different emphases. It will be challenging but we need to welcome that challenge.

You may already be aware that we are changing the balance of roles to having a full time youth minister and part time children's minister, due to the change in demographic with more young people in youth and slightly less in children. It's easy to focus on what we see on Sundays, but midweek clubs significantly touch unchurched young people. The potential to grow a significant youth ministry / youth congregation is what is driving us with the youth role. Children remain a priority and we are looking for someone to develop the family side, particularly working with mums.

3. Changes to leadership

Jon and Claire leaving is only part of the change to the Leadership Team. During this last year Hannah has taken on the Administrator's role, so is on DCC and Leadership Team. Bee is now a warden so is on both DCC and Leadership Team. Mary has stepped down from overseeing house groups and Sarah will take that on in the autumn. Dedo is coming on to fill the vacant evangelism role and Katy Johnson will represent Seven.

Chris finished with the question "how do we respond?" and closed with another New Testament story – change in the church from Acts 1:8.

We live in a changing world and the church needs to be continually transforming if we are not to conform. It is a healthy thing that we are forced to change. We can choose how to respond to the change - negatively or positively.

6. Any other business and questions

Jessica Brierley asked how the other churches in the area are thinking, and what they would like in terms of a team ministry.

Chris explained that it is very complicated! They are exploring how the churches might work together. There is a natural Southborough area. The Southborough Hub is coming and that will hopefully bring the community together. St Thomas is on one side of the main road, and St Peter's and Christ Church are on the other. There are questions because St Thomas is more traditional. Christ Church is in a strong position, with St. Peter's less so. The idea is that a new team is formed that they all work together in. But it will take time to build relationships. If St. Matt's leave, there is no point in being part of that. The recommendation of the Rural Dean is that we become independent. We are looking at St. Matt's co-operating with other churches, not making a new Team Ministry. The decision needs to be made by the Team Ministry as it is now. They may not want us to leave. No decision will be made without everyone having a say. Our decision may be part of a larger decision.

Julian Brierley asked about the interviews for the youth position happening later than children's minister, and whether the new children's minister will be part of the appointment.

Chris advised that the children's minister wouldn't be involved in the appointment process, but the dynamic will be taken into account and how they would fit into the staff team as a whole. The new staff need to be able to work well together. We are not just looking for individuals, but people who can work together. The reason we are not losing children going up to youth, is because Jon and Claire have worked so well together.

Norman asked about replacing Jon and Claire. He asked if we have had any candidates apply or held any interviews yet as he feels we're running out of time.

Chris explained that the process being used is vigorous. We have people on the interview panel representing the DCC and youth work in church, Chris is on the panel, and the youth lead for the diocese. We have short listed for both roles. We have interviewed and can announce the Children's Minister in the next week hopefully. For the Youth Minister role there are two candidates to interview, which will be at the end of June. We had planned to interview next week, but due to

candidates and panel schedules, had to move it to the end of July. Both would be able to start in autumn due to only needing to give short notice. The only problem will be if we don't appoint either.

Mike Harrowing said that Chris had mentioned about 4 ordinations in the past decade, and commented how lovely it was to see some of them come back to the church weekend away. He believes this says a lot about the St. Matt's family and he said thank-you to everyone and to Chris and Carole for making this the case. He then asked, in the sense of sending out, how do we as a church go out and be missional together. What's at the forefront of Chris' thinking about how the church network works?

Chris answered that there is a balance to be found between enabling people to be disciples where they are and providing things for people to be part of as a church in mission. The key is hearing God for what he wants us to do. We try to run church with a light structure so people have time to do what God wants them to do where they are as well as do church.

The meeting ended with an offertory song and blessing.