

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
of the Parish of St. Matthew, High Brooms**  
Held at St. Matthew's Church on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Welcome and prayer**

Chris Wicks welcomed everyone to our first St. Matthew's APCM as a new parish. It's not how we imagined it when we became an independent parish last year.

At this meeting, Chris wants to make sure everyone has their democratic right to stand for election if they wish. He also wants it to be a good example of free speech. He explained that this is a bit more complicated tonight and suggested that when someone wants to speak, they raise a hand, and we will come to you. Chris explained that, to make sure each microphone is only being used by one person, Ian will come to you once you raise your hand, you can tell Ian your comment, and he will repeat it into the microphone.

Chris then prayed for the meeting.

**ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

**1. Welcome**

Chris welcomed those present to this meeting and explained that it used to be called the Vestry Meeting. It has one purpose and that is to elect churchwardens. You don't have to be on the electoral roll to vote at this meeting, just to reside in the parish.

**2. Election of Churchwardens**

There are two nominations for the post of churchwarden this year. These are Bridgette Shaw and David Johnson. Chris asked if anyone else wished to stand for the role, but no-one came forward.

**Chris Wicks therefore declared that David Johnson and Bridgette Shaw are duly elected as churchwardens.**

Chris went on to explain that this meeting would normally take place before the end of April. However, due to Covid19, the deadline was extended to the end of October. The newly elected churchwardens would then go to the Archdeacon's visitation to swear loyalty to the Bishop of Rochester. Due to Covid19, they are unable to do this, so they now have to be sworn in here and Chris can stand in for the Bishop.

Bridgette and David said the following words together:

"I declare that I will faithfully and diligently perform the duties of the office of churchwarden for the parish of St. Matthew, High Brooms."

Chris Wicks then replied:

"As duly appointed Substitute for the Bishop of Rochester, I hereby admit you to the office of churchwarden for the parish of St. Matthew, High Brooms."

**ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING**

**1. Welcome**

Chris then welcomed those present to our Annual Church Meeting.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies have been received from Jane Richardson, Graham Dunn, Julie Dunn, Sarah West, Richard West, Elizabeth Haughan and Kevin Barnes.

### **3. Minutes of SPCM of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019**

Chris explained that these are not last year's APCM minutes, as that was held when we were still part of the team ministry. As we are a new parish, we had a Special Parochial Church Meeting, and these are the minutes we are accepting.

The minutes were approved as a true copy of that meeting.

Proposed: Alistair Granger

Seconded: Bridgette Shaw

### **4. Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

### **5. Vicar's report**

Chris Wicks gave the following report:

This is not how I imagined our first APCM as a new parish! We are six months late and it is taking place in the most unusual of circumstances.

APCM's are always challenging in that they force you to look back – the period we are meant to be focusing on is January to December 2019 (that seems like a lifetime ago now.) And I am getting to an age when I am not sure that my memory is actually that good anymore so I would rather break with tradition and focus on where we are now. Both on recent events and the outlook for the future!

But to do that I do need to start in 2019 – last year as a new parish we began a process of looking at what we were doing as a church and the opportunities we had, with a view to developing a 3 year and 5 year plan to develop mission and ministry. We had an excellent leader's day led by the archdeacon of Rochester (Andy Wooding-Jones), with both the PCC and Leadership Team. And what we were doing connected with a new emphasis with the Diocese in which every church was being asked to set goals for growth over a similar time frame. In the event, all that planning feels like it could be for nothing. We now live in a very different world. A world in which most of what we were planning for is no longer possible, and in the light of our financial situation (which Kate will talk about later) is completely unrealistic!

It would be easy to be disheartened, but the question is whether the glass is half empty or half full, whether we focus on what we can't do or what we can do. Personally, I would opt for the latter every time.

I have lost track of how many times I or others have said we live in times of unprecedented change. Well now we really do....

A year ago, we would never have foreseen the situation we find ourselves in – social distancing, limitations on who can gather, no physical children's work or youth ministry, the inability to even sing in church. It has been a very strange six months and it seems to me that for many of us it is getting more difficult. Life is characterised by uncertainty and isolation and it would seem to me it is taking an increasing toll on our mental wellbeing. It is not good for man to live alone (or women). There is also the question in all of our minds of how much worse it will get. Will we have another lockdown, a surge in factions, what will be the impact on business employment and security?

But neither would we have predicted that we would have an online presence with people joining us from our community and further afield. It's a very different world.

Understanding the times... there is a line in Chronicles which talks about the men of Issachar, who understood the times... and knew what Israel should do. 1 Chronicles 12:32 relates to the action of making David King.

It may be that we are truly living through unprecedented times.

The time of Jesus' birth was significant, as it was one of most settled periods of Roman rule

- Pax Roma
- Roman Roads
- One language – and easy communication

The result was that the Gospel spread in a way that was unprecedented.

The Reformation – there were three fundamental truths. Salvation by faith, the priest hood of all believers and the authority of scriptures. The Reformation took place at the moment the invention of the printing press was made, so the mass production of the scriptures meant availability to all was possible. A few years ago, in an “Imagine” documentary, Alan Yentob was examining the transition from paper and ink to digital. He said, “Guttenberg man is morphing into digital man...” He was talking about the transmission of knowledge. Even then, what we are able to do now would have been impossible. The growth of technologies like Zoom and Microsoft teams has made keeping some connection possible and has made the ability to communicate as never before a reality. If the epidemic had happed only a few years ago, what realistically could we have done?

### **Are we living at a time of unprecedented change – one of those epoch moments?**

How should we then live....

Is our glass half empty or half full - do we focus on what we can do or what we cannot?

Not everyone gets on with technology and particularly zoom – but we do need to use it.

We can bemoan what we can't do, or we can seize the opportunities we do have. In our future planning we were focusing in particular on community engagement. Most of what we were exploring is no longer possible, but we are able to do things now that we never dreamt of then.

Withing a month we hope to open a community larder (Liz and Jan who are driving this forward). It was never going to be on our plans but it represents an unprecedented opportunity to engage with our community – I am sure there will be others too!

### **Don't focus on what we can't do – focus on what we can do.**

I am really grateful for how hard everyone has worked this year. The staff team have gone above and beyond, as have so many members of our church family, who have checked on people, shopped for people, learnt new technologies to lead us in worship, run house groups or youth groups, or learnt how to stream services. Ironically, we have seen a growth in creativity that is unprecedented.

So, thank you to everyone who has played a part in this journey – lets work together to shape our future.

Chris then asked if anyone had any questions or comments at this stage.

Mary Wilson asked how many people watch the service online remotely. Chris replied that it has been fairly consistent all the way through. The most ever was about 90 live on Facebook. At the moment we get about 20-30 in church, 45-50 live on Facebook, and about 10 live on You Tube. Afterwards there are much higher views on both channels. Working out who is local and who isn't is hard. Local families who would drop in at Christmas who appear to be with us every week. Some of the later views might be someone dropping in and dropping out, not watching it all.

## **6. Trustees' Report**

Chris explained that the main part of this report is on pages 1-7. The report is written by members of the PCC, churchwardens, the treasurer, the safeguarding officer, and Hannah Mwesigwa. It is written in the form that is needed by the charity commission. It's the first time we've had to do it ourselves, so we may make adjustments to it for next year.

Chris asked if there were any comments or questions about pages 1-7.

Jean Best advised that she is no longer on the Street Pastors prayer team and asked that that be amended for future reference.

Chris thanked Hannah for writing this report alongside everything else that has been going on this year.

The report was accepted with the above amendment.

Proposed: Matthew Fryett

Seconded: Alistair Granger

## **7. Electoral Roll**

The changes in the electoral roll of St. Matthew's Church since the SPCM last year is as follows:

<b>Total at SPCM 2019</b>	<b>Additions</b>	<b>Deletions</b>	<b>Total at APCM 2020</b>
<b>121</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>124</b>

The updated electoral roll was received.

Proposed: Bridgette Shaw

Seconded: Carole Wicks

## **8. Church wardens report**

This is found on pages 4-5 of the Trustees' Report.

Chris added to the report that we will be having building work starting next week (quinquennial works). He explained that every 5 years we have an external architect inspection, which gives us work that needs doing to maintain the building. We have to do it within the 5 years and we save the money annually with the Diocese. There is currently quite a lot of remedial work that needs doing to the building, including pointing work and brick work, and some work to the roof.

The church will be encased in scaffolding and 4m corrugated iron sheets for 2 months while the work happens.

The churchwardens' report was accepted.

Proposed: Michael Southwick

Seconded: Suzanne Owen

## **9. Safeguarding report**

This is found on page 16 of the Trustee's Report.

Linde Horseman is our Safeguarding Officer and she has written this report. Chris thanked Linde for being really diligent in her role.

This report was accepted.

Proposed: Mary Wilson

Seconded: Dawn Jones

## **10. Deanery Synod report**

This is found on pages 17-18 of the Trustee's Report.

Mary Wilson and Jane Richardson have represented us on Deanery Synod in the last 3 years. Chris thanked Mary for writing this report.

This report was accepted.

Proposed: Jean Best

Seconded: David Johnson

## **11. Parish Treasurers Report**

This is found on pages 8-15 of the Trustees' Report.

Chris explained that the accounts and treasurer's report are also compiled in such a way that is required by the Charity Commission.

Kate Whitehead then gave a brief summary of 2019 and how the church's finances are now.

We ended 2019 with a deficit of about £4,000. This was driven by an increase in costs, predominantly on the church hall. There was also slightly reduced giving in 2019. This deficit was funded by the gift day pot from 2017. At moment we have about £10,000 left in that pot.

So far in 2020, there have been quite a few challenges around reduced giving. Added to that, all the activities we do that make money have stopped. Matt's Monkeys brought in £1,000 in 2019, Friday café makes money, as does community lunch.

We have been fortunate that we have been able to negotiate with the Diocese to reduce our parish share for 2020 by £10,000. Tom Tyler (Youth Minister) also went on furlough, so we have claimed about £7,000 from that scheme. This year is still quite hard to predict. Kate can't guarantee how people will give. Some people have given one off donations since March, which has really helped this year. However, we don't know if they will come again.

2020 is looking like it will end with a deficit of about £8,000, which will wipe out the gift day pot.

Looking ahead to next year, we will probably have to give £15,000 more to the Diocese and we can't really reduce that. There will be no furlough scheme on a long-term basis. The PCC are looking at ways to reduce expenditure and increase income and we will update the congregation later in the year.

Kate then asked if anyone had a questions or comments.

Liz Johnson commented that she thought the gift day pot was ring fenced for children and youth. Kate replied that it is, and if we didn't have it, we wouldn't be able to keep employing the staff we've got. It has been used to make sure salaries for youth and children's ministers are paid.

Mary asked whether people are making use of the online giving, and how that compares with cash offerings we've lost. Kate replied that people are using it. It doesn't compensate for cash at the moment. But people have been using it so it was worth setting it up.

Chris asked those present to show their appreciation for Kate. The Treasurer role requires a lot of time and effort and Kate does a fantastic job.

The Treasurer's report and annual accounts were accepted.

Proposed: David Johnson

Seconded: Dawn Jones

## **12. Re-appointment of Independent Examiner**

Kate explained that she has emailed David Stephens to ask if he is happy to carry on being our independent examiner. She is assuming that he will be happy to carry on.

It was proposed to re-appoint David Stephens as our independent examiner for 2021, on the condition that he agrees to this.

Proposed: Kate Whitehead

Seconded: Bridgette Shaw

## **13. Elections and Appointment of Tellers (if necessary)**

Chris proposed that if tellers are needed to count votes in the unlikely event of an election, then the churchwardens will be appointed. All those present were in agreement with this.

## **Election of PCC Representatives**

Chris explained that we appointed our PCC for the first time in 2019. We had the potential to elect 12 PCC members, and elected 7. Those 7 were elected for 3 years. However, it is not helpful for them all to finish at the same time, so it was agreed that a third would stand down each year, to be re-elected if they want to be.

This year, Andrew MacKay has asked to step down and not be re-elected.

The churchwardens drew lots to choose the other 2 members to stand for re-election. These are Richard West and Ian Wilson. They are both happy to stand again.

Brian Hobden has also been nominated to stand for election to the PCC.

Chris then asked if anyone else would like to stand for election or nominate someone. There were no other nominations.

**Chris Wicks therefore declared that Brian Hobden, Ian Wilson, and Richard West are duly elected to the PCC.**

### **Election of Deanery Synod Representatives**

St. Matthew's Church has been represented on the Tunbridge Wells Deanery Synod by Mary Wilson and Jane Richardson for the last three years.

Chris explained that, in the Church of England, whatever council someone is elected to, they serve on the councils below it as well. So, when someone is elected for Deanery Synod, they sit on our PCC as well.

The levels from local to national are PCC, Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod, General Synod. Things get debated and decisions made in the appropriate area. PCCs can put a nomination to a synod if they want to. Jane is standing down this year, but Mary is happy to be re-elected.

Chris asked if anyone else would like to stand or nominate someone to stand for Deanery Synod. There were no other nominations.

**Chris Wicks therefore declared Mary Wilson duly elected to Deanery Synod.**

### **14. Appointment of Sidespeople**

Sidespeople is the term that the Church of England uses for those on welcome team and those who do the collection. To be appointed as a sidesperson, you need to be on the electoral roll.

Hannah Mwesigwa then read out the names of those put forward by the churchwardens to be sidespeople for the coming year.

Jane Andrews, Norman Andrews, Sue Andrews, Jean Best, Rosemary Blanchard, Gordon Blanchard, Mark Bray, Jacquie Bray, Caroline Clark, Katy Coles, Heather Corbett-Smith, Denise Cummins, Matthew Fryett, Jan Gabriel, Mark Gabriel, Lynn Goreham, Hannah Granger, Liz Johnson, Dawn Jones, Elaine Latchford, Jane Lawson, Hannah Mwesigwa, Wendy Newborn, Giles Parratt, Celia Robertson, Jane Sexton, Patrick Sexton, Clare Smith, Mike Southwick, Kirsty Walmsley and Mary Wilson.

The churchwardens also requested the power to co-opt if extra help is required.

The above names were accepted.

Proposed: Ian Wilson

Seconded: Carole Wicks

### **15. Any Other Business**

Liz Johnson asked if we have still got ring fenced legacy money.

Kate replied that we have. Although we have a deficit, we still have money in the bank. There is a £57,000 legacy, and money in the bank to be solvent. Chris added that it is good practice to have reserves of 3 months. The PCC has chosen to set aside the legacy for a capital project. It was left by Helen Clark. We also have money held at the Diocese for quinquennial works, which we hope will be enough for the work about to start. Lastly, we have reserves - we have more than a third of a year in reserves.

Chris Wicks thanked the churchwardens for all they do throughout the year, and for the staff team who work incredibly hard. He also thanked everyone who plays a part one way or another.

He lastly said thank you to all those present for coming out to a strange APCM.

Chris closed the meeting with the blessing.