

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the Parish of St. Matthew, High Brooms

Held at St. Matthew's Church on Monday 15th May 2023

Chris welcomed everyone to the APCM. He thanked everyone for coming out on a Monday night.

There are two meetings this evening. The first meeting is to elect churchwardens and then the second meeting is the annual parochial church meeting.

There were 18 people present for the meetings.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Welcome

Chris explained that this meeting has one purpose and that is to elect churchwardens.

2. Election of Churchwardens

There were two nominations for the role of church warden at St. Matthew's Church – David Johnson and Brian Hobden. Chris asked if anyone else would like to stand for the role. There were no other nominations.

Chris declared David Johnson and Brian Hobden duly elected as wardens for the coming year.

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Welcome

Chris then welcomed those present to our Annual Church Meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies have been received from Kate Whitehead, Norman Andrews, Sue Andrews and Jane Andrews.

3. Minutes of APCM of 25th April 2022

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

Proposed: Ali Granger

Seconded: David Johnson

All those present were happy that these minutes are a true record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

5. Vicar's report

Chris gave the following report:

As always, we want to use our annual meeting to reflect on church life. There have been many challenges in the past year but there has also been much to be thankful for.

One of the highlights of the year has been the continued success of the community larder led by Jan and Liz and their team, built on the partnerships they have forged with individuals and groups from the local community like the Lions. Through those partnerships they are meeting the growing needs in our

community. It is deeply shocking that in a seemingly affluent part of the country so many people are struggling with food poverty and need the support of the larder. Thank you to Jan and Liz for all the work they put into the larder and thanks to all the many volunteers who work with them.

A much more low-key highlight has been the warm space that we ran across the winter months. Although it never really took off in the way we had hoped or expected, it has become an oasis for people looking for support and relationship. We are very grateful to Jill and the art group that she ran under Embark21 and her continued involvement with the hub now. With the cold weather over the warm space has become a community hub, drawing together church people with people from the wider community to participate in creativity, games, or just chat and the opportunity to have a hot light lunch.

Another highlight has been the mid-week clubs – Deeper serving primary school children and now led by Julia, and Ignite for secondary school aged young people, which our volunteers run under the leadership of Berti from TWYFC. Both of these groups also include food as well as fun – toast at Deeper and a hot cooked meal at Ignite which regularly has 20 young people sitting down to eat together and to share their lives with each other. It's interesting that the twin threads of providing food and the unstinting work of volunteers is key to all those things.

Last year has not been without its challenges though:

With reduced giving and rising costs, we found ourselves facing an unprecedented deficit when we prepared the budget for this year, leading to the difficult decision to make the post of Children's and Families Minister redundant at St. Matthew's. This was not an easy decision and was one we made reluctantly. We are incredibly grateful for all that Lois contributed to St. Matthew's Church over many years and especially during the pandemic.

Really this report is about last year and not this year, but I could not simply move on without highlighting how grateful we are to the volunteers who have stepped up and filled the gaps especially in children's and youth ministry. Their willingness to serve in this way and their commitment to our young people is truly amazing.

As I said earlier, one of the threads that goes through every area of ministry at St. Matt's is volunteer team members. Everything we are involved in is dependent on the willing and sacrificial service of volunteers, so whether you serve in the areas I have highlighted or in the many other areas of church life, we really want to give you a heartfelt thank you for all you do. It really is appreciated.

And if you are wondering where you fit into St. Matt's or how to become more involved, can I encourage you to prayerfully consider where you might fit in. Whilst our volunteers are amazing, there is still truth in Jesus' words when he said to his volunteer team – the disciples: the harvest is plentiful so pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers out into his harvest field.

None of this is our harvest or our ministry, it is the Lord's, and in every area of church life we have amazing volunteers – but they all work under more pressure than is needed because every team needs more members. So pray to the Lord of the Harvest....

Before I finish there is one additional thank you to give – an acknowledgment that alongside everyone who volunteers and serves on teams there is one person who works tirelessly behind the scenes to bring organisation, provide leadership and offer support and that person is Hannah. Thank you to her from all of us.

6. Trustees' Report

Chris explained this is the official report that the PCC has to submit to the Charity Commission. That's why it is in the format it is in. Thank you to Hannah for preparing it on behalf of the PCC.

The report was accepted.

Proposed: Matthew Taylor

Seconded: Liz Johnson

There were no questions or comments.

7. Electoral Roll

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

Total at APCM 2022	Additions	Deletions	Total at APCM 2023
114	5	4	115

The updated electoral roll was received.

Proposed: Mary Wilson

Seconded: Brian Hobden

8. Church wardens report

Brian added to the warden's report that he and David would like to echo Chris' heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and to Hannah.

The churchwardens' report was accepted.

Proposed: Ali Granger

Seconded: Ian Wilson

9. Safeguarding report

Julia is our Parish Safeguarding Officer. Julia explained that at the moment she is doing the day to day safeguarding role, dealing with reports and keeping up to date with things. Hannah is doing the DBS side of safeguarding at the moment. Hannah would happily hand this over if someone wanted to do it. Thank you to Hannah and the wardens for their support.

The safeguarding report was accepted.

Proposed: Matthew Taylor

Seconded: Phil Grainger

10. Deanery Synod report

Chris explained that we are supposed to have two Deanery Synod representatives, but we've only had one for a while. If anyone would be interested in representing St. Matt's on the Deanery Synod, Mary would welcome the company and sharing of the report writing. Mary has written the report on the meetings over the year. Mary also represents Deanery Synod on Diocesan Synod.

Mary added that she has found the meetings interesting and relevant recently. The last one was all about communication and how we as churches address communication. There is also nearly always food at the meetings!

The Deanery Synod only meets 3 times a year, but if you are a Deanery Synod rep then you are also on PCC.

The Deanery Synod report was accepted.

Proposed: David Johnson

Seconded: Carole Wicks

11. Parish Treasurers Report

The other person who puts an amazing amount of work into her role and into these reports is Kate, our treasurer. The accounts are in the format for the Charity Commission, so they are not the easiest to understand.

Kate has asked Matt to talk about the treasurer's report in her absence.

Matt explained that the church finances are a very mixed story at the moment.

In 2022 we had a surplus of about £9,000, plus a very generous legacy of £85,000. We ended the year with cash in hand of £280,000, which was up from last year.

Our finances are made up of restricted and unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds can be used for anything. Restricted funds are for things like the community larder, community hub, etc. £13,000 is restricted at the moment. The larder has been great at raising funds and grants for their work, so the restricted funds have increased during the last year. They have an ongoing battle to keep the funds up to keep supplying food for the larder.

If we take out restricted funds and the legacy donation, it reduces the cash in hand to £182,000.

This is down from about £220,000 before Covid. This year we have been very fortunate with the legacy, but the general decline in funds is down to reduced income.

There are a couple of things to note from the surplus – if restricted income is taken out then it reduces to £2,000. Income was down year on year, and it is only due to a couple of one-off donations that we weren't looking at an £8,000 deficit for 2022.

Parish share is our biggest cost as a church and is what we pay to the Diocese each year. There are 3 parts to parish share – the vicar and parsonage costs, the parish costs, and support of other parishes in the Diocese. We were asked to pay £72,000 in 2022 but we only paid £62,000. The Diocese would like us to show the accounts with the full amount in.

So without the saving we made on parish share, without the one-off donations and without restricted funds we would have seen deficit of £18,000 in 2022.

Income - Unrestricted voluntary income was down £2,000 last year, even with the one-off donations.

Restricted income rose.

Regular giving has declined rapidly over the last couple of years – it is down by about £10,000 or 10%.

There has been a slight uptick in the last few months. This is positive but we are not sure if that will continue. Kate will give an update to the congregation soon.

Expenditure – this was down in 2022 for unrestricted expenses, including parish share. When we look forward, it's a mixed view.

The legacy has helped put the church in a much stronger position. Utility bills have zoomed up over last 12 months. We have budgeted £16,000 for utilities this year, as compared to about £4,000 budgeted for last year.

The aim of the church is to balance our books on an ongoing basis. It will be a struggle to balance this year. If we included the full parish share that is being asked for and all the costs for this year, our deficit would have been £46,000. The redundancy has been necessary to reduce that deficit, and a parish share saving will get us to about £18,000 deficit. Some costs have been a bit lower than expected. But please keep praying for the church finances.

Questions

- Do we tithe that legacy, or will it be included in parish share?

Chris explained that parish share is calculated on the income of the year before, so we will see an increase in our expected parish share at some point in regard to the legacy. There are some set costs that make up

most of the parish share amount, but then they ask for 10% of our income from the previous year. That's what goes towards helping struggling parishes. We could still negotiate and reduce that a bit. All churches are having the same discussions and are underpaying. The Diocese ask for an amount and then we go back and say what we can afford to pay. We would like to be able to pay our way, but we have to balance it with our deficit.

Matt added that we also tithe 10% of our income to charities, as well as being asked to give 10% to the Diocese. We are now looking at giving 10% away in total so some of our tithe makes up the part of the parish share that helps struggling parishes.

When you get a legacy like that, the PCC has to make hard decisions about how to use them, so legacies tend to be reserved for capital long lasting projects, rather than just balancing our books.

- Please can we pass on a massive vote of thanks to Kate for the huge amount of work that she puts into the role week on week.

- Has electronic giving made a difference?

Brian answered that the card machine is being used regularly but for small amounts, and this is staying fairly stable. Not very much is given online. Most people give to church by direct debit.

- Is it worth the baskets going round? It feels embarrassing when it just gets passed along and not much gets put in it.

The PCC will consider the basket and cash giving at their next meeting.

Matt added that there has been a definite increase in giving since the beginning of this year after a rapid and big decline, so it would worth looking at how that is coming in.

- Is the intent for this year not to increase our parish share?

Chris replied that while we are in deficit our intention would not be to increase the parish share very much. We haven't had Diocese leaning on us about it either, which is good but not what we were expecting.

- Has the PCC thought of how to use the legacy yet?

Chris replied that there are still a whole lot of questions around buildings and where we are with all our buildings going forward. We are still on the legal journey with the Bethel, so we need to wait to make any decisions.

The Treasurer's report and annual accounts were accepted.

Proposed: Ali Granger

Seconded: Graham Church

12. Re-appointment of Independent Examiner

It was proposed to re-appoint David Stephens as our independent examiner for the 2023 accounts.

Proposed: Ian Wilson

Seconded: David Johnson

13. Elections and Appointment of Tellers (if necessary)

Election of PCC Representatives

Chris explained that people on the PCC are elected for 3 years but can re-elected if they want to be. This year Ian Wilson has completed 3 years but is happy to stand for re-election.

Phil Grainger has also been nominated to stand for PCC.

There are other places vacant as well, so if anyone else wants to stand for PCC, they can be nominated or nominate themselves. There were no other nominations.

Chris Wicks therefore declared that Ian Wilson and Phil Grainger have been duly elected to the PCC.
Chris thanked them for being willing to stand.

Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

There is one vacancy for Deanery Synod as Mary Wilson is happy to carry on as a representative. Being elected to Deanery Synod means you would be on the PCC and part of Deanery Synod. There were no nominations for this vacancy.

If anyone wishes to stand, they can be co-opted during the year.

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

14. Appointment of Sidespeople

Sidespeople are those on welcome and coffee teams at all of our services. The Church of England calls them sidespeople.

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, Julia Church, Jan Gabriel, Mark Gabriel, Jill Grainger, Phil Grainger, Hannah Granger, Antonia Harrowing, Mike Harrowing, Liz Johnson, Hannah Mwesigwa, Elaine Parratt, Dedo Rampe, Jane Sexton, Patrick Sexton, Clare Smith, Mike Southwick, Jane Taylor, Matthew Taylor.

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

Thank you to everyone who serves on this team.

The above names were accepted.

Proposed: Ian Wilson

Seconded: Brian Hobden

15. Any Other Business

There was no more business.

Chris closed the meeting with the grace.