

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

Held at St. Matthew's Church on Monday 13th May 2024

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 28 people present for the meetings.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Welcome

Chris explained that this is a very brief meeting, just to elect church wardens. You have to be on the electoral roll to vote in the annual church meeting, but to vote for church wardens you just have to be resident in the parish.

Last year Brian Hobden and David Johnson were our church wardens.

Chris then explained that in the course of this year, the Church of England has changed its rules with regard to elections. In the past, we could just announce people as duly elected if no-one else was standing. Now, if anyone wishes, you can ask for a vote even if there are not more people standing than the number of roles. That applies to any election tonight. It is so people can contest if they want to by asking for a vote.

2. Election of Churchwardens

There were two nominations for the role of church warden at St. Matthew's Church – David Johnson and Brian Hobden.

David was nominated by Graham Church and Brian Hobden.

Brian was nominated by David Johnson and Graham Church.

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.

Thank you to both of them for being willing to stand again.

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Welcome

Chris then welcomed those present to our Annual Church Meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies have been received from Cindy Whybra, Suzanne Owen, Dedo Rampe, Gill Fuller, Matthew Taylor and Paul Shilling.

3. Minutes of APCM of 15th May 2023

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

Proposed: Ali Granger

Seconded: Julia Church

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, which is being recorded for anyone who wants to listen to it afterwards.

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who has contributed to the ministry of St. Matt's over the past year. There is no area of ministry at St. Matt's that would function without the dedicated work of volunteers who serve on the various teams.

It is exciting to see how St. Matt's is evolving and there are some common threads that run through every aspect of church life. Sunday mornings continue to grow as does the sense of community as we have become more international with a number of families from Hong Kong joining us and more local with more newcomers living within the High Brooms area.

At this time, it feels like St. Matt's greatest strength is in the areas of church life that touch our community, whether they are aimed at adults or young people.

By far the most significant of these continues to be the Community Larder led by Jan and Liz and the team made up of church members and volunteers from the wider community. On Wednesdays the Community Hub has continued to grow, catering for both church members and individuals from the local community. Work with children and youth also continues to flourish with Deeper at capacity on Monday evenings and Ignite fluctuating a little more but still thriving. Baby and Toddlers is quieter than it used to be but is very much valued by those who attend.

Besides the obvious thread that all these ministries are very much community based, the other significant thread is the importance of team – none of them could happen without the commitment and hard work of their respective teams, and we are incredibly grateful for everyone who serves in this way.

This thread continues into ministry on Sundays – team again is at the heart of everything that happens. Welcome at the door and with teas and coffee, worship ably supported by the tech team and of course children, where Heather and Katy and their team have led our children's ministry, and youth where Mary and Linde stepped up when Natalie moved to Leeds. Linde is now stepping down and we are grateful for the commitment she has demonstrated to our young people on Sundays. There are always changes to the make-up of our teams and we are incredibly grateful to all those who have moved on this year as well as those who continue on team.

When we reflect on church life and particularly the significance of each area within it, there is another clear thread. I think I can say with confidence that every team needs to continue to grow. There are some groups like Ignite on Tuesdays where this is especially apparent but actually every team would benefit from just one of two more team members.

Our future

Those of you who were in church yesterday will be aware that this will be my last APCM as Vicar of St. Matthew's. Next year, after what will be 32 years at St. Matthew's, I will be retiring and our time here will come to an end. Our plan had been to announce this today but bearing in mind our normal attendance at these meetings we felt we needed to speak to the congregation yesterday first. Please forgive me for repeating what was said yesterday before I go on to talk about the implications for the future.

I will reach state retirement age next April when I will be 66 and it feels to us that it will be the right time to retire. This means that if everything goes to plan, the Sunday after Easter will be my final Sunday at St. Matt's.

It has been the greatest privilege of my life to lead St. Matthew's. 30 years is a long time and not being part of the life of this church in the future is very hard to get my head around. It's because of that, that we feel it is right to give as much notice as possible of our plans even though our formal notice will not be given until three months before we actually leave. We know personally that we need to have this time to come to terms with the change and to make plans for our future and we are very aware that you our church

family will also need that time, and many of you will be going through similar emotions and questions about the future.

There are no words to describe what you all mean to us both and we truly cannot believe that we are moving towards the end of this season.

At this point I would like to ask Carole to join me to say a few words from her perspective.

Carole - I guess we have always known this time would come. We always knew that when we retired we would have to leave St. Matt's and move away, as that is the Church of England's rules. So it's not a surprise.

However the reality hasn't sunk in yet. I think my head is still in the sand and I can't imagine a life or living anywhere different to this! 32 years is a long time, and as we have journeyed with many of you over this time, so you have journeyed with us, sharing together births, losses, celebrations, weddings as well as challenges.

We have always tried to be open and honest with everyone which is why we are sharing this now, so that we can all adapt and make changes in the coming year.

We are just so thankful to you all, for you mean so much to us and we are so grateful for your love and kindness and for the way you have journeyed with us as hopefully we have journeyed with you.

Of course we will keep you updated as and when we know what we are doing and where we will be living. But you have not got rid of us yet! We are here for another year, so we want to enjoy this time together and celebrate what God has done and end well.

Chris - One of the reasons for sharing this with you now is to give everyone time to process it properly. For Carole and I this feels like a bereavement, and we know we need time to process it and we are aware that this will also be the case for many of you. But there is another reason for sharing it now and that is that we want to leave the church in the best possible place for the future and to allow for a proper hand over and succession planning.

So for everyone's peace of mind it may be helpful to say something about the process. There are two key principles at the heart of how the Church of England manages the appointment process for new incumbents.

The first is that the outgoing minister should not influence the appointment of their successor. So all of the decisions that relate to the appointment process will be made by the PCC. They will be responsible for creating a parish profile to tell prospective applicants about the parish and the role. They will compile both a job description and a person description of what they are looking for in a new minister.

The PCC will then elect two individuals to act on their behalf throughout this process. They will be supported in all of this by the Rural Dean and the Archdeacon Sharon Copestake who was with us over Easter. Our patrons, who are a faith based charitable trust called the Church Pastoral Aid Society or CPAS, will also have a key role in the process but it will be ultimately the parish representatives appointed by the PCC who will make the decision of who they wish to appoint. Even then there is a final check and balance in that every appointment then needs to be approved by the Bishop.

The second principle in the appointment process is the need for a "fire break" or a gap between incumbents – the term for that is an interregnum. This means that whilst some things can be done prior to my departure, others cannot. The official notice is three months before I leave, and this will trigger the Archdeacon coming to speak to the PCC about the process. Some things can be done in advance, like working on the parish profile, but the process can only properly begin once I have finished my ministry here at St. Matt's.

So the final question many of you may be wondering about is what happens during the interregnum? The legal responsibility for the running of the church will be that of the Church Wardens (currently David and Brian) and they will work with Hannah as Operations Manager to deal with the day to day running of the church. The Rural Dean and the Archdeacon will also be there to support them in this role. The intention is

that St. Matt's will continue to function as it always has and to ensure that this happens we have been encouraging our regular speakers and leaders to undergo further Diocesan training so that St. Matt's will have its own home grown ministry during the interregnum and that it is in the best possible place to continue to flourish under new leadership, which I am confident will be the reality.

Questions:

Do the two reps for the appointment panel need to be from the PCC or can they be anybody?

Chris replied that they have to be PCC members.

In the interregnum, who would be person to do banns and communion?

Chris replied that it has to be a clergy person for communion. Banns can be read by anyone authorised to lead.

Brian then added that, at end of the vicar's report, someone often stands up and says thank you to Chris for the last 12 months. After Chris's announcement he wants to say thank you for all the time they have given to St. Matt's. 32 years is a long time, almost half of Chris' life! Tonight is not the time to say goodbye, but we are starting the year with lots of lasts. Some will be more emotional than others. Chris and Carole's last Christmas will probably be emotional. The last APCM may not be!

We want to formally say thank you to both Chris and Carole. Lots of people know Chris and Carole as they have been here such a long time. This is testament to their influence in the community over the years, with lots of people owing them a huge debt of thanks. They have led us as a church as big issues have been going on, they have had wise council and have led lives as examples of faith.

This is the first of many opportunities to say thank you over the coming year. Everybody here will be praying for you both as you move forward, to find the right place to live, the right church, etc.

Thank you for everything you've done and will do over the next year to leave us in a good place. It is hard to imagine St. Matt's without Chris. Your legacy will live on longer than then time you have been here.

6. Trustees' Report

Chris explained this is the official report that the PCC has to submit to the Charity Commission. It covers the year January 2023 to December 2023. Thank you to Hannah for preparing it on behalf of the PCC.

The report was accepted.

Proposed: Liz Johnson

Seconded: Ali Granger

All those present were happy to accept the report.

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 2023	Additions	Deletions	Total at APCM 2024
115	6	9	112

The updated electoral roll was received.

Proposed: Mary Wilson

Seconded: Dee Harper

All those present were happy to accept the updated electoral roll.

8. Church wardens report

The churchwardens' report was accepted.

Proposed: Graham Church

Seconded: Sophie Wilson

All those present were happy to accept the report.

9. Safeguarding report

Julia shared that safeguarding is very important. It requires quite a lot of work in church. She has enjoyed the roll although it can be challenging. It can be busy, but everything is important, however small. Julia sees herself as someone who does a puzzle – she collects the puzzle pieces and reports on them and puts them together. It is important to let Julia know if anything feels uncomfortable or worrying.

Everything reported is confidential, except for passing it on to those who need to know. Anything that is a risk to anyone is passed onto the appropriate authorities or the Diocese.

The safeguarding report was accepted.

Proposed: Phil Grainger

Seconded: Mike Southwick

All those present were happy to accept the report.

10. Deanery Synod report

Chris explained that Mary is our only Deanery Synod representative currently. She attends meetings and reports back to the PCC. She is also on Diocesan Synod.

The Deanery Synod report was accepted.

Proposed: Jean Best

Seconded: Jane Richardson

All those present were happy to accept the report.

11. Parish Treasurers Report

In Kate's love of numbers, she has worked out that Chris will have been vicar for over a quarter of the time the church has been standing!

Kate gave a high-level overview of the accounts, looking at unrestricted income / expenditure and restricted income / expenditure separately. Restricted means for specific things like the larder.

Unrestricted is about the general running of the church.

Unrestricted income from giving and donations in 2023 was similar to the previous year. This is very encouraging as there were some big one-off donations at the end of 2022. We also benefited from high interest rates in 2023, which we weren't expecting, which provided an extra £6k in income.

Overall, unrestricted income was up by just under £9k.

When setting the 2023 budget, the PCC were faced with very high quotes for utilities. We negotiated some better deals, but utilities still cost 30% more than previous year.

However, total expenses in 2023 were around £15k lower than in 2022, mainly due to reduced salary costs.

We ended 2023 with a surplus of £26k, which was a bit of a relief after a number of years of expenses generally being higher than income.

For 2024, the PCC agreed a balanced budget, which is that budgeted expenses would equal forecasted income. However donations and giving is down by about £1k a month so far this year. But Kate is hopeful it will improve as the congregation usually steps up and surprises her!

Looking at restricted income and expenditure, the larder team continue to search for grants and other sources of income and continue to do a very good job of it.

In 2023 they secured £9.5k in grants, £5k in other fundraising and over £3k in fundraising, as well as having almost £17k in income from what people pay for their bags of food.

However, costs have continued to rise, with £28k expenditure last year.

The larder is in a good place though, with £6k surplus from 2023 and £10k from previous years, and this will be used to do more for people in the community.

Questions:

Is giving down on regular standing orders?

Kate replied that it is a combination of all giving, so regular and ad hoc.

Is there a big difference in giving with no baskets going round and just the giving point?

Kate replied that when we mention that there's a giving point at the back, it increases giving. Not passing the basket round makes a small difference but most of the giving comes through standing orders. Having the online giving button on the website makes a difference, especially for special offerings.

Chris thanked Kate for all her work as Treasurer.

The Treasurer's report and annual accounts were accepted.

Proposed: Fiona Wilson

Seconded: Kim Shilling

All those present were happy to accept the report and the accounts.

12. Re-appointment of Independent Examiner

Kate explained that we have had a different independent examiner this year, as David Stephens retired.

We have used Perrys Chartered Accountants, and they are happy to be reappointed. Kate is also happy to reappoint them.

It was proposed to re-appoint Perrys Chartered Accountants as our independent examiner for the 2024 accounts.

Proposed: Ian Wilson

Seconded: Liz Johnson

All those present were happy with this appointment.

13. Elections and Appointment of Tellers (if necessary)

Chris proposed that the church wardens should manage voting if it needs to happen. They were happy to be tellers if needed.

Election of PCC Representatives

Chris explained that PCC members serve a 3-year term and can be re-elected when their term comes to an end. There are two people finishing their term this year - Graham and Julia Church. They are both willing to stand for re-election. They were both nominated by Ian Wilson and Brian Hobden.

There are also further vacancies if anyone else wants to stand.

Kim Shilling nominated herself and was proposed by Jane Richardson and seconded by Sophie Wilson.

Fiona Wilson also nominated herself and was proposed by Sophie Wilson and seconded by Jan Anderson.

No-one requested a vote.

Chris Wicks therefore declared that Julia Church, Graham Church, Kim Shilling and Fiona Wilson have been duly elected to the PCC.

Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

Chris explained that there is one vacancy for Deanery Synod, as Mary is already a representative for us and is not up for re-election this year.

If you are on a higher synod then you are on all synods below, so anyone on Deanery Synod is then also on the PCC.

Kevin Barnes is willing to stand for Deanery Synod and has been nominated by Julia Church and Cari Reid. There were no other nominations.

Chris Wicks therefore declared Kevin Barnes duly elected to Deanery Synod and to PCC.

Chris thanked all those who have been elected for being willing to stand.

14. Appointment of Sidespeople

Sidespeople are those on welcome and coffee teams at all of our services. The Church of England calls them sidespeople and you do have to be on the electoral roll to be on this list.

David thanked all those who have served in this way over the past year. He then read out the list of people to be sidespeople for the coming year.

Jean Best, Fran Boys, Rosemary Blanchard, Gordon Blanchard, Julia Church, Jan Gabriel, Mark Gabriel, Jill Grainger, Phil Grainger, Antonia Harrowing, Liz Johnson, Elaine Parratt, Giles Parratt, Dedo Rampe, Jane Sexton, Patrick Sexton, Kim Shilling, Clare Smith, Mike Southwick, Jane Taylor, Matthew Taylor.

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

The above names were accepted.

Proposed: Dee Harper

Seconded: Ali Granger

All those present were happy to accept this list of sidespeople.

15. Any Other Business

Liz offered thanks on behalf of everyone to Hannah for all she does behind the scenes.

Chris also offered his thanks to Hannah, particularly for doing the annual report for the charity commission.

The meeting was closed in prayer.