



**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
of the Parish of St. Matthew, High Brooms**  
Held at St. Matthew's Church on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
during our 10am service

Brian and Hannah welcomed everyone to the service / APCM and explained how the service would work. Notices were given out and the service was opened in prayer.

Brian explained that we are holding the APCM in a service this year because we wanted to ensure that as many people as possible could hear what we've been doing and to hear how the PCC and church plan to move forward in our interregnum.

We still want it to be church and it's all about Jesus, even though it's a meeting.

Brian added that if we are asking for a vote at any time, or for proposers or seconders, then you do need to be on the electoral roll to vote.

**Electoral Roll**

This year we have had to redo the roll completely. The changes in numbers on the electoral roll of St. Matthew's Church since the APCM last year is as follows:

Total at APCM 2024	Additions	Deletions	Total at APCM 2025
<b>112</b>			<b>91</b>

The updated electoral roll was received.

Proposed: Kim Shilling

Seconded: Tyler Edwards

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

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

**ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

**1. Welcome**

Hannah 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.

**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.

Hannah asked if anyone else would like to stand for the role. There were no other nominations.

**Hannah 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**

Hannah then welcomed those present to our Annual Church Meeting.

People were reminded that documents for the meeting are on our website and there are paper copies at the back of church.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies have been received from Richard Arding, Dee Harper, Kate Whitehead, Fiona Wilson and Sophie Wilson.

### **3. Minutes of APCM of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

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

Proposed: Jean Best

Seconded: Jane Richardson

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. Worship songs and children left for their groups**

### **6. Reading – Jeremiah 29:11-13**

### **7. Trustees' Report**

Hannah explained this is the official report that the PCC has to submit to the Charity Commission. It covers the year January 2024 to December 2024. There is a lot in it and for now we are just going to look at some highlights. You can read the full report if you would like to.

We chose the reading from Jeremiah because we wanted to focus on God, and we know that he has good plans for us as a church and that he is with us in this time of change. We also know that we want to seek him and make sure that he is in every step of our decisions as we go through this next chapter.

As you know, we looked at our vision and values in the autumn last year. These values are the values of St. Matt's Church, and that stays the same even now that Chris and Carole have moved on. Chris and Carole have very much shaped our church but who we are as a church carries on as we move forward. So our values are still the Word, the Holy Spirit, worship, the cross, love, presence, welcome and teams and all our leadership are fully committed to those values. They will also shape what we are looking for in a new vicar.

As you know, we have been talking about inclusion in St. Matt's Church over the last few years, and what it means for us to be an inclusive church. The outcome of this thought and discussion was for us to add 'Welcome' as one of our values as a church last year, and also for us to join The Inclusive Church Network.

You'll remember that we also updated some of the wording on our website to reflect this journey. This is what our website now says:

"We are an inclusive evangelical church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate against people on grounds of disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, learning disability, mental health, or neurodiversity.

We believe in a church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."

Our decision to join The Inclusive Church Network was made by the Leadership Team and PCC and the wording on our website is similar to theirs. We have applied to become part of the network and we're just waiting to hear that it's been approved, but if you want to find out more about it, do have a look on their website. We want people looking for a church to know that they will be welcomed and accepted here – that's our DNA as a church.

So that's who we are as a church. Now let's have a look at a snapshot of all the things we did as a church in 2024, which is the outworking of those values.

Here's a list of all the different ministries of St. Matt's last year....

Sunday services – 8am communion, 10am, 5pm, 7pm

Life events – baptisms, weddings, funerals

Youth – Ignite, youth on Sundays

Children – Toddler group, Deeper, Bright / Glow on Sundays

Community Larder

Prayer meetings

Home groups and pods

Pastoral care – visiting, meals, odd jobs, etc

Community Hub

Hubs - knitting hub, sewing bee hub, table tennis, gardening hub and walking hub

Revive Christmas Event

Alpha course

Team thank you meetings

Socials – BBQs, bring and share lunch, quiz night

Coffee mornings

Mission partners

School services

Looking after the buildings – cleaning, maintenance, gardening

For the size of church that we are, we do a lot!! So a massive thank you to everyone who is part of one of our volunteer teams – there are so many of you.

I thought it would be interesting to work out how many volunteer hours we spend as a church each week to run all the services, groups and activities we have. I think I have been quite conservative in my working out, but in a normal week I think our volunteers spend 170 hours running all our ministries. And that's just on a normal week before you add in things like coffee mornings and socials and less regular things.

70 of those volunteer hours a week at the larder, and that's probably the minimum each week, and over 40 of those are on our Sunday services.

That just shows the amount of people involved in all we do, and the amount of time we are putting into what we run. So thank you so much, for everything you are giving to being church in High Brooms.

Church is so much more than numbers, we know that, but sometimes getting an idea of how many people come to things we run is useful. Out of those numbers come relationships and support and hopefully faith.

Across our Sunday services last year, we were averaging about 100 adults per week and about 21 children per week. We estimate about 25 of those adults were watching online each week, although it's very hard to get an accurate number for online viewers.

We then have times like Christmas and Easter where we get more people coming to church, with visitors from the community and wider family coming.

Our youth and children's groups are a big part of what we do across the week in church.

As I said, we had an average of 21 children and young people on any one Sunday last year. Our primary school children's group got up to 21 children at a time last year, but we have 4 leaders on each week with them, so they are able to manage the numbers.

Our youth on Sundays had an average of 5 young people each week, with 9 being the most. They have been doing youth alpha recently and that has been going really well.

Deeper is our Monday group for primary school children in years 3-6. They were a really consistent group last year with an average of 21 children each week and 24 on our books, which is the most we could have with 3 leaders. We served about 680 slices of toast at Deeper last year, most of them with chocolate spread on!! The numbers have dropped recently at Deeper, but we'll be inviting year 2s to start coming after half term, so I'm sure they will go up again.

Ignite is our youth group on Tuesday nights for those in secondary school up to year 11. Attendance at Ignite is a bit more sporadic, but the average last year was 21 young people a week, with 60 individual young people coming into Ignite across the year. We served over 750 hot meals at Ignite last year, so thank you to those of you who cook all those meals!

And then our toddler group is on Thursdays and reaches local families with young children. We had 105 individual children come into toddler group last year with their parents or carers, with an average of 20 each week. This number has been going up this year, which is great, and thank you to Julia and Paul for running toddlers faithfully each week. We gave out over 600 bowls of fruit and biscuits at toddler group last year.

The community larder is our other main community outreach as a church. I'm just going to read Jan and Liz's report from the annual report:

Another year has raced by, and the larder has been busier than ever in recent months. We have seen visitor numbers go over 100 on several occasions and this is quite a challenge in terms of providing adequate food. With the economic climate, and supermarkets looking to cut their costs, we have seen a drop in food donations which has necessitated increased direct food purchasing, to supplement the weekly Fareshare delivery. We remain hugely grateful for the generosity of donors and various grants which have enabled us to stay afloat financially.

We are blessed with a wonderful and committed group of volunteers who work tirelessly to keep the larder open. More recently we have had the added bonus of help from the residents of the Kenward Trust hostel, who come on Thursdays to help us set up. It's great to have a group of younger strong men who can lift the heavy trays of food. New volunteers and donors have popped up from the community and proved invaluable as well.

Our visitors remain a moving population - some of our originals still come regularly after more than 4 years, whilst others have moved on to new locations or jobs or better finances, to be replaced by new people.

We have built relationships with lots of our visitors and feel very privileged to have many significant conversations week by week. The cafe area remains buzzing and gives us much joy.

The Christmas event was another happy and financially helpful event.

Crosslight continues to visit once a month and their input is invaluable, helping individuals with budgeting and benefits and debt management.

Thank you for your prayers and support. We are excited to see links with the community and church growing, with visitors attending the community hub and toddler group, as well as the larder and sometimes church on Sundays. We feel so privileged to have this opportunity to practically help and befriend those around us.

Thank you to Jan, Liz and all the volunteers who keep the larder running. That is such a great testimony, that people in the community are accessing church in various different ways, and we are able to support whole families in all that we do.

Other groups that ran during 2024 were the community hub on Wednesdays, which is going well and welcomes people in for company, activities and lunch and then all our other hubs and house groups.

I'm not going to go through everything I listed earlier but do have a look at the report if you want more detail about it all.

Two other things I just want to highlight are our links with the school and pastoral care.

We have got good links with St. Matthew's school. They come down to church for 4 main services a year – Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the year 6 leaver's service. We have two foundation governors at the school – David Johnson and Lynn MacKay. We will keep our links going with the school while we are in the interregnum and will still be able to welcome them into church for their services.

Lastly, from the annual report, I just wanted to mention pastoral care, as Chris and Carole were both great at being aware of people in need of support. We have a pastoral care team who visit people, co-ordinate meals for people, and do some odd jobs and lifts to appointments. But we can only know if people need support if we are told. So please do tell us if you need help or if you know of someone who needs supporting. The best point of contact is me in the office, and then I can ask the pastoral care team to support where it's needed.

Finally, looking back to 2024, there were two things we had to stop last year, mostly due to the resourcing of them, and that was the 7pm service and our monthly prayer meetings. The plan is to keep everything else going as we move forward into our time without a vicar. We may try and put in some ad hoc prayer meetings, but we will see how things go.

The other reports to just highlight in the annual report are fabric, safeguarding and the Deanery Synod report. Do have a look at them if you'd like to.

There was nothing major to report in terms of our buildings in 2024. We updated our electrical circuits in church but otherwise just minor repairs.

In terms of safeguarding, Julia is our Parish Safeguarding Officer, and she is always ready to hear any worries or concerns you have to do with safeguarding. Please do talk to her if you have concerns – her details are on the posters around the church.

So having looked back, we also wanted to just look forward and give you a quick update about the process we now have to start to appoint a new vicar.

There are three parties involved in the appointment process – the PCC, the Diocese who are represented by an Associate Archdeacon, and our patron CPAS.

On Monday the PCC met with the Associate Archdeacon and our contact from CPAS and started the ball rolling. The PCC now has to put together a parish profile which will lay out who we are as a church and what we are looking for in a new vicar. This will reflect everything we have just talked about and our values and vision as a church.

There are official meetings and processes for all of this, so the likelihood is that we are looking at getting an advert out with our parish profile over the summer, with hopefully shortlisting and interviews in the autumn.

If we appoint first time round, there will then need to be time for someone to give their notice in, and for all the relevant checks to be processed, so we are realistically looking at this time next year for someone to start if things go to plan.

We are in such a good position as a church to keep things running smoothly as we go through this process. We have people lined up to preach and lead services for the next few months at least, and vicars booked in

where we need them up to Christmas. Richard Arding and Anthony Hammill are both kindly giving us their time when we need them, and Trevor is happy to take 5pm services when we want him to. All our midweek ministries run with volunteers anyway, so we will just keep going as we are for now.

The annual report, including the fabric report, safeguarding report and Deanery Synod report, was accepted.

Proposed: Julia Church

Seconded: Phil Grainger

All those present were happy to accept the report.

There were no questions or comments.

Hannah invited Hannah Buss to share about being a town chaplain as part of our commitment to mission and other town-wide initiatives.

## **8. Worship songs**

## **9. Parish Treasurers Report**

Matt Taylor introduced himself and explained that Kate Whitehead is our church treasurer, but she can't be here this morning.

Matt thanked Kate for the tremendous amount of work behind the scenes that she does. We are very grateful for all the work she puts into being treasurer.

Matt explained that he will give a brief overview of the church finances. There is a lot more in the treasurer's report that will give you all the information you need, but for now he will give a high-level view.

We're pleased to say that we had a small surplus last year in 2024 of £15,000. That means our income exceeded our expenditure which is great.

This took our cash in hand balances up to £330,000.

We have two forms of funds in our bank account - restricted funds and unrestricted funds. Restricted funds are monies that are restricted by the donor so they're voluntarily given for a specific cause, and that money must be spent on that activity cited. Unrestricted funds are basically money that is voluntary given that we can use for anything within the church. The vast majority of our funds are unrestricted, so of that £330,000 roughly £30,000 is restricted and then the remainder is unrestricted.

A lot of the money that is restricted is for the larder and there's a little bit more for community hub and various other things.

Most of what Matt talked about this morning is the unrestricted side - it's the bulk of our church balance both in terms of income and expenditure.

The good news is we're in a relatively healthy position. That's good for a number of reasons - coming into the interregnum period it's crucial that we have money as it makes us more attractive as a church to a new vicar and it gives them the opportunity to do what they want to do with their vision going forward.

However, there are things that need doing - the fabric of the building always needs updating, the church hall needs money being spent on it and the parsonage will need a lot of money spent on it in terms of refurbishing it for the new vicar.

In 2024 our unrestricted voluntary income was down slightly from £145,000 in 2023 to £140,000 in 2024, but the good news is regular giving that goes into the bank account on an ongoing basis was pretty much the same year on year. Giving in 2024 was in line with expectations so that's really encouraging.

Restricted income, mainly towards the larder, was broadly similar – it was up about £1,000 in 2024.

Expenditure in 2024 was less good. Our costs were up quite considerably year on year.

Expenses from restricted funds were about the same, in fact the larder does a really good job at managing their expenses and last year they had slightly more income and slightly lower expenditure so that was great.

From the unrestricted side, costs were up about £18,000. So expenditure in 2023 was £141,000 and last year was £159,000. There's a few reasons for this - the main driver was the amount of money that we pay the Diocese, called parish share, and that amount went from £60,000 to £70,000. There were also some increases in the running of the church, things like the fabric of the building, utilities, staff costs.

Refurbishment costs - we have known that Chris was going to retire for a year or two and some of the extra money that we spent last year was actually money that we've put aside for refurbishment costs of the parsonage. We've actually got a three-year plan, so we accrued money last year, we're going to accrue more this year and then in 2026 as well. So far roughly £5,000 has been accrued and we expect a similar amount this year and next year. If that doesn't cover all of the refurbishment costs, then we're going to fund the rest out of general reserves.

As Hannah said we're halfway through 2025 already but there's two main items worth noting for this year's budget.

The first is, because we've gone into interregnum, we've planned for a slight drop in our income. That's in line with guidance that we've received from the Church of England and also other churches who've been through the process. We are hoping to buck that trend so please don't stop giving just because the vicar's not here. It really is important that we try and keep our income as high as we can, not least because of costs coming up but also because we want to show the new vicar coming in that we're a healthy family and part of healthy families is giving.

The second reason is that, despite not having a vicar, the money that we pay the Diocese for our parish share doesn't change. We still have to pay that, and the chances are it will go up this year. We've budgeted the same as last year which is about £70,000 but we still need to pay that.

We also still have all the running costs of the church - we're expecting higher church fabric costs and higher utilities yet again so the cost of running church is going to go up and then we've got the refurbishment costs.

So for 2025 we've got a planned budget deficit of about £18,000.

So please can you keep praying for the church and the church finances, and please keep giving if you can afford it.

There were no questions or comments.

Brian thanked Matt for giving us the finance update and thanked Kate for all her work on it.

The Treasurer's report and annual accounts were accepted.

Proposed: Chris Reid

Seconded: Ashley Greagsby

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

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

Brian explained that our accounts have to be checked, and we used an independent examiner for that. 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 2025 accounts.

Proposed: David Johnson

Seconded: Kim Shilling

All those present were happy with this appointment.

## **11. Election of PCC Representatives**

Brian explained that PCC members are the trustees of the charity. They have a legal duty to ensure that we provide the right governance for the church and follow Church of England rules. They also do strategic management and manage the accounts.

Their biggest challenge going forward is the appointment process for a new vicar. The PCC will choose two reps to be part of the appointment panel.

The PCC are supported by the Leadership Team, which Hannah now heads up. The Leadership Team helps to manage the day-to-day leadership of the church, things like the speaking rotas, managing volunteers, the operational side of things.

PCC members serve a 3-year term and can be re-elected when their term comes to an end.

There are two people stepping down this year – Suzanne Owen and Fiona Wilson. Thank you so much to them for serving on the PCC.

There are two people finishing their term this year – Mike Southwick and Matt Taylor. They are both willing to stand for re-election.

There are also two further vacancies, and we have two nominations – Jane Richardson and David Seedhouse.

Brian asked if anyone else would like to stand – there were no other nominations.

**Brian Hobden therefore declared that Mike Southwick, Matt Taylor, Jane Richardson and David Seedhouse have been duly elected to the PCC.**

**All those present were in agreement with these nominations.**

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

## **12. Prayers and final worship song**

## **13. Any other business**

Brian thanked Hannah for all her work keeping everything together.

Hannah reminded people that her working days are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

The meeting was closed with the blessing.