

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING: Monday 12 October 2020

MINUTES

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place on Monday 12 October 2020 at 7.30 pm, chaired by the Revd Patrick Taylor, Vicar. The meeting was held by Zoom video-conferencing due to the coronavirus pandemic. There were some 54 persons present.

- 1 **Apologies** were received from Jane Hornby, Peter Rowland, Ruth Poulten, Jane Armitage, Chris Kennedy, Bobbie Pearce.
- 2 **Minutes** of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 7 April 2019 were approved.
- 3 **Matters arising** None.
- 4 **Vicar's Address**

They say, "the past is a foreign country" and looking back on life in 2019, it certainly feels that way. The consequences of the current pandemic for our lives and parish are of course dominating our thinking and planning right now, but before we come on to those things, it's important at a meeting which is meant to be a review of the previous year, that we spend a little time looking back to celebrate, remember and give thanks for another full and fruitful year in this parish.

There are, as always, too many things and people to mention here and I would encourage you to read all the activities described in the annual report.

I just want to highlight a few things which have a common theme, which is *being a church for others*.

That phrase, being a church that exists for others, is one I used frequently when I returned from my 3 month Sabbatical, which I took from May to July in 2019. Now that really does feel like another country! One of the things that I was most challenged and inspired by was something written by the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He was a German Lutheran pastor, killed by the Nazis in 1945. He famously described Jesus as "the man for others" and so it follows, he argued, that the Church must exist for others, not for herself.

Looking back over 2019 it's good to see so much that was, indeed, focussed on those beyond the church immediate family.

We established new mission partners, Tom and Verity Clare, who along with their four boys are now in Uganda where Tom is working as a doctor.

Closer to home, the Soul Space workshop began with its first group, meeting at the Wellbeing centre at Stratford Hospital. The workshop is a basic

introduction to the Christian faith and has now run for a second time, leading to several adults going forward for confirmation.

The All Saints' Arms in Luddington, a pop up pub which was the inspired idea of Steve Jarvis, has proved very popular with the locals and provided an opportunity to make connections with people who otherwise wouldn't necessarily come to a church service.

The re-opening of the Ken Kennett community centre on Justins Avenue was made possible through our support. Two new groups, Stay and Play for parents and toddlers and Coffee Stop were soon established, meaning that we were reaching parishioners who may not otherwise relate to Holy Trinity Church, especially being on the other side of town.

One of the best connections we have with people beyond the church is our church school, which officially changed its name from "The Willows" to "Holy Trinity" C of E Primary School in September 2019. This has had a real positive impact on the school, with some year groups being oversubscribed for the first time for many years. I would like to record my gratitude to the Head Teacher, Mrs Jo Herrero, for her enthusiastic and personal commitment to the Christian ethos of the school and to further strengthening the relationship with Holy Trinity Church.

On a sadder note, in 2019 we said goodbye to three very faithful and greatly loved members of the church: Ronnie Mulryne, Andrea Blood and Sarah Gretton.

Each of them lived out the principle of being and doing for others:

- Ronnie in his work to restore and enhance the heritage of our church and town;
- Andrea in her passion to share her faith with others and ensure all are warmly welcomed;
- Sarah in her passion for those in need, especially through Christian Aid.

We give thanks for their lives, faith, and all they did to help us be a church for others.

Looking now to the present time, what does it mean to be a church for others now that we are in the grips of a pandemic that has changed so much in our lives and the church?

Our Away Weekend at home yesterday encouraged us to return to our values of Humility, Holiness and Hospitality and to realise again how much these, especially Humility and Hospitality, are about a focus on others rather than turning in on ourselves and our own needs.

If we are to be true to these values, and to our calling as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, then we need to be seeking new ways of serving the people of our parish. Humility requires us to be willing to work with others, especially those outside the church, acknowledging that we can't fulfil our vision ourselves.

As we shall hear in a short while from our Treasurer, we are in a very different country now when it comes to our finances, with the money given by our congregations through Stewardship now being our main source of income, with income from visitors having all but collapsed this past few months.

Giving to the church might seem to some people like the opposite to “being for others.” On the face of it, it can sometimes look like what we give will only benefit those on the inside of the church. But the reality is quite different. All the outreach activities I described earlier will only be able to continue if each of us gives enough to fund them, and at the moment there just isn’t enough coming in.

To be part of a church which is for others, means we must all make a commitment to serve others, both directly in what we do, but also in what we give of our own resources, including our money, for the sake of others.

Finally, some important words of appreciation and thanks.

In 2019 our Director of Music, Benedict Wilson moved on and our Organist, Stephen Dodsworth retired. They both made remarkable contributions to the music of the parish. A big thank you is due to Rebecca Mills who stepped up as interim Director of Music at a time of such change in the department. We were delighted to appoint Douglas Keilitz as our new Director of Music towards the end of the year, although it wasn’t until 2020 that he took up the post, and so more about him at our next APCM!

Thanks go to my colleagues in the clergy team: Steve, Phil and Kay, especially for holding the fort whilst I was on Sabbatical; and to the retired clergy for all their ministry, especially maintaining the pattern of worship in the Parish during the year.

Also to Andy Winter, our Parish Operations Manager, who works longer hours that I dare admit and worked tirelessly to steer us through the initial crisis of lockdown this year. and beyond. Also many thanks for all their hard work and dedication to the staff sadly no longer on our payroll due to the redundancies that had to be made this year.

I’ve already thanked the Wardens, but would like to add 2 other key members of the Standing Committee - Miriam as PCC secretary and Mike as Treasurer. What they do goes beyond just volunteering a few hours to help out, and they are a credit to us as a church and fine examples of doing for others, with no expectation of personal reward beyond the satisfaction of a good job done.

And I want to thank all of you, especially those who have stepped forward and offered your time as volunteers in recent months, as part of our contact groups, or enabling the church to be open to visitors. These are all fine examples of being a church for others and you make me immensely proud to be your vicar.

5 Consideration of:

a) Electoral Roll

Mr T Raistrick reported that the number on the Electoral Roll stands at a total of 340, up from 336 as calculated at the official cut-off date. The number is broken down as follows:-

Holy Trinity: 300 (2019 - 296) – 9 added and 5 removed, net gain 4 (1% increase)

All Saints', Luddington: 18 - unchanged from 2019

St Helen's, Clifford Chambers: 22 - unchanged from 2019

Of the total 340, 27.4% are non-residents (i.e. live outside the official parish boundary)

The split by gender is 65.9% women, 34.1% men

Tim Raistrick was thanked for his work as Electoral Roll Officer.

b) Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

These are contained within the Financial Statements of the PCC as required by the Charity Commission. The PCC had met 6 times during the year, with an average attendance of 76%. Richard Hartley proposed that we accept the Report, seconded by Sally Cohen, and carried, all in favour.

c) Church Accounts (pages 11-13 of Charity Commission Report)

Paul Lageu proposed, seconded by George Reah, that the accounts be accepted. All were in favour.

Mike Warrillow, with the use of slides on screen, then outlined the present financial situation as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, which had led to a significant drop in visitor numbers, and consequently huge loss of income.

- At this time last year, we had a surplus of £115k, this year a loss of £91k.
- Visitor income in 2019 was £312k, only £44k in 2020, with a resultant drop in income of £267k.
- In 2020, we lost £15k in the 1st quarter, £68k in the 2nd, £91k in the 3rd, and a projected loss of £121k in the 4th.
- At the end of 2019 we had £238k in reserves, £228k at the end of the 1st quarter, £178k in the 2nd, £148k in the 3rd and £117 in the 4th.
- We are not paying all of our Parish Share by about £25k.
- Next year the organ is due for a service, at a cost of £60k.
- We have only 5 or 6 months left to dip into reserves.
- The initial budget for 2021 will start with a deficit of £69k.
- Our expenses are greater than income.

d) Stewardship & Gift Aid

Mike reported on Stewardship, and thanked Chris Kennedy for his work on this throughout the year. He thanked everyone who gives, and the more than 30 people who have moved from envelopes to standing order. Those who have stayed with envelopes continue to donate regularly. With the aid of slides shown on screen, entitled 'That wealthy church at the end of town?', Mike asked whether we have relied too much on visitor income in the past. Fewer visitors are coming now, due to the pandemic; the church is not open for as long; and we are not asking for specific donations per person to visit Shakespeare's grave. Stewardship is slightly lower because there are no

cash collections. 30% of those on the Electoral Roll did not give anything in 2019. The average weekly donation of church members is £8.49 per person, whereas the average in Coventry Diocese is £12.30. If everyone gave £3.81 more per week, this would bridge a gap of £49k and reduce our deficit. Thanks were expressed to Mike for steering the church through these unprecedented times, and Patrick added his thanks, including to the volunteers who are on duty in the church as their welcome and encouragement to visitors to donate is an important part of our fundraising now.

e) Appointment of Auditors

Paul Lageu proposed that Mazaar's Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors, of Dudley, West Midlands be retained as Independent Examiners of the accounts for 2020/21. This was seconded by George Reah, all in favour.

f) Fabric, Goods, and Ornaments (page 14 of Annual Report)

Rhod Mitchell, as Churchwarden with responsibility for buildings, responded to questions. Sandra MacDonald asked about the case for the King James Bible to which Rhod replied that a design brief had just been received from the Architect, combined with an expert conservator's report. The plan is to locate it in the North Transept, with the option of being moveable as long as it is capable of being attached to the alarm system by wi-fi. He thanked Friends of Shakespeare's Church for paying for this. The Vicar thanked Rhod for his work, and said we might need to look to the Friends more in the future for basic maintenance in view of loss of visitor income.

g) Deanery Synod Report (page 18 of Annual Report)

The Deanery Synod Report was received.

6 Elections

a) Deanery Synod

There were 5 vacancies for 3 years. 5 nominations had been received: Jane Armitage, Richard Hartley, Lindsay MacDonald, Peter Rowland and Anthony Woollard. There being no other nominations, these 5 were duly elected.

b) Parochial Church Council

There were 3 vacancies for 3 years. 3 nominations had been received: Richard Fletcher, Ruth Poulten, and Mark Sayers. There being no other nominations, these three were duly elected. In addition, Teresa Kristunas was elected for 6 months, taking the space released by Lindsay MacDonald being elected as a Deanery Synod representative. Patrick thanked Mark Lorenz and Tony Bentall who were standing down.

7 Matters of Parochial and General Church Interest

Patrick welcomed our new Director of Music, Douglas Keilitz, and his wife Nancy, to the parish.

It was noted that Church of England rules had changed such that Sidespeople and Pro-Wardens can be elected by the PCC rather than the APCM. The current list will be carried over to 2021, and be decided at the PCC immediately after the APCM.

Andrew Dow asked what had been done for young families in the past six months. Phil responded he had worked with St James Church, Alveston in supplying a monthly Bible Adventure Box to families, and was keeping in touch with the families who previously attended regularly through social media. Toddler groups had only received permission to operate two weeks ago. Phil had been very involved in editing services to go out online, and hoped the new pattern of services would engage with young families.

Patrick was encouraged as well as challenged, and hoped the recent Parish Weekend At Home would help us as a church to return to values of holiness, humility and hospitality.

John Hall-Matthews, on behalf of the whole congregation, expressed a huge thank you to the Vicar for his leadership and care of the parish, and to Laura and the family.