

ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH HARWELL

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meetings held on Tuesday 23rd April 2002 at 7.45 p.m. in St Matthew's Hall

The meeting was chaired by The Rev Chris Stott and 54 parishioners attended. The meeting opened with the hymn "Jesus, Prince and Saviour followed by a reading from 1Peter 2 and prayer.

1. **Apologies** were received from Norman Ponting, Tony Twigger, Joy Hance, Jim Mein, Roy Slatter, Tom and Muriel Taylor.
2. **The Minutes of the last meeting** on 27th March 2001 were accepted as a true record.

Proposed by Alan Walker

Seconded by Tony Ullmer

3 **Election of Churchwardens**

The following were elected to serve: Allan MacArthur (re-elected) and Ruth Slatter

The Chairman thanked Wendy and Allan for all that they do week by week, often quietly behind the scenes. Particular thanks went to Wendy for her unfailing duty over five years. Her reliability, dependability and willingness, both in public and behind the scenes, have been very much appreciated.

Signed Date

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. **The Minutes of the last meeting** were accepted as a true record.

Proposed by Jean Twigger Seconded by T Hughes and carried.

2. There were no **Matters arising**

3. **The Deanery Synod Representatives** Steve Tunstall was elected to join Clive Silver and Jean Twigger.

4. **Election of PCC members**

The Rector explained to the meeting that it was now an unwritten rule that members serve for just five years on the PCC. As Rob Thomas our LLM had served 5 years already, the meeting had to agree to him being co-opted.

Proposed Steve Tunstall

Seconded T Hughes and carried

The Parochial Church Council Members 11 members were elected to serve: Elizabeth Gill, Clive House, Tony Hughes, Martin McIlroy-Speed, Nancy Preston, Tim Roberts, Jim Sinclair, Wendy Sinclair, Frances Taylor, Marilyn Thomas, Tony Ullmer, plus Rob Thomas, specially co-opted as noted above.

Thanks were recorded to Alan Walker and Tracy Linnard who were standing down.

5. **Election of Sidesmen**

Wendy Sinclair thanked all the sidesmen for their work during 2001/2002. The following were all elected:

Betty & Peter McNiven	Tony & Kate Ullmer
Mary & Geoff Jenkinson	Wendy Sinclair & Pam Chung
Mark Hillier & Mike Pepper	Malcolm & Mandy Birkinshaw
Clive & Doreen Silver	Jim & Grace Mein
Pat Connolly	Betty & David Pyke
Trevor Powell	Elizabeth Gill (8am)
Graham & Ann Cox	Mary Jackson (8am)
Jim Sinclair	Tim Roberts (8am)
Shirley & Alan Walker	Alison & Sid Gale
Steve & Hayley Thompson	

Proposed: Wendy Sinclair

Seconded: Allan Macarthur and agreed

6. **Harwell Annual Report** - this was available in church on Sunday 21st and distributed at the meeting.

Tony Hughes gave a report of the disability audit (discrimination act) that has to be completed by 2004. The act requires that by December 1996, we should not discriminate against the disabled members of our congregation and provide facilities that are equally acceptable to both able-bodied and disabled persons. "Disabled" means, anyone who is disadvantaged. I.e. any child being smaller is disadvantaged. By October 1999, reasonable steps should have been taken to fulfil all required acts. And by 2004, to remove or alter any physical features which make it difficult for the disabled to participate fully in any activity.

All care has been taken to make some changes over the last few years. A hearing aid loop has been fitted and the heating and lighting has been updated and improved. 21 recommendations have been made to the PCC. 20 have been pursued, 1 shelved (disabled parking space) 12 completed, 7 in hand and 1 deferred. The kitchen and toilet area is estimated to cost around £10,000 plus.

Nick Hance asked " would be possible to change the night of PCC from Tuesday occasionally?" as some people find Tuesday a difficult evening. The problem with this is that the halls are in use for other activities during the week.

7 **Joint PCC Report** - met once during the year and nothing to report.

8. **Harwell Financial Report and Accounts** - These were circulated. The accounts were proposed by Alan Walker and Seconded by Grace Brown and agreed. Money has been set aside for a new photocopier and at present the options to rent or to buy are being explored. Old style covenants were expiring and people are being asked to make their weekly/monthly giving "gift aided " so that the tax can still be recovered. Thanks were expressed to our treasurer Elizabeth Gill for all her hard work.

9. **Appointment of Independent Examiner** - Alison Manning is happy to continue in this position.

Proposed Pat Connolly Seconded Tony Ullmer

10. **Fabric and Ornaments Report** - Allan MacArthur thanked everyone who had worked so hard during the working days. Much work has been done on the exterior of the building and thanks must go to Douglas Jordan and Tony Hughes for overseeing this work. Thanks must go to Norman Ponting for his work as caretaker of St Matthew's Church Hall. Liz Roberts stepped in when Norman was ill and wishes to relinquish this post in September. Allan also thanked the deputy churchwardens for their contribution during the year. Working days are being planned for the Church building in September, and in July for St. Matthew's church hall. Both weekends have yet to be approved by the PCC. Wendy Sinclair gave a report on the altar frontals that are at present being made by Ellen Pedley. These are to be dual/reversible cloths with suitable motifs.

11. **Electoral Roll Report**

Liz Roberts reported that the Electoral Roll has just undergone an active six-yearly revision, and the number is

now 160 - 21 down on last year. We have 15 new members on the Roll, 22 have come off and the remaining 14 were lost by death or from moving away from the parish. The majority of the members are female and the number of people from other parishes who regard St Matthew's as their home church has increased slightly. Liz will be handing over the job of Electoral Roll Officer but said that her successor will find it hard to top the support from clergy, churchwardens and PCC which she has been privileged to receive.

12. **Deanery Synod Report**

Clive Silver reported that Harwell was 1 of 17 churches served by 10 Stipendiary clergy in the Wallingford Deanery. The Area Dean is Edwin Clements of Blewbury, Hagbourne and Upton and the lay chairman is Graham Goy, of St Andrew's, Hagbourne. The Full Synod has met twice. All meetings include reports from diocesan synod and the General synod if there has been a meeting and a financial update. There was a presentation on Faith Healing at the June meeting Streatley and Chris Stott reported on our experiences with "Sharing Life" at the December meeting. It seemed that Harwell were further ahead with this topic than most of the other member churches. Once again our parish share in to be increased and the criteria is as follows: The number of Stipendiary Clergy, number of members on the Electoral Roll (we are second only to Wallingford) and Attendance based on the numbers at the main service on a Sunday in October. We are third after Hagbourne and Wallingford. The next meeting will review stipends and pensions for clergy. I would welcome new members from Harwell to join us on the synod committee. I personally find the synod interesting and basically enjoyable.

13. **Rector's Report**

This past year since our last AGM, has been a significant year of change for our two churches and for me personally. We first had the anticipation of Mary's departure; then her wonderful farewell weekend at the end of July; and since then we have been adjusting to a new ways of doing things.

Peter tells the Christians to whom he writes that they are the people who belong to God, who are chosen to declare the praises of God, who has brought them into the wonderful light of Christ, who is precious to them as believers. The Church is the people of Jesus. We are the people of Christ here in Harwell - that is both an amazing privilege and a wonderful opportunity.

I want to thank all of you who have helped us through this transition period and also for your prayerful and practical support personally. I am deeply grateful. You have been willing, helpful, and encouraging - these are qualities, which are of great value in a church. I wish particularly to thank Wendy Sinclair and Allan Macarthur, our two churchwardens; Ruth Slatter our PCC Secretary and Rob Thomas; our musicians, our sidespersons and visiting team, cleaners, flower arrangers, and bellringers, those who work with children and young people, our finance wizards, and many others who contribute to our on-going church life in many and varied ways, sometimes behind the scenes, sometimes up front.

I am particularly grateful to Joy Hance, who has done so much in the way of Public Ministry, both leading and speaking and as a member of the Visiting Team, as well as behind the scenes in the office. This she has done while continuing in a 3rd year of training as a NSM. Joy will be standing down as Secretary in July after six years in the job, prior to her ordination in September. The work she has done in the office is of crucial importance to the life of our church, and I'm sure we are all very appreciative of all that Joy has done so conscientiously. After her ordination, Joy will be serving as Non-Stipendiary Curate in the benefice of Cherbury and Gainsfield in the Vale of the White Horse. A "Bring and share" farewell supper is being planned for Joy Hance on September 15th, and a picnic lunch is taking place on the 7th July after church.

I am also grateful to Jean Barton, who has taken on the job of Co-ordinator of small groups, and has been helping with the Alpha Courses, which have been really encouraging. The Bishop has agreed that Jean should become Non-Stipendiary curate here after her ordination on Sunday June 30th. We remember both Joy and Jean in our prayers in the coming weeks.

Since our last AGM, a small group of us have been meeting to think about our priorities for the next 5 years - and so, I would like to move into a presentation of the work of this Vision Group.

We must have a clear vision for our churches in Harwell and Chilton because:

- Changes are taking place in our church, such as Mary's departure
- We have a duty to make the Church as relevant as possible to our community
- We must be forward looking - 5 years
- We should build on the "Sharing Life" initiative, which touched on a number of key areas. Outreach, worship, Prayer, Pastoral Care, Engaging with the community, and a website.

Over the past few months a '**vision' working group** has been thinking about these issues. We have produced statements about our values, our vision and the things that we think we need to do to make progress. These are available to everyone.

I summarised the main themes in my essay "I have a dream....." To be outward looking is a high priority for the next generation. How can we be effective for the next generation when there is so much competition?

Turning this vision into reality means addressing what we do in: worship, pastoral care, small groups, church administration, youth work, communicating to everyone, and involving people in all activities, finance and buildings and Evangelism.

The Activities

- The different activities to support the Vision will be run by people from across both churches - one of our aims is more involvement and giving people more ownership
- The starting point of each activity will be to note and acknowledge the work already being done in each of these areas, which is valued very highly

People are being appointed to work on Chris's behalf in co-ordinating the activities, which will make the plan happen: these people have so far been asked and have agreed to help

- **Finance** - Alison Manning
- **Children** and Youth - Martin Speed and Carol Pigott
- **Outreach** - Nancy Preston and Steve Ward
- **Active Prayer Life** - Rosemary Rolls and Frances Taylor
- **Structure for Managing the Church** - Tim Roberts and Linda Ward
- **Worship Framework** - Jean Barton and Pam Rolls

Communication is vital

- Important elements of the vision were included in Lent sermons
- Progress reports on the activities will be made to the PCC's

A summary of the vision will be distributed in a handy format throughout the churches

The Rector wished to record his thanks to Tim Roberts for all his hard work during this time of planning.

14. **Reports from organisations**

Ladies Group - Wendy Metcalf is in her third year as leader of St Matthew's ladies group having taken over from grace Mein. We average a membership of about 24. Attendance at our meeting being between 15 and 20. We meet every 3rd Thursday of the month and our speakers and activities are varied. We try to have a mix of moral, social, religious or just "fun" speakers and learn something from whatever we hear. Once a year we meet with Chilton Ladies Group and party together. Our members contribute each year to a charity of their choice - last year this was the 'destitute children' in Kenya, for which we raised £65.00. The aim of the Ladies Group is to be a warm, friendly, caring organisation whose members extend these attributes to all they meet.

Orchestra/Music Group report from David Evans

Music in our church plays an important role in its many forms. The variety of musical expression and gifted musicians and singers in Harwell would be the envy of many a village church. The many different gifts and the way in which we can mix them to suit different occasions, is, I believe, what gives us a broad spectrum for both worship and blessing. I am indebted to those committed to this area of service that turn out regularly in all weathers to persuade cold instruments (or voices) to play (or sing) in tune.

Particular thanks must go to my teammate Frances, for her musical gifts, organisation, reliability, and flexibility. Also thanks to Tony Hughes whose administrative skills, care and back up are much appreciated.

Different people who are sharing their gifts on a regular basis come and go. We have lost some of our older youngsters to university but have had the joy of welcoming new younger musicians.

We enjoyed joining forces with Chilton for Mary's farewell Songs of Praise and we are anticipating the pleasure of getting together again for the Golden Jubilee songs of Praise in June. New members for choir and orchestra will be made most welcome. Why not come and join us for the Jubilee Celebrations on June 2nd?

Alpha Courses - report from Liz Roberts

Alpha is a programme of Christian teaching over 10 weeks. The organisation, which originates the material is a registered charity and markets it worldwide. In Harwell, we are on our 5th course. This one during the day, in the hope of appealing to young families as well as those who would not normally want to go out to an evening course. The staff to run the courses largely come from the previous one ones. Homegrown talent amongst the participants. Sustaining the course requires 3 leaders to take the participants through the material, 2 people to run the crèche and we have always been blessed by the number of people from the congregation who come forward to bake a cake here, knock up a chilli con carne for us there.

The format for the sessions is always the same: a welcome and social part with food, watching a video and after a convenience break we break into smaller groups to discuss what impact the video had on people.

We have musical worship about half way through but the atmosphere is non-threatening, non-preaching and distinctly non-churchy. Alpha is an opportunity to explore the meaning of life. The comments we've received back certainly bear that out. We are not just interested in the unchurched but also in offering those who - and this was my reason for getting involved after the course I went on as a participant - feel themselves in need of restoration and who want a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Alpha team in Harwell welcome all of you most warmly to take part in any way you would like - to attend or to help on an occasional basis. The next course starts on September 11th. You are welcome to come along to the Celebration at the end of the current course on July 10th and meet the survivors from all 5 courses.

15. **Any Other Business**

Kate Evans shared her feelings on Chris's "I have a Dream". She felt that ours was already a caring church and after going through several emotions came to the conclusion that Chris's dream needed to be shared.

Wendy Sinclair thanked Chris Stott for all his work and leadership. Chris replied by saying that he is very happy here working amongst us.

Kate Evans suggested that groups may like to issue a report (say 3 times a year) so that the church members can pray for them and any particular needs they may have. Kate agreed to co-ordinate this.

Alan Walker enquired as to whether a replacement has been found for Joy Hance as Secretary. Enquiries are continuing.

Christianne Thomas (a lady who worshipped regularly with us when her husband was working at Harwell) is coming to England and has asked that anyone who has any unused spectacles could keep them for her. Chris and Eva Stott are happy to receive them on her behalf.

16. The meeting closed with **prayer** at 9.39pm. The Rector prayed especially for Joy and Jean as they are to be ordained this year. Another concern for our prayers is the increase in our parish share to £5,000.

Signed..... Date.....