

St Matthew's Church Harwell

Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Tuesday 19 April 2005 at 7.45 p.m. in St Matthew's Church Hall

The meetings were chaired by Rev Chris Stott, and recorded by Jim Sinclair; the attendance was 41.

Apologies were received from Liz Roberts, Mrs Eileen Roberts, Geoff and Mary Jenkinson, Cath Convery, Tony Twigger, Betty McNiven, Margaret Hughes, Anita Pepper, Heather House, and James Mein.

The meeting opened with the singing of the hymn "Jesus Is Lord". Chris then read some verses from Acts Chapter 1 and committed the meeting to God in prayer.

Annual Parochial Meeting

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

held on 30 March 2004 were distributed. It was proposed that these be accepted as a true record.

Moved: Tony Hughes; seconded: Tim Roberts; passed: unanimously.

Election of Churchwardens

Chris expressed thanks to Allan Macarthur and Ruth Slatter for their service in this post over the past year.

Nominations for Ruth Slatter and Tim Roberts had been received in advance of the meeting. They were elected unanimously.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

held on 30 March 2004 were distributed. It was proposed that these be accepted as a true record.

Moved: Allan Macarthur; seconded: Jean Twigger; passed: unanimously.

Matters Arising

None was raised.

Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

We were entitled to elect up to 4 representatives, who would serve a three-year term. Nominations had been received in advance for Georgina Greer, Clive Silver and Steve Tunstall. No other nominations were forthcoming.

These were elected unanimously.

Election of PCC Members

Chris expressed thanks to those retiring. Ten nominations had been received in advance for the twelve available posts. No further nominations were forthcoming. The following were elected unanimously:

Cath Convery	Clive House	Marilyn Thomas
Kate Evans	Wendy Sinclair	Tony Ullmer
Sid Gale	Martin Speed	
Madeleine Gibson	Frances Taylor	

Election of Sidesmen

Ruth Slatter thanked all who had served in this way over the past year. She proposed the following to serve for the coming year. These were seconded by Clive Silver and elected unanimously.

Malcolm and Mandy Birkinshaw	Peter and Betty McNiven
Pat Connolly	Mike Pepper
Graham and Anne Cox	Betty Pyke
Ryan Davies	David Pyke
Elizabeth Gill (8am communion)	Jim and Wendy Sinclair
Mark Hillier	Jean and Tony Twigger (8am communion)
Mary Jackson (8am communion)	Tony and Kate Ullmer
Geoff and Mary Jenkinson	Alan and Shirley Walker

Church Annual Report

The Annual Report, adopted by the PCC at its last meeting and signed by Chris Stott as chairman, had been distributed and was presented by the PCC secretary, Jim Sinclair. It summarised the purpose of the PCC, gave the list of members, explained the use of subcommittees, recorded the church membership and attendance figures, reviewed the business considered by the PCC, and summarised the financial position.

In discussion, more detail on the decision to use weekly hymn sheets rather than hymn books was asked for. Jean Barton explained the basis for the decision, and the difficulty with reproduction until a new folding machine could be obtained (deferred because of cost). There was also a call for black-on-white sheets to available in sufficient quantity.

Financial Report

The report was presented by the Treasurer, Clive House. Clive gave thanks for the hard work of Elizabeth Gill as bookkeeper and Alison Manning as Independent Examiner. The Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2004 had been adopted by the PCC at its last meeting, and was presented along with the statement of the appointed Independent Examiner, Alison Manning.

Clive highlighted that a deficit of £8,363 had come about for the year, compared with a deficit of some £1,800 last year. This was mainly associated with a drop in income of some £5,000, principally in (unforeseeable) legacies and donations. Planned giving had increased slightly, but loose alms had fallen. By comparison, spending was roughly level with the previous year. Although the Parish Share had increased, less was spent than budgeted on buildings maintenance.

Looking forward to 2005, a deficit of £9,000 is budgeted for. If this turns out as assumed, the general fund will have fallen by the end of the year to less than £30,000, which is very small compared with the annual turnover. This is why we had launched a Giving Initiative in January. Some pledges for increased giving have been received. On the basis of best available assumptions, we may see an increase of some 10% in planned giving, and the deficit may be only about £7,000.

Clive finished by identifying finance as our current "Challenge Spike" (a term used by Bill Hybels of Willow Creek).

In discussion, the challenge was addressed by several contributors. It was agreed that continuing emphasis of the need for increased giving would be necessary. It was suggested that the congregation be clearly informed of the consequences in practice of a drastically cut back level of expenditure.

Acceptance of the Financial Report was moved by Steve Tunstall, seconded by Peter McNiven, and passed unanimously.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Chris thanked Alison Manning for her service in this role. Alison was proposed to serve for a further year by Tony Hughes, seconded by Tony Ullmer, and elected unanimously.

Report on Fabric and Ornaments

A written report had been distributed, and presented by Allan Macarthur. Allan highlighted the work done on the Sound System, including careful thought about the requirements, and provision for any future expansion. The difficulties with the project to refurbish the kitchen/toilet area in the church were briefly explained, and the news given that agreement appears at last to have been reached over planning and regulatory issues (written confirmation still pending).

Chris seconded Allan's appreciation of Tony Hughes' tireless work on this and other Buildings Committee concerns.

Electoral Roll Report

Wendy Sinclair, electoral roll officer, reported that the roll stands at 168, after 14 additions and 9 deletions during the recent annual revision.

Deanery Synod Report

This had been circulated, and was presented by Clive Silver, one of the three representatives to Deanery Synod.

Clive said that meeting the new Bishop of Reading had been a highlight. The final Synod meeting of the year had been held in Harwell, and Chris had reported excellently on the Diocesan Synod.

Chris added that by 2007, the approved number of paid clergy in Wallingford Deanery would have fallen to only 7, a matter that is sure to cause much anguish.

Vision Coordinator's Report

Tim Roberts used a visual presentation to communicate to the meeting what was involved in the church's strategy to implement its vision, "Sharing life at the heart of the community, making followers of Jesus." He outlined the initiatives that had been taken the Key Areas that have been identified, each of which is championed by a leader.

In the **Prayer** area, the prayer chain and prayer diaries had seen increased usage; the Saturday prayer groups were being well supported, and Prayer Points have been featured in the weekly service sheet.

Children and Youth: there are about 50 children/young people in core youth groups, and over 100 when the Scout groups are included. Good links have been maintained with Harwell school (e.g. Y God course after the holiday play scheme); there has been a new after-school club in Chilton, and Marilyn Thomas has coordinated several special events, one per term, with attendances of around 50, including many non-church youngsters.

Under **Outreach**, Alpha courses have continued (first to be held in Chilton); the Wednesday Morning group has run "Christianity Explored"; the Visiting Team and many other assorted contacts with the community all contribute to outreach.

In future, **Communication** is identified as a new area of focus (making the Vision more widely known and owned).

Reports from Selected Organisations

For the **Youth Fellowship**, Marilyn Thomas reported that the YF, started up by the Tunstalls, now numbers about 19, aged from 14 to 19, and meets in the Thomas' home. The aim is to grow in each member an independent faith that will last after they have left home. The group always changes as the oldest age-group move on to college, etc.

Malcolm Birkinshaw helps, doing 'brilliant warm-ups'.

The Youth Service in November was very successful. There is a strong interest in continually trying to draw in new members.

During the present year, the group will be involved in SID (Soul in Didcot), which will include town cleanups, and a Celebration Festival.

The Church Orchestra, reported David Evans, has been going now for 11 years. It has a repertoire of over 300 hymns and songs, and aims to help lead and enrich the worship in church. The membership is very diverse; there has been a good replacement rate as people leave, but additional members are always sought.

Small Groups were reported on by Jean Barton. These would be a key priority for 2005. Lent groups were very well attended (over 70 total attendance in the two parishes). There are many other groups than those specifically identified as Study groups, and all of them contribute to the aims of getting All Involved, making Disciples, Evangelism, Encountering God.

Small Groups represent the 'other wing' of the church to that which is represented by the Sunday gatherings.

The Rector's Report

Chris' sabbatical reminded him of the need for Solitude – time with God, for new and fresh expressions of church, and for relevance to a changing world.

He was concerned that we all continue to grow, and to help one another to grow.

The financial challenges we face have not been solved yet, and several new initiatives are on hold for want of sufficient funds.

Chris expressed his gratitude to the many unsung heroes in our church – those who give so much of themselves as volunteers. We must not forget that Jean is unpaid for her work. Chris also mentioned appreciation for the work of Naomi Gibson, Betty Pyke, Jim Sinclair, and David Evans.

The opening reading, mentioning the election in the new-born church of a replacement apostle, was relevant to current elections in the world as well as to our election of council members tonight. We should emulate the first apostles in their togetherness, their prayerfulness, their witness to the resurrection, and their strong call to an apostolic ministry: being at the heart of the community, making disciples of Jesus.

Other Business

- a) Mention had been made of the reducing provision by the Church of England of paid clergy in our deanery, and also of those in our church currently training for ministry, with the hope of applying their qualification here. Is this how the Church sees the future of ministry? Chris replied that increasingly we would see paid clergy as leaders of groups of parishes, overseeing a mix of Non-Stipendiary Ministers and lay leaders. He noted that we have recently 'exported' people to ministry elsewhere, as well as enjoying the services of others locally.
- b) It was questioned whether the extent of noise from children in church services was reaching the point of sidelining older people. Chris acknowledged the tension, but felt that we must 'bend over backwards' to provide a welcome to families. Some felt that there must be some limit to this.

Close

Jean Barton expressed thanks to Chris on behalf of the whole congregation for all he has done for us this year. The meeting closed with prayer at 9.50 p.m.

Chairman: Chris Stott

Secretary: Jim Sinclair