

St Matthew's Church Harwell

Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Tuesday 24th April 2007 at 7.45 p.m. in St Matthew's Church Hall

The meetings were chaired by Rev Chris Stott, and recorded by Martin Speed; the attendance was 40.

Apologies were received from Cath Convery, Clive Silver, Eva Stott, Heather House, Jack and Mary Perry, James Mein, Joan Impey, Liz Roberts, May Hanley, Wendy Metcalf.

The meeting opened with the singing of the hymn "Christ our King". Chris then read verses from 1 Peter and committed the meeting to God in prayer.

Annual Parochial Meeting

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2006 were distributed. It was unanimously agreed that these should be signed as a correct record.

Election of Churchwardens

Chris expressed thanks to Tim and Ruth for their work as churchwardens over the last year. On behalf of everyone he particularly thanked Ruth Slatter as she stepped down as Churchwarden this year after five years of conscientious and cheerful service in the role.

Nominations for Alan Macarthur and Tim Roberts had been received in advance of the meeting. There were no other nominations. They were elected unanimously.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

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Matters Arising

No matters arising from the minutes were raised.

Election of PCC Members

Chris thanked the PCC for their service over the last year, with particular thanks to Wendy who stepped down this year, and to Nancy, who left the PCC when she moved from the village. Nine nominations had been received in advance for the twelve available posts. No further nominations were forthcoming. The following were elected unanimously:

Cath Convery	Jane Woolley	Martin Speed
Clive House	Kate Evans	Sid Gale
Frances Taylor	Madeleine Gibson	Vicky Macarthur

Election of Sidesmen

Ruth Slatter thanked all who had served in this way over the past year, stressing the importance of the the warm welcome they had given. She proposed the following to serve for the coming year. These were seconded by Norman Ponting and elected unanimously.

Mary Jackson	Tony and Jean Twigger	Tony and Kate Ullmer
Elizabeth Gill	Peter and Betty Mcniven	Graham and Anne Cox

Geoff and Mary Jenkinson

Ryan Davies

Liz Hill

Mark Hillier

Betty Pyke

Ruth and Roy Slatter

Malcolm and Mandy
Birkinshaw

David Pyke

Mike Pepper

Pat Connolly

Jim and Wendy Sinclair

Roz Shipp

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, Martin Speed. 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.

No questions were raised about the report. Leading on from it, the importance of involving children in the services was commented on, and it was suggested that the musical instruments should be used more often.

Financial Report

The report was presented by the Treasurer, Clive House.

The Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2006 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 summarised the report for the meeting and highlighting a number of points. He noted that the format of the accounts had been changed to comply with new Church and Charity commission guidelines.

He was pleased to report that there was a modest surplus for the year, the first for a number of years and against a budgeted deficit of £12 thousand. This was the result of higher payments than had been budgeted, with regular giving having gone up by nine percent. At the start of the year Tim and Clive had made presentations to the congregation asking everyone to review their giving, and Clive thanked everyone for doing so. He also noted that there were a number of large donations.

Clive noted that there was a reserve of £32 thousand.

Commenting on the details of the accounts, Clive drew everyone's attention to the Mission Giving, which was a concern because although it had been retained at the same level as the previous year in monetary terms, it had been allowed to drop from 15% to 12% as a proportion of the budget overall. Clive expressed the hope that giving could be increased in the next year.

Clive gave thanks for the hard work of Elizabeth Gill as bookkeeper and Alison Manning as Independent Examiner – he said they make his job as treasurer very easy. He reported that this will be Alison's last year as independent examiner, and thanked her for her service in this role.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Clive reported that as yet a replacement for Alison had not been found, and that he would welcome suggestions for people that may be approached.

Report on Fabric and Ornaments

A written report had been distributed in the booklet with the annual report, and highlights from this were presented by Tim Roberts. He thanked Doug Jordan, Tony Hughes, David Pyke, Jim Mein, Jim Sinclair particularly for the time and effort they give throughout the year and extended particular thanks to Roz Shipp for her work on the Tower appeal. He mentioned the planning for the new bench, and the formal completion of the extension works. He also spoke about the Tower Appeal, highlighting fundraising events such as the Flower Festival, and the work of Gordon Gill in applying for grants. He said that the work was expected to be starting in mid to late summer.

He also thanked Wendy for her work looking after the Church Hall.

Tony Hughes was invited to give an 'up to the minute' briefing on the Tower appeal, and he reported that fundraising was progressing so well that it was now proposed to include a lightning protection system in the work undertaken.

A question from the floor asked whether it was possible to obtain more chairs and another table, but it was noted that the chairs provided were for the maximum number the hall was permitted to hold.

Electoral Roll Report

Wendy Sinclair, electoral roll officer, reported that the roll stands at 147 down from 169 last year.

Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod report was presented by Georgina Greer, one of the three representatives to Deanery Synod. Georgina reported that there had been three meetings, in June, November and March.

The June meeting elected members and discussed 'Rural Affairs' and encouraging more Fairtrade parishes. The November meeting heard a report of the General Synod, and shared 'areas of expertise' between parishes. The March meeting heard a report of the changes in types of ministry and variations in training.

Reports from Selected Organisations

Tim reported on the work of the **Because Approach Group**, explaining that it was so easy to carry on doing things because 'we've always done them that way,' whilst this approach could lead us to improve the way our resources are used in sharing the 'Good News'. The approach identifies four stages of drawing people into the church – (1) Knowing some Christians, (2) Respecting the Christians one knows, (3) Seeing the relevance of the Church, and (4) building the response. To balance the work in these areas, Tim reported the group were auditing the activities that currently take place and trying to identify surpluses and gaps. This work, Tim reported, was linked to the work of the **Combined PCC** group which was identifying opportunities that could come from closer working between the two PCCs. When PCC agenda items were analysed the group had found 50% of the items were common to both Chilton and Harwell, 25% had some common ground, and only a final 25% were unique to just one parish. Tim reported that although there were already many joint activities there also seemed to be opportunities to build on this in the future. The action plan was to: review group structures, combine groups or committees where the balance of the work was in common, and to revise PCC agendas to allow more time for major issues.

Contributions from the floor made the points that: separate identities were sometimes important because people chose particular styles of worship; that sometimes wider Christian groups were better; and that it was important to distinguish between the things that can be done best separately, and those that can be done best together.

Tim was asked whether anything had been identified as 'overdone'. He answered that there were no specific conclusions yet, but it was felt that the greatest need was in 'stage two' which he referred to as the 'pre-alpha' stage.

Debbie Davis reported on behalf of the **Cleaning and flower display team** explaining that there was an 11 person team looking after the cleaning, who worked well together and exchanged information on future services. Communication was said to be very important to the cleaners as anticipation of a problem can reduce their consequences. 'Special events' she described as the team's greatest problem and asked that everyone should consider their 'footprint' when using church buildings. Debbie praised God for the gift of flower arranging! She said that there were 20 flower-arrangers, 7 of whom were on the cleaning team as well – something she described as an embarrassment of riches. She said that experiments with themes and new ideas had added additional fun to the job, and she thanked everyone who had generously provided flowers to enhance the beauty of our place of worship.

Chris took the opportunity to express the warm appreciation of the congregation for all those who do such fine work behind the scenes.

Vicky Macarthur reported on **Children's Ministry** – splitting her report into church based activities ('in here') and those that were community based ('out there'). She listed and gave a numbers 'health check' for the main church groups and their leaders – noting the importance of the Orchestra as a group in which young people made a substantial contribution – and also for the community based work. Among these Vicky reported the activities mornings (for 3 to 11 year olds), the Holiday club run by Sid and Alison Gale, the Pathfinders events and the importance of the Youth Fellowship meetings. Looking to the future she said there were plans for a pre-school carer's club and a hope that one day a Harwell 'after school' club could be formed.

Vicky related the work with children to the stages of the 'because approach' as follows:

1. Relationship building ("*I know some Christians*") – **activity mornings, Playscheme, Pathfinders open events and youth fellowship**
2. Respect building ("*I respect the Christians I know*") **as above**
3. Relevance building ("*I see the relevance of Christianity to life*") **Sunday groups**
4. Response building ("*I need to follow Jesus*") **Sunday groups**

Vicky closed her report by thanking all those who helped with Children's ministry – including all those 'who smile and talk to the young people when they see them in church.'

Responses from the floor of the meeting included: support for the new arrangement of services to bring the children in at the end to provide a contribution; a plea from Jane Woolley for additional Crèche helpers; and a reminder from Chris of the contribution of the scouting groups – asking that we remember them in our prayers.

The Rector's Remarks

Chris opened with thanks for the contribution to the parish made by Jean, and reminded everyone of the date for the bring and share lunch to say good-bye to her as she took up her new post. He also thanked all those who helped lead services and all those who helped behind the scenes, saying that every job is important – to 'serve the Lord with gladness'.

Chris also gave thanks for the life of Robin Greer.

Chris spoke of the forthcoming shape of Didcot and the impact on Churches, and asked who we should plan our part in a Harwell that has more of an urban feel. Changes here, he said would be matched at Harwell site and the Chilton fields development. He said that we prefer things not to change, but reminded us of the way the disciples had to face change after the resurrection, and asked that we follow their example.

Chris spoke of the baptism and confirmation register, citing the scarcity of adult baptisms as a challenge, given that there had been fewer babies baptised. He suggested four actions we should take: praying for those we have contact with, improving the quality of our friendships, sharing our faith, and making use of small groups and Alpha. He suggested we should prioritise through the 'because' approach and then *do more*.

Other Business

The financing of the church hall was discussed. The suggestion was made that groups who use the hall might be encouraged to make a voluntary donation.

Also regarding the church hall, it was noted that the old screens have now gone, and that the rat problem in the grounds of the hall was being dealt with.

There were compliments and thanks for the web site – which was said to work well.

Close

Jean closed the meeting in prayer at 9:15.

Chairman: Chris Stott

Secretary: Martin Speed