

## **St Matthew's Church Harwell**

### **Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Tuesday 1 April 2003 at 7.45 p.m. in St Matthew's Church Hall**

The meetings were chaired by Rev Chris Stott; the attendance was 36.

**Apologies** were received from Elizabeth Gill, Mark Hillier, Jim Mein, Eva Stott, Tony Twigger and Kate Ullmer.

The meeting opened with the singing of the hymn "Yes, God is Good". Chris then read some verses from Mark chapter 5 – two parables about growth – and committed the meeting to God in prayer.

### **Annual Parochial Meeting**

#### **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

held on 23 April 2002 were distributed. It was proposed that these be accepted as a true record.

Moved: Jean Twigger; seconded: Peter McNiven; passed: unanimously.

#### **Election of Churchwardens**

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

Allan and Ruth were both nominated to serve for a further year. They were elected unanimously.

### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

#### **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

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Moved: Alan Walker; seconded: Tony Hughes; passed: unanimously.

#### **Matters Arising**

None was raised

#### **Election of PCC Members**

Chris reminded the meeting that it was now the practice to regard Rob Thomas, Licensed Lay Minister, as holding a position on the council *ex officio*.

Eleven nominations had been received for the twelve available posts. No further nominations were forthcoming. The following were elected unanimously:

Elizabeth Gill	Clive House	Tim Roberts	Frances Taylor
Georgina Greer	Tony Hughes	Wendy Sinclair	Marilyn Thomas
	Nancy Preston	Jim Sinclair	Tony Ullmer

## Election of Sidesmen

Ruth Slatter thanked all who had served in this way over the past year, stressing the importance of the welcome that they give to those coming to services. She proposed the following to serve for the coming year. These were seconded by Wendy Sinclair and elected unanimously.

Malcolm and Mandy Birkinshaw	Peter and Betty McNiven
Pam Chung	Mike Pepper
Pat Connolly	Betty Pyke
Graham and Anne Cox	David Pyke
Ryan Davies	Clive and Doreen Silver
Elizabeth Gill	Jim and Wendy Sinclair
Mark Hillier	Steve and Hayley Thompson
Mary Jackson	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.

The basis for the attendance figures was questioned, and whether these represented an increase on the previous year. Jim explained that the attendance figures are averages over the Sundays of October, as practised universally in the Church of England. The numbers represented approximately 20% increase over the previous year.

## Financial Report

In the absence of the treasurer, Elizabeth Gill, the report was presented by Clive House, chairman of the Finance and Budget subcommittee of the PCC. The Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2002 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 out-turn as approximately break-even (within £400), compared with a budgeted deficit of approximately £9,000. This improvement was due principally to Donations and Legacies exceeding the forecast. Regular giving was approximately equal to the previous year, but tax recovery was greater.

An important feature of the accounts was the use of a number of Designated Funds, which allow money to be set aside in one year for a specific purpose brought to fruition in later year(s).

With our stipendiary clergy now only one, ministerial expenses have decreased.

A very major outgoing is the Parish Share, which at approximately £30,000 for 2002 was some £5,000 up on the previous year.

The statement of Assets and Liabilities showed reserves of approximately £56,000 (less than two-thirds of the annual expenditure).

A summary was given of the Missions and Charitable giving, the total amount of which is set at 15% of the previous year's income.

For the coming year, a budget has been adopted with a deficit of £9,000. The Parish Share will be increased to £33,000.

The bank charges of £200 were queried from the floor. It was stated that this was a very reasonable figure for a business account.

### **Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Alison Manning was proposed to serve for a further year. Proposed: Jean Twigger; seconded: Tony Ullmer; elected: unanimously.

### **Report on Fabric and Ornaments**

A written report was distributed, and presented by Allan Macarthur.

The church buildings are generally in good repair. Maintenance work on both the Church and the Church Hall are recorded in log books. A Register of church property is kept, including an Inventory of valuables, with photographs of most items.

Thanks were given to all who had helped with working days during the year. Particular thanks were directed to Doug Jordan, Tony Hughes and David Pyke.

Examples of the works carried out were given. An important item was the trial of modified seating arrangements in the Church, with some pews being replaced by chairs. The final changes were based on extensive canvassing of opinion, and authorised by the granting of a Faculty.

Gratitude was expressed to Peter and Betty McNiven for taking over management of the Church Hall.

### **Discussion**

- Roy Slatter pleaded for equitable, tidy and safe use of the upstairs storage space in the Hall
- Tony Hughes commented that much maintenance work on the Hall could be saved through greater care by some users. Peter McNiven requested that the PCC undertake to remind users of this, rather than leaving it to the managers.

### **Electoral Roll Report**

Wendy Sinclair, electoral roll officer, reported that the roll stands at 162, after 6 additions and 3 deletions during the year.

### **Deanery Synod Report**

This was presented by Clive Silver, one of the three representatives to Deanery Synod. Clive is an elected member of the Standing/Pastoral committee of the Synod. Regular business includes reports from the Diocesan and General Synods, and review of the financial position. The Parish Share is a frequent topic of debate.

Apart from these regular subjects, the Synod considers a number of special topics. One this year was a Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. Joint worship and

sharing of communion are endorsed, but ongoing difficulties include differences over women as Bishops or equivalent, and the qualifications for a president at the Eucharist.

A second topic of interest was environmental pollution, in particular by the greenhouse-effect gas CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Reports from Selected Organisations

**The Bellringers** sent a report from their new Captain, Ann Gardiner. She was unable to attend, and the report was presented by Anita Pepper. Thanks were expressed to Doug Jordan for his many years of service to The Tower. Ringing for Sunday services is well attended, and the standard of ringing has seen real improvements. Some practices are held jointly with Chilton, and two learners are currently being taught.

Visits from other towers are increasing. The ringing service is used by several weddings each year, and peals are rung by both the local group and visitors. From May, the band intends to ring a quarter-peal once a month before an evening Sunday service.

**The Vision Coordination Group** was reported on by Tim Roberts. He said that the Vision expresses the diversity of gifts within the Church but a unity of purpose. With recent reductions in our number of stipendiary clergy, it had seemed good to appoint a number of lay leaders with responsibilities for particular key areas of the church's life. The Vision Coordination Group comprises these coordinators, and meets every two months. A recent outcome of this group was to produce laminated cards, in two formats, which could be used to keep the principles of the Vision in mind by members of the congregation. Samples of these cards were distributed to the meeting.

Each key area has one leader from Harwell and one from Chilton. The areas are:

Prayer (Rosemary Rolls, Frances Taylor)	Children & Youth (Marilyn Thomas, Carol Pigott)
Worship (Jean Barton, Pam Rolls)	Management (Tim Roberts, Lynda Ward)
Outreach (Nancy Preston, Steve Ward)	Finance (vacant)

Examples of the work in the areas were given by short presentations from two coordinators

- 1) Nancy Preston described the recent and future use of Alpha Courses as part of our outreach. The fruit of the courses held in the past was reviewed, showing a number of new regular church attenders, and a significant increase in practical involvement in church life by those who had already been adherents. Many Alpha attendees are keen to help with subsequent courses.
- 2) Marilyn Thomas reviewed the children's and youth work, giving the current levels of attendance and numbers of leaders in each case. She highlighted two issues. One was the fact that the groups are currently dominated by the children of church families. This implies a need to reach out more, perhaps through schools, and perhaps using an employed youth worker. The other issue was continuity of leadership. Rota arrangements help to manage the load on volunteers, and enable them to attend morning worship, but there is a negative effect on the children, and it becomes harder to note when any seem to be falling away.

## The Rector's Report

Chris' remarks were accompanied by a 'hi-tech' graphical presentation prepared by Jean Barton.

Chris gave thanks to God for many aspects of the church's life during the past year –

- Developments in ministry (Jean's ordination and taking up of service among us; Joy's ordination and appointment to other parishes; Naomi's service as secretary)

- Outreach (Alpha courses; Mothers' support network; pastoral visiting team)
- Personal development (Network course; Faith Comes By Hearing; Lent groups)
- Prayer support
- Generous giving and service by many

Looking ahead, Chris urged the church to foster –

- Our relationship with God (worship; listening; obedience; prayer)
- Our relationship with each other (nourishing our relationships, forgiving mistakes; 'huddling' in small groups; being interdependent rather than independent; communal sharing)
- Our relationship with others (being at the heart of community affairs; oriented towards mission and evangelism; acting as Salt and Light)

Chris mentioned that he had been asked to attend a conference in Chicago in August, and was planning a three-month period of sabbatical leave from May to July 2004.

He thanked everyone for their prayers and support.

### **Other Business**

Roy Slatter advocated moving the organ to open the South Transept for other uses. In discussion, it was pointed out that historically the organ had been moved several times, and no better place than the current position has been found. Others felt that, whatever the merits of different positions or of the uses that the South Transept might be put to, there were other higher priorities, e.g. improvement of the toilets and kitchen.

Jean thanked everyone for their welcome to her. She also expressed thanks to Chris on behalf of all.

### **Close**

The meeting closed with prayer to 9.30 p.m.