

St Matthew's Church Harwell

Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Sunday 24 March 2019 at 11.55am in St Matthew's Church

The Chairman, Revd. Dr. Jonathan Mobey, welcomed everyone to the meeting, which followed the morning church service, after a short break.

The attendance was 42.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received: Frances Taylor, Pam Rolls, Ruth Slatter, Roy Slatter, Tim Roberts, Kate Evans, Rebecca Lewis.

Annual Parochial Meeting

2. Election of churchwardens

Jonathan Mobey thanked Tim Paget and Rebecca Lewis for serving as churchwardens for the past year. Rebecca Lewis is willing to stand again for churchwarden but Tim Paget is not.

Jonathan Mobey said that **Rebecca Lewis and Allan Macarthur** have been nominated and seconded as churchwardens for the next year. Rebecca was nominated by Kate Evans and seconded by Jane Woolley. Allan was nominated by Vicky Macarthur and seconded by Tony Hughes. There were no other nominations and they were elected unanimously.

Signed as a true record:

Chairman:

Secretary:

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

3. Election of Deanery Synod representatives

Jonathan Mobey explained the Deanery, Archdeaconry and Diocese structure of the Church of England. Jonathan reminded the meeting that Sid Gale and Gordon Gill are our current Deanery Synod representatives, and that this is the maximum number of representatives we are now entitled to according to the numbers on our revised electoral roll. So there are no vacancies to fill.

4. Election of PCC Members

Jonathan Mobey reminded the meeting who had served on the PCC during 2018-19.

Jonathan explained that the number of elected members to the PCC depends on the size of the electoral roll. We are currently entitled to have up to 6 elected PCC members (it was 12 last year when our electoral roll was over 100), and up to 2 co-opted members.

Jonathan displayed a list of current PCC members, including ex-officio members. Jonathan explained that the intention is for the PCC in due course to co-opt Phill Johnston (Treasurer elect - because he has not been on the electoral roll long enough) and Rev Jean Barton assuming she is willing (because she is not licensed to the Parish and so is not an ex-officio member, and she cannot be elected because members of the clergy cannot join the electoral roll).

Jonathan explained that two elected PCC members – Martin Gibson and Michelle Walker - have come to the end of their three year terms. Four other elected PCC members are part way through their terms: Jane Woolley, Tony Hughes, Andrew Keene and Eliza Wheaton. There are therefore two vacancies.

The PCC Secretary had received a nomination form from Michelle Walker to be re-elected to the PCC.

Jonathan Mobey proposed that Michelle Walker be duly appointed to the PCC, and this was approved unanimously. That leaves one vacancy¹.

Jonathan Mobey thanked the Secretary, Jane Woolley, for all her work.

5. Appointment of Sidespeople

Jonathan Mobey thanked the sidespeople for their assistance to the churchwardens and for their important role in welcoming those attending services.

Jonathan Mobey proposed the following to serve as sidespeople for the coming year. These names were agreed unanimously.

Peter Barclay-Watt	Liz Hill	Kevin Davies
Gill Gay	Mike Pepper	Matthew Davies
Anne Cox	Elaine Shrimpton	Ryan Davies
Graham Cox	Tony Twigger	Margaret Spindler
David Pyke	Jean Twigger	Margaret Gibson
Jim Sinclair	Elizabeth Gill	Mel Gibson
Madeleine Speed	Georgina Greer	Peter Barton
Wendy Sinclair	Debbie Davies	Christine Jacopetti
Andy Lewis	Ruth Slatter	

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Jonathan Mobey explained that the Treasurer and the bookkeeper are the key stewards of St Matthew's finances but the PCC overall is responsible for looking after the money and how it is used. Most of our income is from donations. There is no government funding of C of E churches.

¹ Unfilled vacancies can be filled during the year via an election held by PCC members, unless there is less than 2 months to go until the next Annual Meeting.

Jonathan Mobey explained that the financial accounts are effectively audited by someone who we appoint to be the Independent Examiner. Once again, Jane Moreton has agreed to be the independent examiner for the 2019 financial accounts.

Jane Moreton was proposed by Peter Barclay-Watt and seconded by Scott Cockburn. Her appointment was unanimously accepted by the meeting.

7. Receipt of the reports

The following reports had been made available in the weeks leading up to the meeting, in hard copy and on the church website, and were formally “received” by the meeting:

- Minutes of the annual meetings held in April 2018
- The PCC annual report on 2018, including the Electoral Roll report, adopted by the PCC at its February meeting and signed by Revd. Dr. Jonathan Mobey as Chair
- Fabric report for 2018
- Financial report and Accounts for 2018, approved by the PCC at its February meeting
- Deanery Synod report on 2018 proceedings

The meeting accepted the minutes of the April 2018 meetings as a correct record and they were then signed by Jonathan Mobey and the PCC Secretary.

8. Electoral Roll

Jonathan Mobey explained that the Electoral Roll is a list of those entitled to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and is also a crude indicator to the Diocese of church membership. However, the church service attendance figures during October which we have to supply to the Diocese are another indicator of this.

Jonathan Mobey explained that the Electoral Roll has to be completely renewed every 6 years. Mike Pepper is our Electoral Roll Officer and Jane Woolley is his Deputy.

Jonathan Mobey reported that in April 2018 the number on the Electoral Roll stood at 111. As of March 2019 it stands at 44.

Jonathan Mobey explained that this does not really indicate that membership of St Matthew's is a third of what it was in 2018. He also indicated that it could result in a small decrease in our Parish Share payment.

Jonathan Mobey then asked if there were any comments or questions about the Electoral Roll.

Q1 (Tony Hughes) Have other churches in the Wallingford Deanery had a similar reduction in numbers on the Electoral Roll? If they have all reduced similarly, then our reduction will have little or no impact on our Parish Share.

A1 (Jonathan Mobey) The only figure I know for certain is All Saints', Chilton, which has had a small drop in numbers. Chilton takes a much more proactive approach than Harwell to recruiting people on to the Electoral Roll. My guess is, though, that other churches in the Deanery will also have experienced a reduction in numbers – but I don't know this for sure. I agree that if all the churches in the Diocese experience similar reductions to St Matthew's then there would be no reduction in our Parish Share payment. Currently, each additional person on the Electoral Roll equates to approximately an additional £80 per annum in Parish Share. So nominally, if we have 70 fewer on the Electoral Roll, this would equate to a reduction of £5,600 per annum.

Q2 (Peter Barton) I think that the size of the Electoral Roll can be taken as some indication of the strength and commitment of the congregation. We should bear this in mind because allocation of clergy posts is decided centrally and Electoral Roll numbers will be taken into account. There is also a moral aspect. We shouldn't deliberately reduce numbers on the Electoral Roll to reduce our Parish Share.

A2 (Jonathan Mobey) I don't think we have had a deliberate strategy to reduce numbers on the Electoral Roll. I did not brief Mike Pepper (Electoral Roll Officer) not to recruit. Yes, I agree that we would have to question the ethics of doing such a thing. There are many factors taken into account when allocating numbers of clergy. An Electoral Roll of 44 is still not small when compared to many other churches. The total for our Benefice (i.e. Harwell and Chilton combined) is about 120.

Q3 (Peter Barton) I do not wish to infer that we have deliberately tried to reduce the number on our Electoral Roll but rather to emphasise that the number has some importance.

Q4 (Jean Barton) I wanted to make the same points that Peter Barton has made. I would like to add that it's not too late for people to apply to go on the Electoral Roll.

Q5 (Peter Barclay-Watt) So it would appear that there are now around twice as many on the Electoral Roll in Chilton as in Harwell. That does not seem a fair reflection of reality.

A5 (Jonathan Mobey) Yes, if we examine the average service attendance figures, they are the other way round to the Electoral Roll numbers i.e. attendance is about twice as high in Harwell as in Chilton. Around a dozen people on the Chilton Electoral Roll do not live in Chilton and do not attend services. I have discussed this with All Saints' Electoral Roll Officer and there seems to be a particular culture around being on the Electoral Roll in Chilton. We could take Ladygrove Church, Didcot, as another example. This is attended by many from a Baptist tradition. Their Electoral Roll has been disproportionately small in comparison to service attendance figures. I also know of another village church which has very low service attendance figures but a very high number in comparison on its Electoral Roll. So these things can vary by church depending on culture and history.

Q6 (Peter Barton) Why are people on Chilton Electoral Roll if they live outside the Parish and never attend services?

A6 (Jonathan Mobey) Exceptions to these criteria are allowed in certain circumstances. I've been discussing this with the All Saints' Electoral Roll Officer.

Q7 (Hazel Connelly) I wasn't aware that the Electoral Roll was being renewed. I must have missed it.

Q8 (Alison Gale) I was going to make the same comment. I have attended either Harwell or Chilton church most Sundays and I have heard nothing about it even though I have been looking out for it.

A7/8 (Jonathan Mobey) The renewal of the Electoral Roll has been publicised in several notice sheets as well as the statutory notice in the church porch. I'm sorry if it has not been communicated well.

Q9 (Alison Gale) Perhaps in future it could be publicised in one of the Rector's emails.

A9 (Jonathan Mobey) There is a wider issue about Church communications. I aim to send out only around one email per month and not everyone is on email.

Q10 (Alison Gale) However the Electoral Roll is quite an important issue.

In the interests of time, Jonathan Mobey suggested that the meeting needed to move on.

9. Thanks

Jonathan Mobey said that he had thanked various people during the meeting so far but this is the point in the meeting at which he would like to formally thank a wide variety of groups. Jonathan explained that he will not name individuals as he might unintentionally miss people out.

Jonathan expressed his thanks to preachers, service leaders, musicians, PCC members and office holders, the bookkeeper, churchwardens, sidespeople, those who provide refreshments.

Jonathan said that there are a very large number of people who maintain and develop our church buildings, plus those who clean and do the flowers.

Jonathan also thanked the staff team in the office, who put in many extra hours of work, home group leaders and children's group leaders.

In summary, Jonathan said that he was very grateful to a huge team of people with diverse gifts and talents and that he apologised if he had missed anyone out.

Churchwarden Tim Paget thanked Jonathan Mobey for his work and leadership over the past year. Jonathan in turn paid tribute to his wife, Dawn, who he said enables him to function in so many different ways.

Peter Barton asked for thanks to be recorded to Peter Barclay-Watt who has served as Treasurer for a number of years, to the bookkeeper, Nick Clarke who has kept the records straight, and to Phill Johnston for talking over as Treasurer.

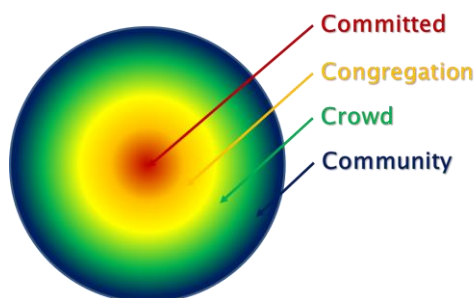
Joyce Doughty expressed thanks to the bell ringers.

10. Implementation of the church vision: "Growing God's Church, wider, deeper and closer"

Jonathan Mobey reminded the meeting that St Matthew's had adopted this vision a few years ago.

Jonathan expressed the opinion that Jesus had a strategy. Firstly he had a strong sense of His identity and calling. Then He gathered together the 12 disciples – He did not work alone. This reflects our church life too. The 12 then grew to 72 and Jesus sent them out in pairs to the towns and villages He planned to visit. Throughout all this, Jesus has a clear sense that he's going to end up in Jerusalem.

Jonathan said that he finds the following "fuzzy circles" diagram quite helpful as a conceptual framework when thinking about our church strategy:



At the centre of the diagram are the Committed. They are highly committed to their faith. They are probably also highly committed to church life, but not necessarily. Moving out from the centre we find gradually lowering levels of commitment.

Those in the Congregation regularly attend church but might need support and encouragement to grow and deepen their faith (Discipleship). Those in the Crowd are people in contact with the church (e.g. via Fledgelings, Holiday Club, an Alpha course or a CAP Money course) but are not part of the

church Congregation. We have opportunities to share the Gospel with them and we have some credibility with them (Evangelism).

We create the Crowd out of the wider Community by meeting what are called 'felt needs' e.g. via parenting courses, pastoral care (Serving). In time we might have the chance to meet their even deeper needs i.e. spiritual needs. This is like tilling the soil and is the model we see in Jesus when he feeds the hungry and heals the sick.

The aim is to move people closer towards to the centre of the circle. For example, Jonathan Mobey mentioned that Liz Roberts had told him that someone who had attended The Repair Café hosted recently in St Matthew's church had seen the display about CAP and booked to attend a CAP Money course.

Growth is up to God but we can till the soil (Serving), plant the seed (Evangelism) and water the plants (Discipleship).

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow... For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building."

1 Corinthians 3:6,9

Jonathan then listed some of the activities which we have been doing recently to build links to the Community and to draw people further towards the centre of the "fuzzy circles" diagram referred to earlier:

- Sunday services & Festivals
- Children and Families Work e.g. Fledgelings, Y Club, Holiday Club, school assemblies, etc.
- Home Groups, Alpha course, Christianity Explored course
- Generation Gold, Evergreens
- Weddings, Marriage Course
- Men's & Women's Ministry
- Baptisms, Parenting Course
- Home Visiting, Home Communion
- Walking Group, Celebrations
- Science and Faith group
- CAP Money Courses and support for local CAP Centre, Support for Didcot Foodbank
- World Mission support
- Hosting No Go Joe musical and The Repair Cafe

Jonathan said that he also wanted to draw attention to a question received before the meeting: *How do we make St Matthew's more welcoming?*

Jonathan said that we want people to be welcomed by people, and also for the building to be welcoming. Recently we have been developing our church building in particular. The latest project underway is to improve the entrance from the church porch into the church. We have just launched a consultation among the church community. Once we've had church member input we would then open the consultation to the wider village community. Tony Hughes has been leading the working group on this project.

Jonathan listed a few ways in which we have also been able to make use of the more flexible space in our church building recently e.g. for Lent Central bible study meetings, to site a crèche and soft seating area near the base of the tower, to host the No Go Joe musical, to host a parenting course.

11. Discussion and questions

Jonathan Mobey then opened up the meeting to discussion and questions.

Welcome

Joan Sutton commented that she feels that she has been made very welcome in church since she arrived 3 years ago. She said that she could not see how she could have been made more welcome.

World Mission

Peter Barclay-Watt made 2 points:

- If anyone is interested in joining the World Missions group, they would be very welcome to join it.
- Please could the PCC ensure that 10% of a recent legacy which has no restrictions on its use is clearly set aside for mission giving, as per the PCC's missions giving policy?

Action: PCC Secretary to raise with Treasurer/PCC

Fund raising

Liz Roberts said that she had been working on a Friends of Harwell St Matthew's Facebook page to get people interested in financially supporting the fabric of the church building. This is mainly aimed at families in the USA with historical connections to Harwell and who feel an affinity for our church building. Liz Roberts reported that this initiative had not yet borne much fruit. She asked people to let her know if they have any ex-Harwell contacts on the East Coast of the USA, or in other parts of the UK, who we might be able to tap into as well.

Gordon Gill mentioned that there is something in the USA called the American Fund to which generous US citizens contribute (its existence has something to do with the USA tax regime). This distributes money to good causes in the UK e.g. Coventry Cathedral. Perhaps we could tap into that?

12. Closing prayer

Jonathan Mobey closed the meeting in prayer at 12.45pm.

Signed as a true record:

Chairman:

Secretary