

St Matthew's Church Harwell

Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Wednesday 7 October 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom video conference and in St Matthew's Church

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Meetings were held later in the year than normal and were conducted electronically via Zoom video conferencing.

The meetings were attended by 18 people, 4 of whom were in the church building, from where the meetings were 'broadcast' to the Zoom audience at home. One of the Zoom attendees was present from item 3 of the APCM onwards.

The Chairman, Revd. Dr. Jonathan Mobey, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Jonathan Mobey informed the meeting of two privacy-related matters:

- 1) The Zoom meeting is being recorded
- 2) We intend to take a screenshot of the Zoom participants during the meeting so that we can potentially use this in publicity for our churches

Jonathan Mobey asked that anyone who had any concerns about either of these two matters to let him know e.g. via the 'chat' function in Zoom. No one raised any concerns.

Jonathan Mobey thanked Allan Macarthur, churchwarden, for arranging the technical set up for the meetings. He also thanked Jane Woolley, PCC secretary, for other preparations for the meetings.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received: Joyce Doughty, Alison Gale, Peter Barton, Jean Barton and Elaine Shrimpton.

Annual Parochial Meeting

2. Election of churchwardens

Jonathan Mobey thanked Rebecca Lewis and Allan Macarthur for serving as churchwardens for the past year. Both are willing to stand again for churchwarden.

Jonathan Mobey said that **Rebecca Lewis and Allan Macarthur** have been nominated and seconded as churchwardens for the next year. There were no other nominations and they were elected unanimously.

Signed as a true record:

Chairman:

Secretary:

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Resolution re new rule on number of terms served on the Deanery Synod

Jonathan Mobey invited PCC member and Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod, Gordon Gill, to comment on how the new rule limiting the number of terms elected lay members of the Deanery Synod may serve had come into being.

Gordon Gill explained that this new rule had been bundled up with some other matters when voted on by the General Synod. It was not expedient at the time to amend that particular aspect without jeopardising the bundle as a whole. So it was passed by General Synod. Apparently, the intention is for the General Synod to change it back again in due course.

Jonathan Mobey clarified that therefore our resolution to dis-apply this new rule would maintain the status quo in the meantime.

Resolution	To dis-apply the new limit on the number of terms which may be served by lay members elected by the parish to the Deanery Synod				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

2. Election of Deanery Synod representatives

Jonathan Mobey noted that Sid Gale and Gordon Gill had been nominated to serve as lay members of the Deanery Synod. Jonathan proposed that they be duly elected, and this was approved unanimously.

3. Election of PCC Members

Jonathan Mobey displayed a list of current PCC members, including ex-officio members.

Jonathan explained that Andrew Keene has come to the end of his latest 3 year term and did not wish to stand again. Jonathan thanked Andrew for serving on the PCC.

Four other elected PCC members are part way through their terms: Jane Woolley, Tony Hughes, Eliza Wheaton and Michelle Walker. A church with an electoral roll of 51-100 people can have up to 9 elected PCC members. There are therefore 5 vacancies.

The PCC Secretary had received a nomination form Phill Johnston, currently co-opted on to the PCC. There were no other nominations.

Jonathan Mobey proposed that Phill Johnston be duly appointed to the PCC, and this was approved unanimously. That leaves 4 unfilled vacancies.

4. Appointment of Independent Examiner

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 2020 financial accounts.

Jonathan Mobey proposed that Jane Moreton be appointed as Independent Examiner, and this was approved unanimously.

5. Receipt of the reports

The following reports had been made available in the weeks leading up to the meeting and were formally “received” by the meeting:

- Minutes of the annual meetings held in March 2019
- The PCC annual report on 2019, 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 2019
- Financial report and Accounts for 2019, approved by the PCC at its February meeting
- Deanery Synod report on 2019 proceedings

The meeting accepted the minutes of the March 2019 meetings as a correct record and they were then signed by Jonathan Mobey and the PCC Secretary.

6. 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 one indicator to the Diocese of church membership (average Sunday attendance in October being the other). The number on the Electoral Roll is also a factor which feeds into calculation of Parish Share payments.

Mike Pepper is our Electoral Roll Officer and Jane Woolley is his Deputy.

Jonathan Mobey relayed that the number on the Electoral Roll as of 9 September 2020 stood at 68, as compared with 44 in March 2019.

Jonathan Mobey thanked Mike Pepper for managing the Electoral Roll.

7. Thanks

Jonathan Mobey said that it was always impossible to list everyone who should be thanked. But he did want to acknowledge the work of the following people specifically:

- The churchwardens, PCC members and Deanery Synod members
- Tony Hughes, who chairs the Buildings Committee and who oversaw a number of projects throughout 2019, some fairly major
- Phill Johnston (Treasurer) and Nick Clarke (book-keeper) for managing the finances
- The ministry team, and in particular Pam Rolls who is a tireless, reliable, faithful servant of the Lord in our parishes

Jonathan Mobey reiterated his general thanks to all those who serve in all sorts of ways.

Tony Hughes proposed a vote of thanks to Jonathan Mobey for all the work he is doing and has done. Tony commented that 2020 has so far proven to be a difficult one due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been government restrictions to implement and alternative service formats to arrange.

Tony Hughes commented that Jonathan has also taken the initiative for us to be part of an exciting potential new development to support youth ministry in the Didcot area.

Tony Hughes concluded by thanking Jonathan for everything he has done throughout the whole year.

8. Implementation of the church vision: “Growing God’s Church, wider, deeper and closer”

Jonathan Mobey read from Romans 12 v.1-13.

Jonathan Mobey pointed out that this passage has much to say to us at an Annual Meeting and at this time in our national life.

Jonathan said that at this time we are unable to worship in the normal way. However, our worship is more than gathering together on a Sunday. Rather, we worship with our whole lives and minds.

Jonathan remarked that each of us has unique opportunities, situations and gifts.

Jonathan went on to say:

I want to use this occasion to thank you for your partnership in the work of both St Matthew’s Harwell and All Saints’ Chilton, with whom we form a united benefice. We are a Christian community at the heart of our village communities, seeking to serve our neighbours in love, share with them the good news of Jesus, and help one another to deepen our lived-out faith. We are about growing God’s Church, wider, deeper and closer.

We do this through teams of people who run our worship services, in-person and now also on-line, small groups such as home groups and the Alpha Course, our baby and toddler groups, baptisms, weddings and funerals, Generation Gold and Evergreens, children’s, youth and women’s groups, Holiday Club, pastoral work, hosting repair cafes, concerts and other community events, sponsoring a Scout Group, supporting our local Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Debt Centre and a number of mission partners further afield, and more! Enabling and underpinning much of this activity are our church buildings and Church Hall, lovingly cared for, maintained, cleaned and decorated, our leadership and governance teams, and the generous financial giving of many.

We are one body, with one mission, but many parts, each able uniquely to give our time, talents, and “treasure” to enable the work of our churches; to do so is an act spiritual worship that glorifies God (ref. Romans 12).

At our annual meetings it is good to review what God has been doing amongst us, and where he is leading us. Our annual reports focus on 2019, but we reflect also on the last six months, with its considerable challenges, but also opportunities.

I want to highlight two aspects of our corporate life – and the challenges and opportunities of this season. The first is connection, the second is stewardship.

Connection

A particular challenge during these last six months and going forward is to remain connected to one another, and maybe also remain connected to God. Initially services in church and most other in-person activities had to stop, and we moved online in many areas. We are now starting to a bit more in person, such as our evening services alternating between Chilton and Harwell, and now experimenting with socially-distanced gatherings for families on Sunday mornings at St Matthew’s.

Many home groups have continued to meet in various ways, but some have been unable to, and many individuals are not in such groups. As a result for the next few months we will be starting a number of Zoom-based Connect groups which will give us a new opportunity to connect both with one another and with God; more news on those to follow.

Stewardship

Another challenge the last few months has been our finances. But this also presents an opportunity for each of us to our financial priorities and our giving to the churches.

Many individuals and families in our church and community are finding themselves in financial difficulty at this time. Our churches are here to support them in various ways, including through the provision of our CAP Debt Centre. Others will not be struggling in the same way and may even have made savings over the last few months.

Our churches are facing a particular challenge this year to balance the books and ensure that we are able to continue to do all that we wish to do, and even do exciting new things, but we know that God is able to provide for all our needs. God's plentiful resources are there, some of them within our own bank accounts!

As we celebrate God's generosity to us in the season of harvest, it is appropriate to focus on stewardship – on making wise, generous use of all that we have been given. The last Sunday in October, 25th, is going to be our Gift Day, an opportunity for us to individually respond to God's goodness to us, and to support the ongoing work of our churches.

There will be two main ways that you can respond. The first is with a one-off gift. The second is to pledge to give on a regular basis, e.g. monthly, perhaps for a set time. There will also be the opportunity for your gift to be used in one of four ways:

- 1. General giving, to support the whole work of our churches, and used in the way most needed*
- 2. To enable us to continue to employ our Children and Families' Workers beyond the end of the year; this has the exciting opportunity of securing match-funding through a Greater Didcot Christians Youth work Trust that we are hoping to establish in January with three local partner churches*
- 3. To support the work in our communities of our local CAP Debt Centre, which has to date enabled 42 individuals and families to become debt free; this is a critical service that will sadly be even more needed in the coming months as the economic effects of Covid-19 play out*
- 4. To maintain and develop our beautiful church buildings which are a wonderful resource, a spiritual and operational base. In the case of St Matthew's we need to cover the cost of essential roof work following the recent lead theft, and in the case of All Saints' to cover some outstanding costs associated with the new access path installed a few years ago.*

If you are a tax payer, the value of your gift is increased by 25% through the Gift Aid scheme, but as with the five small loaves and two fishes, whatever our tax status, be assured that all that we give back to God is hugely multiplied by the Giver of all good things (ref James 1).

As we sing at Harvest time: "All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, so thank the Lord... for all his love"

9. Discussion and questions

Jonathan Mobey then opened up the meeting to discussion and questions. There were no questions or discussion points.

10. Closing prayer

Jonathan Mobey closed the meeting in prayer at 8.20pm.

Signed as a true record:

Chairman:

Secretary