

## **St Bride's Church Fleet Street**

### **Minutes of the Annual Meetings**

**Held on Tuesday April 23 2013**

**Present:** Ven David Meara (Rector), Christopher Betterton, Pam Bevin, Geoffrey Burgess, Rachel Corp, Helen Fraser, Julie Glaser, Clive Hill-Archer, James Irving, Lesley-Ann Jones, Janet Kitchen, Beverly Leach, Peter Longland, Ian Locks, Elizabeth Madison, Matthew Morley, Claire Seaton, Peter Silver, Ingrid Slaughter, David Smith, Janet Smith, Terence Smith, Russell Spencer, Grace Stedman, Mary Walker, John Waterlow, Jerry Wright.

**Also in attendance:** Andrew Pianca (Crowe Clark Whitehill, Auditor),

1. **Opening prayers**

The meetings opened with the collect for the feast day of St George.

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from: Emmanuel Adeniji, Sue Ash, Edward Bevin, Angela Cova, Eric Davies, Valerie Hill-Archer, Charles Leach, Valerie Locks, Jean Longland, David Lowish, Lindsay Nicholson, Nicola Smith, John Smith, Lesley Wood.

**A. Annual Vestry Meeting**

3. **Election of Churchwardens**

The Rector reported that Lindsay Nicholson had been appointed Churchwarden the previous year, but that pressure of work had prevented her from fulfilling the role. The Rector thanked Lindsay for the work that she had done during the year.

Ian Locks proposed and Jerry Wright seconded the proposal that Helen Fraser be nominated for to fill the vacancy. Mary Walker proposed and Beverly Leach seconded the proposal that Ian Locks, Peter Silver and Jerry Wright be re-elected.

Both proposals were unanimously passed.

**B. Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

4. **Minutes of the APCM held 23 April 2012**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Rector and Secretary to the meeting.

5. **Matters arising not on the agenda**

There were none.

6. **Rector's Annual Report**

The Rector presented his report:

I began last year's report by mentioning our updated Mission Action Plan which guides our priorities for the next few years. Since then the Diocese of London has been preparing its own strategic plan 'Capital Vision 2020' which will be launched in June this year. This identifies three aspirations, that together we will become more:

- Confident in speaking and living out the Gospel.
- Compassionate in serving our communities with the love of God.
- Creative in reaching new people with the Good News.

It seems sensible, therefore, to recast our own Mission Action Plan taking account of these headings, and that will be presented to the first meeting of the new PCC.

The last year has been an unusually busy one, partly because of the celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games. We marked both occasions in style and held a special service and reception for journalists covering the Games. In addition we held the usual annual events such as Beating the Bounds, MacMillan Coffee Morning, Summer Party, Quiz Night, EC4 Music, Journalists Commemorative Service attended by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, Lord Mayor's Day and the Lent Sermon series on Faith and Work. In addition we held the Sleep out in aid of Street Child World Cup, and the screening of Baroness Thatcher's funeral. We also hosted 25 carol services and concerts, Livery Company Services, and many weddings, baptisms and memorial services. Peter Hitchens and Brian Paddick delivered the Olsen Lecture and we welcomed our Guild Bursary Scholar Tom Knowles on a number of occasions. We are just starting the process of choosing his successor, again using City University's excellent Department of Journalism.

Congregational numbers, as measured by attendance figures in October, show Sunday morning numbers averaging 133, and evening numbers at 60. Over 5,900 attended our weekday Christmas carol services, and our own Advent and Christmas numbers were 1,200 and at Easter 850.

We continue to engage with the media industry and I have attended various events such as the Society of Editors Conference, the PPA Reception, London Press Club Awards, British Press Awards, and the IBP Awards. I have also kept in contact with some of those journalists arrested as a result of Operation Weeting.

During the past twelve months we have launched the Inspire! Appeal and I want to pay tribute to Gerald Bowey and the team who have been pushing this forward. As you can see, Phase 1 has begun, and we are working on the launch of the congregational part of the Appeal which is raising money for the interior re-decoration of the church.

My job would not be possible, and certainly not as much fun, without a great staff team. I would like to pay tribute to all work in the office, our Churchwardens and PCC, the Guild, the Choir and organists, the Sunday School team, the shop and tours team, our vergers and all who make St Bride's such a happy and rewarding place in which to work and worship.

## 7. **Presentation of 2012 Annual Report and Accounts**

The PCC Treasurer presented her report:

We spent approx. £730,000 on the church during the year to December 31 2013.

- An amount of £135,000 was spent on the first phase of the Inspire! Project covered mainly by grant income.
- Of the remainder approx. two thirds went to the people, who are so important to the running of St Bride's and make it so special, our office staff, the vergers, the choir and most importantly a contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund for David Meara's stipend, housing and pension etc.

- The remaining third went on maintenance, church running costs, office costs, charitable contributions and other items such as depreciation.
- We watch costs closely and over the last year kept them in line with our agreed budget with a few small exceptions relating to the website costs (£10,000) and staff & choir costs (£11,000)

Our reported income was greater than our general expenses at £611,000.

- Collections and Gift Aid donations (£133,519) remained strong despite the economic climate and we were able to reclaim the substantial sum of £24,855 from HMRC in Gift Aid. We are most grateful to those who give this way without any extra cost to themselves.
- Church Rates income was £87,413, well above the £52,500 budget. I must thank James Irving for his hard work in preparing the invoices and collecting the funds.
- Legacies from Bob Edwards, Francine Swift, Margaret Swift and Sylvia Tutt totalled £29,163.
- Other Donations of £77,000 were £13,000 higher than expected (including a Freshfields donation increase of £5,000).
- Income from the St Bride's Appeal Trust of £145,000 was lower this year than last and way below the originally projected £180,000 p.a. as yields on investments continue to remain low.

Net incoming resources for the year were £45,897.

To summarise the Finances are in good order.

At the bottom line we are carrying forward reserves of £416,661 from 2012. Of that already designated funds are £319,470, which is made up of £150,000 allocated to the Inspire! Appeal and £169,640 church furniture.

Therefore the underlying cash reserve is £95,902.

As a charity we are required to have a reserves policy. During 2012 the PCC adopted a reserves policy aiming for a balance of £72,000 (or two months income less the Appeal Trust income) to cover emergency situations. The current reserve of £95,902 exceeds this by over £20,000 (£23,902). Accordingly, I made a proposal to the PCC at our last meeting to designate all of £29,163 legacies received for the Inspire! Appeal.

I would like to think that the donors will be pleased that we are putting their funds to such good use and permanent benefit. We are therefore carrying forward reserves of £67,000 to the current year.

It was a good year, but not a time to be complacent as we have some challenges ahead raising funds for the Inspire! Appeal and keeping costs down.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to:

- everyone who donated money however large or small who collectively made a substantial difference to our income this year and kept the ministry and fabric of our much loved church running.
- James Irving, who has worked tirelessly all year to ensure the finances of the church are in good order and to Claire and Gloria in the office for their help.
- Andrew Pianca and Andrew Thomas of Crowe Clark Whitehill and the team of auditors for their assistance over the course of the audit and preparation of the accounts.

## **Q&A:**

Andrew Pianca (Crowe Clark Whitehill, Auditor) reported that it had been a good audit and thanked the church team for their input.

James Irving was asked to comment on the voluntary church rate: he noted that 2012 rates receipts had been higher than in 2011 and that there had been fewer adverse comments from the recipients of the rates demand. It was reported that there were moves to repeal the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure and abolish the voluntary church rate, but that this could take a number of years. In the meantime, James was to engage with some of the major contributors to discuss sustainable on-going giving.

Peter Silver proposed and Peter Longland seconded the proposal that the accounts be received and that thanks were passed to James Irving and Beverly Leach for their work. The proposal was unanimously passed.

Item 10 on the Agenda was taken at this point.

### **8. Appointment of Auditor**

The Rector thanked Andrew Pianca on behalf of the meeting. The Rector proposed and Peter Silver seconded the proposal that Crowe Clark Whitehill be re-appointed auditor. The proposal was unanimously passed.

### **9. Electoral Roll Report**

Janet Smith (Electoral Roll Officer) reported that the Roll had been wiped clean. The new Roll stood at 235 (from 509).

Ian Locks proposed and Helen Fraser seconded the proposal that the meeting thank Janet Smith for her work as Electoral Roll Officer. The proposal was unanimously passed.

### **10. Election of lay members to the Parochial Church Council**

It was reported that the terms of office of Emmanuel Adeniji, Janet Kitchen and David Lowish had expired and that they would be required to seek re-election; Helen Fraser's term had also expired but she had become an ex-officio member of the Council as Churchwarden. It was also reported that there were also a number of casual vacancies – in all there were eight vacancies to fill.

Emmanuel Adeniji, Janet Kitchen and Ashley Painter were elected unopposed to serve for three years on the Council.

David Lowish and Rachel Corp had been willing to stand, but were unable to do so as they were not on the Electoral Roll. It was agreed to resolve this at the 22 May Council meeting.

11. **Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church**

John Smith (Architect) tabled his report:

Artwork, furniture, furnishings and ornaments in the church comprise a wide range of objects including the East wall mural, paintings, photographs, a mediaeval and other lecterns, sculpture, stained glazing, altars, font, organ console, donation and other tables, shop fittings and seats, as well as the oak reredos, screens, stalls and aisle seating. Church plate and many other valuable items are locked away for safe keeping. I am pleased to report that I have inspected these items, which in general continue to be kept in good condition. The church fabric, including walls, roofs, crypt and churchyard has been regularly inspected during the year. Continuing defects and deterioration are now being addressed and the fabric is otherwise generally in good order.

Last autumn, following the detailed surveying and testing, the church decided to proceed to obtain consents and tenders and to commission a first phase of the 'Inspire!' Appeal work - the cleaning and repair of the tower and spire and extending the lightning protection. Submissions were made, tenders invited and the work begun and it will continue until late November. It is hoped that response to the Appeal will enable the remaining recommended repairs, cleaning and redecorations to follow quickly. Churchyard boundary walls and railing repairs still remain to be planned at some time in the future. The paving and planting are of course kindly maintained by the City Corporation.

During the past year surveys have led to drawings being produced for the crypt and churchyard. Several water supply issues have been addressed including a new standpipe and Rectory water storage. The church's health and safety policy and fire procedures have been updated. A space utilisation study was commissioned. Several electrical issues have been and are being attended to. A large number of other miscellaneous redecorations, repairs and replacements including normal routine procedures such as leaf-clearing have also been carried out. In conjunction with the 'Inspire!' Appeal, support has been given to various initiatives, including the potential creation within the building of a centre for resources and study of Sir Christopher Wren's achievements.

Once again, I am most grateful to you and to the parish for my involvement with its continuing commitment towards the upkeep and development of this beautiful and historic church.

12. **Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod**

Clive Hill-Archer presented the report:

There had been three meetings – June and October 2012 and 29th January this year. The June meeting is largely, if not entirely social, being generously hosted by the Rector and Master of Temple Church in his garden.

The October meeting featured two substantial presentations, the first by Andrew Myers of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC). This organisation principally does enabling work to help the laity give voice to work in church committees and in daily life and bring Christianity to the workplace. Based in St Peter's Vere Street in the parish of All Souls, Langham Place, the LICC helps break down the sacred/secular divide to "make a difference wherever you are". The 2nd presentation was from Kerry McMenemy from the

Church Urban Fund (CUF). The CUF Mission is to change the lives of those in need in the most deprived areas of the UK against a background of price inflation and increased poverty in deprived high unemployment areas.

The January meeting earlier this year was the traditional session preceded by the visit of the current Lord Mayor, Alderman Roger Gifford, the Lady Mayoress and Sheriffs and their respective consorts. This year the Lloyds choir sung the introit "If ye love me" by Thomas Tallis, and this was followed by an inspirational presentation by Patrick Regan, CEO of NFP organisation XLP on "Youth in the City". XLP tries to deal with the causes of violence and works closely with schools. It works to provide stimulating activities as an alternative to gang culture and was greatly encouraged by the visit of Archbishop Tutu to see the scheme in action.

Rory Anderson, Synod Lay chairman, presented a King James Bible to the Lord Mayor, who responded elegantly, mentioning the "Gates of Heaven" that can be seen in large print on the Bow Road. He insisted the Church must create this ethos as well as criticise and engage. The Lord Mayor presented Synod with a copy of the book on the Harold Samuel Art Collection at the Mansion House. After the Lord Mayor's departure, reports were given on the 'Online Lent Blog 2012 Burial Ground Fund Project' from the Revd. Laura Jorgensen of St. Botolph's Aldgate and the 'Moorgate Talks' from the Revd. Richard Bray of St. Botolph's Aldersgate. Our own The Ven David Meara, Archdeacon of London, updated Synod on the progress with the 'Vision for the City'.

13. **Any other business**

The Rector reported that David Smith was required to be re-licensed as a Reader, and that the APCM was required to endorse him, which was done unanimously.

The Rector was thanked for all his work during the previous year.

14. **Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.