

St Bride's Church Fleet Street

Minutes of the Annual Meetings

Held on Tuesday 15 April 2015

Present: Canon Alison Joyce (Rector), Peter Silver (PCC Vice Chair), Christopher Betterton, Pamela Bevin, Guy Black, David Bolton, Gerald Bowey, Edward Bowsher, Lucy Bowsher, Geoffrey Burgess, Chris Cottrill, Carole Cox, Edward Cox, Paul Dyson, Helen Fraser, Julie Glaser, Susie Ind, Alasdair Johnstone, Lesley Ann Jones, Rosemary Lewin, Valerie Locks, Peter Longland, Alison Martin, Jane McClennahan, Rachel McClennahan, Matthew Morley, Crevan O'Grady, Ashley Painter, Claire Seaton, Everarda Slabbekoorn, Ingrid Slaughter, David Smith, John Smith, Terence Smith, Russell Spencer, Mary Walker, Jerry Wright.

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

1. **Opening prayers**

The meetings opened with prayers.

Clerk to the meeting

Chris Cottrill proposed and Mary Walker seconded that Christopher Betterton be appointed Clerk to the meeting. This was approved.

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Sue Ash, Bobby Baddeley, Sue Baddeley, Edward Bevin, Rachel Corp, Eric Davies, Clive Hill-Archer, Valerie Hill-Archer, James Irving, Janet Kitchen, Ian Locks, Jean Longland, David Lowish, Katharine Wilkinson.

A. Annual Meeting of the Parishioners

Churchwardens' Report

Peter Silver reported to the meeting. The report is attached at Annex 1.

3. **Election of Churchwardens**

- a. The Rector reported that Churchwarden's terms of office was set at six years, and that Peter Silver would be required to stand down at the meeting. In order to maintain continuity in the early stages of her ministry it was put to the meeting that the six year term be suspended on this occasion. Mary Walker proposed and Valerie Locks seconded that the six year term of office be suspended. This was approved.
- b. Nominations had been received from Peter Silver, Jerry Wright, Helen Fraser and Guy Black who were elected unopposed.

B. Annual Parochial Church Meeting

4. **Minutes of the APCM held 30 April 2014**

Peter Silver proposed and Valerie Locks seconded the minutes be accepted. This was approved and the minutes were signed by the Rector.

5. **Matters arising not on the agenda**
There were none.
6. **Rector's Annual Report**
The Rector reported to the meeting. The report is attached at Annex 2.
7. **Appointment of Auditor**
Ashley Painter proposed and Chris Cottrill seconded the proposal that Crowe Clark Whitehill be re-appointed auditor. The proposal was approved.
8. **Election of lay members to the Parochial Church Council**
 - a. It was reported that the terms of office of Valerie Locks, Ingrid Slaughter and Mary Walker, had expired and that they would be required to seek re-election to the Council. Mary Walker would not seek re-election and was thanked for her work on the Council.
 - b. Carole Cox, Valerie Locks, Lucy Nutt and Ingrid Slaughter were elected unopposed to serve for three years on the Council.
 - c. There remained one vacancy on the Council.
9. **Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church**
The Architect's report was presented to the meeting. John Smith was thanked for his work.
10. **Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod**
 - a. A report by Clive Hill-Archer (Deanery Synod representative) was presented to the meeting.
 - b. It was noted that General Synod elections would be held during 2015.
11. **Electoral Roll report**
The Electoral Roll report was presented to the meeting. The Electoral was 332 at the date of the Annual Meetings. Claire Seaton was thanked for her work.
12. **Any other business**
There was none.
14. **Closing prayers**
The meeting ended with prayers.

2015 APCM Churchwardens' Report

Your Churchwardens have been very busy over the last year.

As you know, Ian Locks left office this time last year to take the Masters Chair of the Worshipful Company of Stationers' and Newspaper Makers and we were very fortunate that Guy Black agreed to join Jerry Wright, Helen Fraser and I to act as your Churchwardens over this last momentous twelve months.

To dispel any thoughts you might have that this is purely a ceremonial role (with nice big chairs in the Sanctuary!), I can report that we have formally met on a dozen occasions during this period and have incorporated the church's Standing Committee at the majority of those meetings – which I might add, commence at 8am! (This is to accommodate my non-retired colleagues who have to then go off to do a days' work!)

In brief summary, our year has included us overseeing the departure of our then incumbent Rector/Archdeacon, David Meara;

Surveying the congregation for their hopes, desires and comments;

Producing a well-received Parish Profile;

Saving 10% of the net choir costs;

Re-structuring the staff pension liabilities of the church;

Serving on a number of the Inspire! Appeal committees;

Ensuring a smooth Interregnum without disruption to our normal services;

Preventing the Sunday School (aka the Sunday Club) from possible closure and,

most importantly, selecting a superb new Rector and assisting her through the first few months of her Ministry.

All of this has, of course, been supported and helped by many members of the congregation for which we are all immensely grateful. If re-elected, we collectively assure you that we will continue to give of our very best to the benefit of this marvellous Church of St Bride's.

Here ends an Election Broadcast on behalf of the Churchwardens' Party.

PWS 14/04/2015

St Bride's Church, Fleet Street
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Tuesday 14th April 2015 at 6.00 pm

Rector's Report

Interestingly enough tomorrow, 15th April, will be exactly six months to the day since I moved into the Rectory here – so this feels like a particularly appropriate moment to reflect on my first half year with you, and also to flag up some thoughts for the future.

It has always been one of my guiding principles that when coming into any new parish, one must work 'with the grain' of the place, rather than against it. In other words, my single most important task since joining you here has been to strive to understand St Bride's: how we operate; what we do well, what matters to the people who make up our core congregation; what draws other people to visit us here – and at the same time, to come into St Bride's looking at everything with new eyes, and asking all the dumb questions (which is the prerogative of all new Rectors). Because I perceive my task here as being above all to honour what is already a great tradition and to build on all that is good.

And from my point of view at least, the transition has felt a remarkably straightforward one – both because the values of St Bride's happen to be values that I share wholeheartedly; and also because we are blessed with a wonderful team here. Our administrators, vergers, Churchwardens, and other support staff, not only make my job manageable – they also manage to make it fun (and I cannot tell you what a gift that is). I am so grateful for the extraordinary help and support I have been given by all of you, as I have been learning to ropes here. My overriding hope is that you will, in time, come to have increasing confidence in my own judgment, so that as we move towards planning for our future here, the vision we develop is very much a shared vision, in which all feel they are involved, and to which all feel committed.

With regard to our worship, you will I hope already have gathered that my policy is basically to tweak, rather than to change – always and only in the interests of making what we already do well even better – and to date the responses I have received have been overwhelmingly positive. I also note with interest that our Evensong numbers have been increasing, which is an interesting development. The quality of our welcome to visitors at services is getting better all the time, and must always remain an absolute priority, because that is one of the most important ways in which we build community – for the simple reason that, as an American theologian once observed: 'People cannot be inducted into a repenting, praying, and serving community unless there is one'. So our challenge is to ensure that we are that community and that we continue both to grow within it, and to grow it. That is why the way in which we conduct ourselves towards one another, as well as towards our visitors, matters more than I can say. I cannot emphasize that enough.

I am delighted that I have been able to pick up and consolidate the excellent relationship that my predecessor The Ven. David Meara developed with both the Livery Companies and with the

newspaper and media world. Next month I am to be installed as Honorary Chaplain to my third Livery Company, and I am committed to making all of those relationships both active and creative. I am also making a point of accepting every media invitation that comes my way (which included a Business Forum lunch at the News UK headquarters today), and am developing some very positive links and networks within the media world as a result.

I have been extremely heartened by the way in which our work with children and young people is starting to take off, and by the enthusiasm and commitment of the group that has been formed around it. Special thanks are due to Katharine Wilkinson for helping to get this particular area of our work off the ground so effectively and efficiently.

With regard to the future: we face a number of significant challenges, most obviously of course those connected with our finances and with the fabric of our church, although of no less importance the issue of our mission and outreach. It seems to me that the most important task is to review and reinvigorate our vision for what we are about in a way that will give greater and deeper coherence to the various issues we face. For that reason, it is timely for us to revisit our Mission Action Plan, in a way that will take account of our need to address questions of Stewardship, but also connect with our development of the crypt. It will also be a useful way of enabling us to respond to the Bishop of London's request that we commission Ambassadors in a way that is helpful and appropriate to our particular setting. The possibility of linking in with the social outreach programmes that are currently based in our neighboring church, St Andrew by the Wardrobe, is another potentially very exciting area for further exploration. At the same time, we need to recognize and to value our most important and distinctive assets – not least, of course, our amazing musical and choral tradition. The point is that each of these individual elements should have its own proper place within a broader coherent vision and understanding of what we are ultimately about here.

But six months in, my overwhelming sense is that, in fact, most of the pieces of the jigsaw are already in place – it is just a question of making the connections, locating the missing pieces, and turning what we already have into something truly extraordinary – because as a church, and as a community, we really do have everything going for us.

So, the future is bright – the future is St Bride's! And thank you for enabling me to accept what I now know is without question the very best job in the Church of England.

AJJ 14/04/2015