

St Bride's Church Fleet Street

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners Held on Sunday 22 April 2018

Present: Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce (Rector), Bee Abel, Emmanuel Adeniji, Bobby Baddeley, Sue Baddeley, Nick Baldock, David Ballard, Ann Bawtree, David Bawtree, Neil Bellingham, Christopher Betterton, David Bolton, Gerald Bowey, Ed Bowsher, Geoffrey Burgess, Edwin Chappell, Joan Chappell, Yvonne Chappell, Christopher Claxton, Gavin Conn, Eric Davies, Paul Dyson, Helen Fraser, April Fredrick, Julie Glaser, Sue Anne James, Jill James, Alasdair Johnstone, Philip Keown, David Kirkby, Janet Kitchen, Sue Laughton, Charles Leach, Jonathan McEvoy, Barbara Nelson, Lucy Nutt, Ashley Painter, Claire Seaton, Peter Silver, Everarda Slabbekoorn, Ingrid Slaughter, Terence Smith, Mary Walker.

1. Opening prayers

The meeting opened with prayers.

2. Appointment of Clerk to the meeting

Eric Davies proposed and David Bolton seconded that Peter Silver be appointed Clerk to the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. This was approved.

3. Apologies for absence

These were received from Revd Dr Jeff Lake (Assistant Curate), Beverly Leach, Chris Cottrill, Jane French, James Irving, Peter Longland, Ian Locks, Valerie Locks, Jane McClenahan, Steve Rumbles, John Smith, Katharine Wilkinson.

4. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 25 April 2017

Christopher Claxton proposed and Mary Walker seconded that the minutes be accepted. This was approved and the minutes were signed by the Rector.

5. Churchwardens' report

- 5.1. The report had been circulated. (See Appendix 1 at the end of these minutes)
- 5.2. On behalf of the wardens, Helen Fraser thanked the staff and the PCC for their work and support during the previous 12 months.
- 5.3. The churchwardens were thanked by the meeting for their work throughout the year.

6. Election of Churchwardens

- 6.1. It was noted that Helen Fraser's term of office was due to end in 2018 and that Chris Cottrill had decided to stand down early due to a change in his personal circumstances.
- 6.2. The Rector noted that a number of consultations had been undertaken and that five nominations had been received prior to the meeting for the four vacancies; Nick Baldock, Christopher Betterton, Valerie Locks and Lucy Nutt were duly elected. The meeting expressed the wish that Jane French be asked to consider standing for the PCC for the ensuing year.
- 6.3. Terms of Office would formally begin in the summer when the churchwardens were admitted to office.
- 6.4. Helen Fraser and Chris Cottrill were thanked wholeheartedly by the meeting for their contribution to the life of the church during their periods in office.

The meeting was declared closed. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting followed.

Appendix 1

Churchwardens' report

Your four churchwardens for this past year were Helen Fraser, Christopher Betterton, Chris Cottrill and Lucy Nutt. Helen Fraser and Chris Cottrill are stepping down at this APCCM, Helen after serving for six years. Christopher and Lucy look forward to two new churchwardens joining the team.

The churchwardens, as you are doubtless aware, are generally responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the parish. We meet every six weeks or so for a churchwardens and Rector 8.00 am meeting, which is immediately followed by the Standing Committee meeting at which in the past year we were joined by Peter Silver, secretary, Philip Keown, acting treasurer, and Everada Slabberkoorn, who were elected to join us by the PCC. We discuss any issues of concern, plan the next PCC agenda and generally do our best to support the Rector in her work.

Over the last twelve months our main tasks could be summarised as follows:

- Seeing through a very challenging and time-consuming HR situation with excellent pro bono support from Freshfields
- Supporting the Rector in discussing, planning and setting out a new strategic direction for St Bride's, covering areas as diverse as stewardship, branding, finding and installing a new database, choosing an architect, planning renovations to the chapel
- Serving as Trustees on St Bride's Charitable Trusts
- Serving on the Court of the Guild of St Bride
- Actively assisting the administration team at memorials and Christmas season services
- Changing the system of churchwarden recruitment so that every CW serves four years not six
- Conducting an annual appraisal for the Rector, and supporting and advising her both in the recruitment of a new Verger and in the management of the office team
- Being a sounding board for any concerns that the Rector, the PCC or the congregation have

We are grateful for the help and support of many members of the congregation and particularly for that of members of the PCC. We are confident that the new team of churchwardens will continue to do their utmost to serve St Bride's in 2018-19.

Helen Fraser

Chris Cottrill

Christopher Betterton

Lucy Nutt

St Bride's Church Fleet Street

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Held on Sunday 22 April 2018

The meeting was preceded by the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMoP).

For details of attendees and apologies and appointment of Clerk for the meeting please refer to the minutes of the 2018 AMoP.

7. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 25 April 2017

- 7.1. Edwin Chappell proposed and Christopher Betterton seconded that the minutes be accepted. This was approved and the minutes were signed by the Rector.

8. Rector's Annual Report

- 8.1. The Rector reported to the meeting. The report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 8.2. In response to a question about the funding we have in the past received from the newspaper industry, it was noted that this is no longer forthcoming, as the industry itself is under increasing financial pressure. As a result, we are addressing our financial situation in new ways, with plans already in hand for raising our profile (including through a new branding project) and a forthcoming stewardship campaign.
- 8.3. Jill James suggested that closer ties could be developed with the Journalists' Charity and offered to help to achieve this.

9. Presentation of 2015 Annual Report and Accounts

- 9.1. The Annual Report and Accounts had been approved by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and made available to parishioners.
- 9.2. A report by the PCC Treasurer had been circulated.
- 9.3. Jonathan McEvoy proposed and David Bolton seconded that the Annual Report and Accounts be received. This was unanimously agreed.
- 9.4. Philip Keown (Acting PCC Treasurer) and James Irving (Head of Operations) were thanked for their work.

10. Appointment of Auditor

- 10.1. Charles Leach proposed and Christopher Betterton seconded that Crowe Clark Whitehill be appointed auditor. This was unanimously agreed.

11. Election of five lay members to the Deanery Synod

- 11.1. The Clerk noted that an election was not needed this year as the term of office of the current Synod members Geoffrey Burgess, Edwin Chappell, Ashley Painter and Terence Smith would expire on 31 May 2020.
- 11.2. There were no nominations for the one vacancy to the Deanery Synod.

12. Election of members to the Parochial Church Council

- 12.1. The Clerk noted that the terms of office of Carole Cox, Valerie Locks, Everarda Slabbekoorn and Ingrid Slaughter ended at the meeting and Jane McClenahan had resigned from the Council in February 2018. Valerie Locks had been elected to the PCC as churchwarden and Ingrid Slaughter and Everarda Slabbekoorn both offered themselves for re-election for a further term. There was one further nomination, Gavin Conn, and all three were elected to serve for three year terms.

13. Safeguarding

- 13.1. A report by the Safeguarding officer, Christopher Betterton, had been circulated.
- 13.2. There are no facts known which has led to, or is likely to lead to, a safeguarding issue.
- 13.3. Christopher was thanked for his work.

14. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

- 14.1. A report by the James Irving on behalf of the churchwardens had been circulated.
- 14.2. Concern was expressed that our sound system was not always effective to all members of the congregation but it was recognised it would take a capital outlay of around £100k to rectify. The Head Verger, Robin Turner, undertook to monitor the system during services whenever possible.
- 14.3. Terence Smith informed the meeting that the Guild of St Bride is prepared to provide training for Readers and Intercessors.

15. Report on the proceedings of the Diocesan Synod

- 15.1. A report by the Rector had been circulated.

16. Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

- 16.1. A report by Terence Smith (Deanery Synod representative) had been circulated.
- 16.2. Terence was thanked for his report.

17. Electoral Roll report

- 17.1. The Electoral Roll report by Claire Seaton, Electoral Roll Officer, had been circulated was presented to the meeting. The Electoral Roll stood at 337 at the date of the Annual Meetings.
- 17.2. The electoral roll officer reported that there would be a new roll next year and encouraged all members of the congregation to enrol or re-enrol.
- 17.3. Claire Seaton was thanked for her work.

18. Any other business

- 18.1. It was requested that PCC Minutes and the Church accounts be published on the website. It was confirmed that there was no legal responsibility to divulge the minutes although, for the dissemination of information, it was the intention to share more relevant news and reports. The accounts are published and available also from the Charity Commissioners to whom they have to be presented. Hard copies are also available at the back of the Church.
- 18.2. It was noted that we will have to find some considerable extra funding for completing the cleaning of the exterior St Bride's stonework.
- 18.3. The Rector, The Revd Canon Dr Alison J Joyce, was warmly thanked by the meeting for her work for St Bride's throughout the year.

19. Closing prayers

The meeting ended with prayers.

Appendix 1

Rector's Report

I have been looking back at my previous reports to this meeting (of which this is now my fourth). In my first report I was still on a journey of discovery, finding out what kind of a place this was; in my second, we were discerning the key issues that needed to be tackled; in my third, these were being addressed. If there is a theme to the last twelve months it has been very much that of putting the foundations in place from which we can now build a really exciting and creative future.

The past year has seen some significant changes in staffing. Following Josh Delia's departure to train for ordination, we were delighted to welcome Robin Turner as Head Verger

here – which has proved to be an absolutely excellent appointment. Robin brings much wisdom and insight to the role, as well as a range of hidden talents that continue to amaze us all – and he does all of this with much patience and good humour, so it has been wonderful to have him on board. We are also greatly blessed in David Bolton's continued and invaluable work as Verger, and an overall increase in the number of verger hours now means that we have verger cover on Sundays, which has been an extremely important and positive development.

When one of our full-time administrators left towards the end of last year, we took what has proved to be a very wise decision. Rather than attempting to fill that role immediately, we set up a six month experimental period to try different patterns of working, in order to discover how our administrative and other needs are best met. As part of this, Neil Bellingham has been employed for one day a week specifically to raise our profile on social media, which has had a significant and very positive impact, so our sincere thanks to him. Lydia Barnard has been employed for three days a week in the office, on a fixed term contract, and has been very competent and efficient in producing our orders of service, dealing with callers, and undertaking a wide range of other tasks as the need has arisen. James and Claire continue to play roles of pivotal importance in all aspects of our life, and in keeping the show on the road day by day, and as always I owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude for the quality of their work, their good humour, and their dedication, which invariably goes far above and beyond the call of duty. The revision of staff job descriptions and contracts, a thoroughgoing revision of the staff handbook, and establishing a proper system of formal appraisals for all staff, were all long overdue, and are now either fully completed, or nearing completion.

We are also delighted to have appointed a new church architect in Alex Veal, an award winning young architect with an exemplary record. My thanks as always for the invaluable work done by other members of our team – Jeff and Mark in leading our worship and preaching (with an occasional special guest star appearance by Christopher Betterton), our amazing musicians and choir, and our wonderful team of volunteers, who help with so many aspects of our life, often behind the scenes.

Looking ahead, we shall be working with a professional branding company later this year, to help us to revisit and review our sense of purpose and identity, and to clarify and tidy up our image, and the way we present the outside world, as the first step to raising our profile significantly. We have so much to offer that it is scandalous that we are not better known, not only locally and nationally, but internationally. We need to aim high.

It is also timely for us now, as a community, to do some heart-searching about our discipleship and our stewardship. Hence, in June of this year, we shall be launching what was traditionally called a stewardship campaign. It must be stressed that this is not a fundraising exercise – it is something much more important and profound than that, which is to challenge us all to reflect deeply on the gifts we have received, and the Gospel imperative that we are generous in return. (I refer you to this morning's Gospel reading, and our need to look outwards). I hope very much that you will all be able to attend a special launch service in June to hear more about it, which will be followed by a shared lunch here in church. More information to follow.

Another important achievement this year has been the installation of our new database, which will prove a tremendous asset to our administration, and essential to the future organisation of our networking, our record keeping, and our outreach. Each of these building blocks are crucial. As many of you will know, new legislation relating to Data Protection (GDPR) is coming into force at the end of next month, and you will shortly be contacted by us so that we can obtain your consent for us to retain your details on record.

We have presented another six adult candidates for confirmation at St Paul's Cathedral this year – and there are some interesting signs that aspects of our spiritual life are deepening in interesting and sometimes unexpected ways. Attendance at the central hour on Good Friday (that is, the devotional service that follows Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and precedes Stainer's *Crucifixion*, as part of the three hours that we observe on that day) has increased every year since I have been here, and this year numbers went up from 54 to 80. This is extremely

heartening, as it would appear that those who in past years have come for a performance of sacred music, are now recognising the value of participating in the worship as well.

The 'Inspire' Service in September was a great success once again, and is now a regular feature in the calendar – and there are interesting plans afoot for Remembrance Sunday this year – which, of course, falls on the centenary of the end of WWI. I was delighted to receive an invitation to preach in Berlin on that date, and I have just received confirmation that a Berlin pastor, Barbara Neubert, has accepted an invitation for her to preach here. To have a pulpit swap of this kind on such a significant occasion is symbolically both powerful and apposite, and London Diocese has volunteered to do all that it can to promote this and to raise the profile of the event.

Which brings us to our links with the media, which, far from being under threat (as people often assume, given that 'Fleet Street' is no longer in Fleet Street), they are in fact deepening. We are discovering continually that there is absolutely no substitute for personal connections, and although all the staff play a role in this, James and I in particular have worked tirelessly in attending events and meetings, and building up our network. The fruits of this can be illustrated by two examples: last month we organised at zero notice a service of prayer for a young journalist on the Sun who died completely unexpectedly. 54 journalists and staff from that newspaper turned up for that ad hoc service. We have also been approached by the new Religion and Media Centre (which is being spearheaded by major players such as James Harding, and is committed to providing quality resources to ensure that the reporting of religious issues in the media is always impartial and well-informed, and in building good relationships between the two worlds) – they are keen that St Bride's is actively involved in the work of the Centre, and James has been invited to join their board.

We have undertaken a major revision of the Guild of St Bride this year, to clarify, consolidate, and strengthen its role and sense of purpose. This too will be one of the important building blocks as we move forward.

Above all, I must reiterate my thanks, on your behalf, to our wonderful team of Churchwardens. It has been an unusually challenging twelve months, when we have had to navigate our way through some difficult issues, and we all have reason to be profoundly grateful for all that they have done on our behalf – so our renewed thanks to Helen, Chris, Christopher, and Lucy, for all that they have done this year. I wouldn't have survived without your wisdom, guidance, and support.

And my thanks, also, to all of you - who believe in St Bride's, in all that it has to offer, in all that it strives to do, and in its future. Without you we would be a building, rather than a church. So thank you for coming here Sunday by Sunday, and for supporting us in all the ways that you do.

We have some big plans, and some big challenges ahead – of which the most exciting is the redevelopment of the crypt, which is such an astonishing asset for us – and the most daunting is the work on the stonework, which will probably require outlay of something like a million pounds.

But we are getting there. We really are!

Thank you!