



THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETINGS

held in St Mary's Church on Thursday 27 April 2017

The meeting opened with a prayer.

A. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners

for the purpose of electing two churchwardens to serve for the coming year.

Patty Darke has decided to stand down after serving as churchwarden for the past three years. The Rector thanked her very much for her considerable contribution to the life of St Mary's. He presented her with an icon of St Mary the Virgin.

Paul Teverson has agreed to stand again (proposed by Peter Boyling and seconded by Sam Wright) and the Rector thanked him heartily for his work during the past year.

Phil Bladen was proposed as churchwarden by Patty Darke and seconded by Jo Teverson. Both Paul and Phil were unanimously elected.

B. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Present: The Rector, 2 churchwardens and 41 members of the congregation. Apologies were received from Paul Phillips, Claire Boyling, Hilary Cooper, John Harries and Ben Mackworth-Praed.
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28 April 2016, were approved on a proposal by Annie Sullivan, seconded by Sebastian Munden.
3. Report on the Church Electoral Roll. On behalf of the Electoral Roll Officer, Cheryl Cole, Judy Gowing reported that the count on the Electoral Roll was 214, a reduction from 2016 of just 4 people.

4. Elections

- a) The election to the Parochial Church Council of five representatives to serve for three years;
Sue Boyd has stood down. The Rector recorded his thanks to her. William Heller has also come to the end of his three year term but he has agreed to stand again. Emma Powell is moving abroad. We shall miss her enthusiastic participation on the PCC. The following were unanimously elected as PCC members:
Cathy Putz (proposed by Phil Bladen and seconded by Geoffrey Barnett);
Elisabeth Munden (proposed by Judy Gowing and seconded by Geoffrey Barnett);
Jo Fraser (proposed by JulieAnn Sewell and seconded by Fiona Barnett);
Michael Murison (proposed by Patrick Findlater and seconded by Judy Gowing);
William Heller (proposed by Judy Gowing and seconded by Peter Boyling).
- b) The election of sidesmen for 2017/18.
The following sidesmen were unanimously appointed (proposed by Peter Boyling and seconded by Patty Darke):
8am service David Barrie, Christine Butenuth, Rachel Elkington, Desmond & Josephine MacDermott, Geoff Snowball
10am service David Blacklock, Claire Boyling, Brian Cleave, Tony Dundas, Anthony & Mayella Figgis, Patrick Findlater, Ken & Tiziana George, Jonathan Iremonger, Sarah Kearney, Paul Phillips, Trevor Searight, Peter Siddall, Fiona Smith, Cilla Snowball,

Andrew Summers & Joan Wheeler-Bennett.

11.30am service Sally Copland, Paul Teverson & Francesca Wisdom

6pm service Wendy Kyrle-Pope

Thursday service Shelagh & Phillip Mitchell, & Linda Read.

The Rector thanked David Blacklock for coordinating the sidesmen and ensuring everything runs smoothly.

5. Report on proceedings of the PCC written by the churchwardens was received by the meeting. It can be found printed in the Annual Review.

6. Report on the annual accounts by the Treasurer, was received by the meeting, following oral comments by the Treasurer. The written report can be found printed in the Annual Report.

7. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2017. Alistair Cameron was thanked for his work. His reappointment was proposed by Judy Gowing and seconded by Phil Bladen and approved by the meeting.

Thanks were recorded to John Harries for taking on the Gift Aid work, to Richard du Parcq for banking all the cash from services and events, and to Tiziana George who performs bookkeeping duties for the accounts.

8. Reports on the fabric of the church, and of the church hall were received by the meeting. They can be found printed in the Annual Review.

9. Report on the Team Council was received by the meeting. It can be found printed in the Annual Review.

10. Rector's report; *Appendix 1*

11. Any other business. Joan Wheeler-Bennett complimented the Annual Review for its contents, presentation, illustrations and photographs. Richard thanked everyone who has written a report, describing the considerable work of St Mary's. Sebastian Munden asked about the situation concerning Director of Music and asked whether there was a mismatch between our expectations and the salary available. Richard explained that the salary was well in line with others currently being advertised. The good candidates who had been for interview all found that they cannot manage to fit in the stipulated 12 hours. We are now considering reducing the commitment to 8 hours/week.

Vote of thanks to the Rector, by Paul Teverson. *Appendix 2*

12. Date of next annual meeting – to be announced at a later stage.

The Rector closing thought was that there is an amazing amount we can do in and through St Mary's by being positive and thoughtful.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

Appendix 1

"Somebody once said to me something like:

"Richard, you must've have done some testing jobs in the church before you came here because now you've been rewarded with a lovely, easy parish to run!"

Well, I struggled to respond to that because it contained such huge misjudgements that it was hard to know where to begin!

Many of you know that being Rector of this parish is no cushy number. Numbers of you have expressed concern for me recently knowing that, especially without a curate to support the

ministry, there is a hefty workload. This parish is not demanding (as in some urban churches) because there is social deprivation or because so many people rely on the parish priest as just about the only professional living in the community who can provide advice. Nor is it challenging (as in some rural communities) because there is an enormous church building to sustain and only a handful of people who come to services from one week to the next. It's demanding here for quite different reasons. There is little social deprivation so people are very independent minded and can often think they need little beyond their immediate environment to enrich or satisfy them. It is challenging, like any other parish, because people do grieve, they do have pastoral needs and life problems and sometimes reach out to their parish priest for support. It is challenging because people have high expectations of what a church like ours should be like and so everything must be of a very high quality and if it isn't they won't be backward in saying so! It is also taxing because I support the ministry of two other churches in the Barnes Team Ministry and there are team issues (and there have been some major ones this year) that require time and creativity to deal with. We are the busiest parish in the borough in terms of number weddings, baptism and funerals and in terms of the number of people attending on Sundays.

I do not say any of this to evoke your sympathy, nor to polish my halo – that is totally unnecessary. I remind you of these things simply to describe something of the day to day reality of your church which it is my privilege to lead under Christ. Thank goodness it is not all down to me to do the work. That would be totally impossible and a recipe for disaster. We can only do as much as we do because there are so many tremendously devoted people who step up to the plate in all sorts of ways.

I have already thanked our churchwardens and especially Patty who stands down this year. And I have thanked the whole PCC who have had another good year. And also I want to express my appreciation to Charlie our Youth & Children's worker and to Cheryl who has given another year of sterling service to St Mary's. Charlie is a wonderful person to have around. He's always so positive and chirpy. He also always seems to find the time to do what needs to be done. Our young people really enjoy all the wonderful things he does with them. His work to get the St Mary's Minis Parent & Toddler group going has been fantastic. Charlie shares his faith in a really natural and accessible way. We are very blessed to have him. Charlie is helped by Cate Summers and JulieAnn, by Jo Fraser, David Summers and Nick Aldred and many others. They make sure that our work with the younger generation continues to be a great strength in St Mary's.

I can't do a long list of thank yous because there are too many and there would be no time to do anything else. But take a good look at the annual review and the annual report and the names of all those there. I am (and I am sure you are all too) very grateful to all of them for the great work that they have all done. However, I would like to highlight a couple of names: firstly, Richard du Parq who comes into church several times a week, every week of the year to count the money from the Sunday collections and from other ad hoc collections. I'd like to say to say that he goes about this with wonderful good humour, but he doesn't! He is fabulously acerbic and his emails describing how his job has once again been made infinitely harder by some random person's carelessness are a masterclass in dark humour. The other side of this job is taken on by John Harries who took over the mantle of Gift Aid Officer from Chris Hine. Both Chris, and now John, have carried out this job with relentless efficiency going through literally thousands of forms and envelopes so we do not miss out on any tax refund from the revenue. Many thanks to Richard, Chris and John who alongside Patrick, ably assisted by Tiziana George keep our finances in good order.

I would like to make mention of Sian Walford who leads our brilliant team of Daily Friends whose job it is to keep the church open for visitors every day and some of them do some much needed church cleaning too. Sian deals with all the complications of the rota, and filling gaps on holidays and opening up when Cheryl's away. Without Sian and the Daily Friends, St Mary's wouldn't be there to welcome passers-by and others for looking for a quiet place to think and pray.

This year there have been two especially significant developments: firstly, the renewed and much-improved lighting. This has taken a lot of work and is the result of careful planning and successful fund-raising by the Friends of St Mary's. It's not quite finished but its success is plain to see – if you look carefully.

The other really important development is the launch of St Mary's Minis. I have wanted to get a Parent & Toddler group going for ages but there weren't any suitable slots in Kitson Hall and I didn't know how we would staff it. Then there was a cancellation freeing up Thursday

mornings and Charlie jumped at getting a group started. He has done it with huge success. It is a wonderful space for children to play in and for adults to chat and support one another. It is a fabulous outreach for the church and for the families of children we baptise to make a deeper connection with St Mary's.

Despite these and many other successes over the past year there are some significant challenges. Our financial needs are pressing in again and we will be launching an important appeal to boost our funds again this year. But just as much as money, we need people to help run events and different aspects of St Mary's mission. For instance, Charlie needs a couple of helpers for St Mary's Minis. For us to reach out effectively to new young families in Barnes we need more established members of our church to be supporting this work and to make those connections more real.

We also need more helpers for two very important annual events: the Christmas Fair which we successfully scaled down last year and the Fashion Show which gets bigger and better every year. Without someone to co-ordinate the different elements of the Christmas Fair we will no longer be able to run this at all. That would be a great shame and would leave us £5000 short of our giving to our designated charities. The Fashion Show already involves a number of volunteers from St Mary's and even more from the wider community. But still too much is falling on too few people. Those few won't be able to keep it up without a few more committed volunteers to do practical jobs. I'm going to be challenging our community over the coming few months to think hard about doing a bit more to help the church to continue being an effective sign of Christ's presence and God's love here in Barnes.

This has been a particularly challenging year and continues to be because of Ann's departure as Team Curate. The trouble with having an excellent curate is that you really miss them when they go. This is certainly true of Ann who did a lot and is missed a great deal too. The service of celebration of her civil partnership with Sigrun was a great high point of the year. It showed what an inclusive and affirming community we are as well as demonstrating to Ann and Sigrun how valued they are. Sadly there is no immediate prospect of a replacement curate so Bishop Richard, Geoffrey and Christabel and I will just have to continue to do as best we can. And that isn't too shabby, really! I have also been able to draw on the support of Sister Margaret Anne who moved into the borough a year ago or so. She is available to take some services for us every month and I have been asking for her help one Thursday and one Sunday 8 o'clock per month. This gives me a little bit of breathing space.

We are also in a challenging time because of Dan's departure at Christmas and our failure to appoint a new Director of Music since then. I can assure you it is not for want of trying. Thankfully we have some very good deputies who've been able to help us out but that is no alternative to a permanent post. So, Judy, Peter, Patty, Andrew and I have all been working hard to try to rectify this and I'm sure we will before long. Music is a very important part of our life at St Mary's. For worship, yes, but for more than that too because there's the Music Festival and many other events as well. We need someone gifted and talented as well as being a reliable and committed member of staff.

There are many challenges and there is much to do. I'm not put off by that and I trust that none of you are either. Thankfully there is far more about us than just trying to run an organisation. We have a *raison d'être* which is to serve God and to share the love of Christ in our parish and far beyond. Along with the PCC, I have been doing some work on a new way to understand and express that defining purpose – the key word in this is: "blessing". We could summarise the purpose of the church as "being thankful for the blessings we receive from God and seeking to be a blessing to others in every way possible". I'm going to be working this through more thoroughly in the months to come and I hope it will be something that gives energy and focus to what we are about. Of course we are not about 'presentation' we are all about the gospel – living it, sharing it. We will do this if the gospel message has possessed us and drives all that we are.

Just over twenty years ago I attended my sister's ordination as a priest in Coventry Cathedral. I was very struck by the incredible tapestry hanging in the East End. It is the largest tapestry in the world. Archbishop Justin recently referred to the tapestry, and it made me look it up so that I could remind myself of it. For more reasons than just its massive size, it is remarkable. It is full of imagery, much of it taken from the book of Revelation. One of the most powerful details is that right beneath the feet of Christ is a human figure, plain, perhaps naked. This person is looking out into the world, he looks exposed and vulnerable but in fact he is protected by the massive figure of Christ above him. All the figure can see are the crucifixion wounds of Christ's feet. Our world today appears to be a place of threat

and danger, we might feel we should cower away from it; to simply protect ourselves and stay with the familiar. But if we carry a picture of Christ in our hearts like that of Graham Sutherland the tapestry maker, then we might feel ourselves nestled in the presence of Christ, trying to see the world as Christ does – with love, compassion and clear determination. There is work for us to do and it is the work of Christ, to love God's world."

Appendix 2

Vote of thanks to the Rector

Lord by your cross and resurrection

You have set us free

You are the saviour of the world.

Those powerful words were brought vividly to life for us at about 10.40 am on Easter Day 2017.

All those present came forward and threaded a daffodil through the radiator-like framework of our bare cross.

This was in response to a sermon. It was in response to the actual words used and the manner in which they were spoken and to the message they conveyed. The message was a powerful one: you have a choice. You can give in to cynicism, to evil, to destructive acts, to knife crime, to terrorism to fear or you cannot give in to them. You can communicate your decision if you wish by coming forward and placing a daffodil into the cross. And we did, all of us. It was a very moving moment. There was a cross transformed by new life.

We should not underestimate the power to do good in this place. We are blessed, truly blessed, with a wonderful clergy team led by you Richard.

In response to your excellent and typically honest address, we are indeed thankful for the blessings we receive week in week out from your ministry which is a blessing in every way possible.

We are not going to cower away. You are going to help us to carry a picture of Christ in our hearts. We are going to go forward with love, compassion, tolerance and clear determination.

As you said, it is not about presentation. It is about substance.

Inspired by the ministry of you Richard, and that of Bishop Richard, and of Geoffrey and Christabel, we will strive to do the work of Christ in this place and I repeat we should not underestimate the power to do good in this place. Thank you for inspiring us to go forward.