

ST. MARY'S RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VESTRY CHURCH MEETING
HELD ON SUNDAY 30 APRIL 2017
ST. MARY'S CHURCH RIVERHEAD
AT 11.15.A.M.

Present:
Revd Martin Booth (Vicar of St. Mary's)
Mrs Diane Williams (Churchwarden for St. Mary's)
Mrs Ronnie Todd (Secretary)

And approximately 34 Church members.

VESTRY MEETING
Election of Churchwardens

The Vicar advised the meeting that Diane Williams and John Curtis are happy to continue as Churchwardens for the coming year. The vicar explained that when initially taking on the role of Churchwarden, it is for a specific period of five years with nomination and election for each of those five years at the APCM.

Nominations were received for the two Churchwardens, John Curtis and Diane Williams, who will serve for the year 2017-2018.

Members in attendance were all content for Diane Williams and John Curtis to continue to serve for another year.

Those present were asked to give thought and pray about putting themselves forward for the role of Churchwarden in the future, especially as next year John Curtis will be at the end of his five year spell.

The Vicar thanked both John and Diane for all the sterling work they have done over the year.

The Vestry meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.

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1. Apologies for Absence

John & Margaret Curtis, Philippa & Chris Ledson, Pam Rankin, Alan Chart, Bryan Nicholas, Lizzie (Williams)

2. To Approve Minutes of APCM held on 19 April 2015

The Minutes were agreed by all present and signed by the Vicar as a true copy.

Proposed: Margaret Holman

Seconded: Denis Williams

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. To receive Electoral Roll

Margaret Nicholas gave the current number on the electoral roll. There are 83 resident and 43 non-resident. A total of 126.

Margaret made a plea for more readers, servers and sidesmen as it is becoming increasingly difficult to make up the rotas.

5. Parish Report (Attached)

The Parish Report was taken as read. Karen Forster-Pearce pointed out that the Mothers' Union as mentioned in the report is a branch and not a group. She went on to say that they are actively looking for new members via the website and other means.

The Vicar agreed to amend the report to reflect Karen's point.

All present were content with the Parish Report.

6. Vicar's Report (Attached)

The Vicar began by thanking all the officers and everyone who helps in any way with the work and upkeep of the church.

He welcomed the three new PCC members.

Thanks were given to Tesco for the gift of money from plastic bags and to the North West Kent Countryside Alliance for their work in the churchyard.

It is hoped that an event concerning later life will be held in the summer where information will be offered relating to funerals, insurance, pensions, etc. It will be made available to the local community and we will invite local companies to set up stalls for people to visit.

An important part of our worship is to encourage Christian values and to grow relationships, especially we think of our connection with the Estonian Church. On the 24th September it will be the Lutheran anniversary of the Estonian Church and a service will be held here in St Mary's to celebrate together with members of the Estonian church and choir.

Sunday School is a very important part of our worship and we must do everything to encourage our children. We need to create a friendly, relaxed and fun filled atmosphere but with a Christian rooting and love of Christ. Training and resources will be made available to all helpers. At the start of the new term in September we will be changing the name to Sunday Club.

It was mentioned that the Ride and Stride event held each September by the Churches Together in Sevenoaks group should be included in the Mission and Outreach report. It will be included in the 2018 report.

Daphne Harrison is currently on a Licensed Lay Preacher course and we wish her well. May God bless her for the future and we hold her in our prayers.

Denis Williams asked about the results following the appeal for help?

The Vicar replied that we had received a fairly good response and emphasised that we should all contribute if we are able and not leave it to the usual stalwarts.

7. Finance

Stuart Wigley advised those present that this year we have not needed to use our reserves to keep in the black. This is partly as a result of the decision to reduce our Parish Share contribution.

Expenses this year have been the church organ and the hall kitchen. The church organ however has been covered by donations.

Our main income results from regular giving, gift aid receipts and the church hall.

It is envisaged that we may consider a slight increase in our Parish Share this coming year.

Our Procurement Policy has been successfully implemented during the year.

This coming year we will aim to look at our insurance payments and obtain alternative quotations, as the premiums represent one of the larger outgoings.

We have had high maintenance costs this last year and they will increase in the coming year.

The Inspector of Accounts, Jim Metcalfe, has been retained for this year but may not be available for next year. Stuart has contacted the Diocese and has identified Sue Davis if Jim Metcalfe is unable to work for us.

It was asked why Traidcraft is under income and resources.

Stuart replied that it is part of church activities.

Janet Sharp asked why the charity collection from the RSCM music event was not shown in the Accounts and asked how much was raised. It was to be a 50/50 split with the RSCM and St Mary's. Stuart replied that only main items are summarised. He will clarify the amount collected to Janet and confirmed that the money raised was sent to the RSCM.

Robert McLintock queried whether we were contributing our fair share in terms of our 'Parish Offer'. He understood the Diocese had stated that, in total, including overheads, it costs on average £48,000 to deploy each member of clergy. However, our total 'Parish Offer' of £42,554 (2016) [cf. £60,778 (2015)] did not seem to even cover the cost of our excellent vicar. Robert wondered whether our position might be somewhat akin to saying to the taxman: 'sorry, we cannot pay all our taxes because we have spent all our other income'?

Stuart replied that it is our intention to pay an increased percentage next year. We do take it seriously. The reserves would have depleted last year as we would have had to dip into them. We paid £42k last year and hope to increase this by 5% this year. Our giving as a church needs to cover our Parish Share. Currently it falls short. The PCC do look at the finances and make decisions based on the information available. We have indicated to the Diocese that we intend to increase our share if we are able. However, we do have to prioritise when it comes to finance.

The Vicar told the meeting that he had recently been away with other Rural Deans on official business with the Bishop to discuss and look into money provided by parishes. It is about looking to the good of the Parish and not just the cost of the Vicar. Serving the community is very important. We have moved to a centralised system which means the Deployment of priests is centrally funded rather than funded directly by individual Parishes. It is not necessarily about what parishes are prepared or able to fund; some parishes are able to give more than others. A lot of thought has been given to the topic.

A vote to accept the Financial Accounts was taken.

Proposed: Jill Dickenson
Seconded: Keith Lovelock
All in favour.

A vote to accept the Inspector of Accounts was taken.

Jim Metcalfe

Proposed: Mark Stott
Seconded: Robin Tonge

- and -

Sue Davis

Proposed: Rachel Wigley
Seconded: Anne Straight
All in favour.

The Vicar thanked Stuart for everything he does on behalf of the church and for keeping the accounts in good order, as well as all those who help him.

8. Churchwardens' Report (Attached)

Diane Williams gave the report. She spoke of the shock and sadness of hearing of the death of Chris Rayner. It was a shock to all associated with the church in the area. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family and friends.

Diane had nothing more to add to the Churchwardens' report.

The Vicar gave a vote of thanks to Diane and John for all their hard work during the year and to their spouses for their enduring support.

9. Deanery Synod Report (Attached)

There were no questions from the floor.

The Vicar thanked Anne Straight and Margaret Nicholas for their continued commitment.

10. Parish Reports (Attached)

(a) Sunday School

Nicola Joyce gave the report. She had spoken with parents regarding the change of name to Sunday Club. It had gone down well. A huge thanks was given to the leaders for all their hard work during the year. Nicola mentioned that Daphne Harrison will be offering support and training for new leaders in the coming year.

There were no questions.

(b) Lunch Club

There were no questions.

The Vicar thanked everyone involved with lunch club. It provides a nutritious meal at a very reasonable price as well as a place for social interaction for those on their own.

(c) Tots & Toddlers

There were no questions.

The Vicar thanked everyone involved with the Tots & Toddlers Group. It provides a friendly and safe environment for mothers and toddlers to meet for a cup of tea and a chat.

(d) Church Hall

There were no questions.

The Vicar thanked Margaret Nicholas and Kathryn Woodward for the efficient running and care of the church hall.

(e) Music

There were no questions.

Those present agreed that the music is wonderful. Janet Sharp told the meeting that the congregation were also good at singing and it gives a feeling of community singing for and with the congregation as well as giving a sense of worshipping together.

The Vicar thanked Janet for her continuing involvement with the choir and music group and also thanks to Nick and Dan for their wonderful organ playing.

(f) Mothers' Union

There were no questions.

Karen mentioned that the AGM was the following Saturday and all were welcome.

The Vicar thanked Karen for her commitment and support.

(g) Events Committee

There were no questions.

The Vicar thanked Margaret Curtis for all her hard work over the past year. It was noted that there will be a new Events Committee for the coming year.

(h) Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

Zoe Bromwich is continuing as the officer for the safeguarding of children and Diane Williams officer for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. If anyone has concerns they should speak to Zoe or Diane.

(i) Outreach

There were no questions.

It was decided to reinstate our nominations for supporting three charities in 2017/18. The three chosen are Kent/Surrey/Sussex Air Ambulance, Porchlight Homeless Charity and Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service.

11. Election of the PCC

Four PCC members retire this year.

There are three nominations for PCC membership:

Barry Sharp
Bennet Smith
Andrew Swidzinski.

All present voted in favour.

12. Election to Deanery synod

This year we need to elect two representatives to Deanery Synod. Anne Straight and Margaret Nicholas have both agreed to continue as representatives to Deanery Synod for the next three years.

All present voted in favour.

13. Election of Sidespersons

The list of Sidespersons was read out.

All present voted in favour.

14. Election of Examiner of Church Accounts

This has been dealt with under point 7 Finance.

15. Any Other Business

Janet Sharp said that she was unhappy with coffee being served after the Sunday service at the back of the church instead of the church hall. She asked whether it could occasionally be held in the hall and whether it had brought in any more people?

Geoff Holland and Julia agreed with Janet.

The Vicar told those present that he had prepared his rationale for having coffee at the back of the church to give to the PCC. It is available to anyone who would like to see it.

Diane Williams told the meeting that it takes no more time to make the coffee under the new system and she is personally happy with the way it is going.

Mark Merson said it was difficult to find people to swap with as they are unhappy with the new system.

Jenny Wood asked about the cost of the disposable cups.

Stuart Wigley replied that they are not overly expensive. He believed that more money was collected for cups of coffee since being situated at the back of the church.

Maggie Booth believed that it could be quite daunting for new people going into an empty hall. It is also easier for the elderly to remain in the church rather than having to get into the hall.

Lynn Wilson thought that it has been made much easier to cope with and the churchwardens are always on hand to help. Lynn had been unhappy with the new arrangement in the beginning but is much happier now that she has become familiar with it.

Marion Lovelock thought that more newcomers are staying.

The Vicar told the meeting that it was not his intention to make people unhappy. With the new arrangement it means that the hall is available to baptism families. He pointed out that we must prepare for the next generation. It is an important part of our mission and evangelism. For the moment he would like to leave it as it is. It was suggested that a vote be taken.

The majority of those present were in favour of keeping the coffee at the back of the church.

Karen Forster-Pearce thanked everyone who helped deliver Easter and Christmas cards to the residents in Dunton Green.

16. To discuss date and time of Vestry and APCM 2018

The date of the 2018 APCM will be 15 April 2018.

The meeting closed with prayer.