

## St John's Church Ainsdale – ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING – Sunday 28 April 2019

- 1 **OPENING PRAYER:** The meeting in the Church building opened at 7:30pm with prayers led by the Chairman **Rev Graham Birch**
- 2 **ROLL CALL:** Forty-four members of the church attended the meeting.  
**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received from eight church members.
- 3 **MINUTES:** The minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held 29 April 2018, having been available on the Church notice board for two weeks prior to the meeting, were agreed to be 'taken as read', approved and signed.
- 4 **ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS:** Having been proposed and seconded, **Rob Williams** and **David Price** were elected to serve as Church Wardens.
- 5 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHURCHWARDENS:** Having been proposed and seconded, **Steve Cox, Margaret Flemington, Val Sinnott, Heather Griffiths and Lindsay Jessop** were elected to serve as Deputy Churchwardens. Whilst not a formal office the appointment is required to be accepted by the Annual Vestry Meeting. The Chairman thanked all those continuing to serve for their service over the past year.  
  
**CLOSE:** With business complete the Annual Vestry Meeting was closed.

## St. John's Church Ainsdale – ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING - Sunday 28 April 2019

- 6 **MINUTES:** The minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held 29 April 2018, having been available on the Church notice board for the two weeks prior to the meeting, were agreed to be 'Taken as read' and were approved and signed.
- 7 **MATTERS ARISING:** None
- 8 **ELECTORAL ROLL:** **Paul Olive** reported that this year a new electoral roll has been prepared and as at 28 April 2019 136 people have applied to go onto the new roll. Paul thought that some additional names will be added to this. There is a reduction from the previous electoral roll which contained 164 names but the new roll truly reflects the congregation at present.
- 9 **ANNUAL REPORT:** The Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council, including Financial Statements, was accepted by the meeting as a fair record.  
  
The Chairman said the Annual Report was a celebration of the fellowship throughout the year. He thanked all the people who made contributions, John and Helen for collating the Report and Ruth for printing out the paper copies.
- 10 **TREASURER'S REPORT:** **Keith Older** opened by referring to the summary of the final accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018 as shown in the Annual Report. He explained he would highlight the main points.

The accounts have been examined and approved by Neil Latham (who is the Independent Examiner) as witnessed by his Report on page 32.

The Treasurer then asked the Meeting to turn to (or view the screen) page 27 Section 5: Finance, Giving and Fundraising. This shows a summary of the financial issues in the year. The PCC set a budget for the year 2018 which reflected a level of performance which was likely to produce a deficit of £18,191. At the end of the year there was a deficit of £18,514 which was worse than forecast by £323 but the outcome was very close to the amount budgeted.

The deficit of £18,514 included depreciation of £23,948 which is a non cash item. If the depreciation is disregarded then there is a surplus of £5,434. This is a good result taking into consideration it is the first year of both the reordered church and its various outreach activities.

The Treasurer explained that the Charity Bank's (CB) borrowings' Terms and Conditions require the PCC to meet a Covenant formula set by the CB. Keith confirmed that the PCC have been within that formula for the full twelve-month period of the accounts having had to produce Accounts each quarter to reaffirm Financial progress.

There has been a fall in the planned giving under Gift Aid which has in turn reduced the gift aid tax recoverable. It is important that people sign up to Gift Aid if they can. Standing Order and Envelope giving has decreased by £3,997, including Gift Aid receipts, in the year over the 2017 figures; this is a decrease over two years to 31 December 2018 of £7,644.

The PCC work hard to find the right balance between ensuring our activities are accessible to everyone (regardless of financial situation) and charging for events to raise much needed funds. Our general approach is that we do not charge for activities we regard as mission outreach, but may charge and/or run a for-profit bar for social events. We are also always looking for additional opportunities to hire out the building to fee-paying community groups and one-off hires. However, in doing so we try and ensure that the Church remains available for Church and our affiliated groups to use, including our Church School. As part of our mission we do not charge the Uniformed Organisations to use the Church.

CB's main concern is evaluating the PCC's progress with Mission. In February 2019 CB reviewed the first year of the loan and the Mission at a meeting with Keith, David and Ruth. They were happy with the progress to date but stressed the PCC must make sure this is not a 'flash in the pan' as the progress must be maintained for the next year and beyond. In the words of CB the PCC must not take their 'foot off the pedal' in years 2 and beyond.

The Nursery's significance to both the Mission and the PCC's finances must never be underestimated. When cash flow is tight, which it is from time to time, the rent and service charge received from the Nursery more than covers the bank loan repayments leaving a "surplus" of cash available to support the cash flow..

The Treasurer then referred back to page 32 which shows the Independent Examiner's (IE) Report. Keith explained that the IE checks that PCC are both reporting and presenting Accounts correctly under the Charities Act requirements and that the PCC are keeping accounting records as required by the Charities Act. CB require an Independent Report as a condition of the loan; this Report has to be read in conjunction with the Accounting Policy notes on pages 35 and 36.

The Treasurer then referred to page 33 'Unrestricted Funds' – this is the trading account.

The Unrestricted Funds at 31 December 2018 show a deficit of £18,514.

The Restricted Funds are the amounts allocated for a specific purpose.

The Treasurer reported that the 'Analysis of Income' on page 37 showed planned giving of £81,228 which is a reduction compared to the previous year where planned giving was £85,225. The main reason for this was a reduction in income from envelopes.

The Restricted funds income showed an amount of £5,000 which is a gift given to cover the work on the hall to deal with the needed upgrade for both PCC and Nursery purposes.

The Church and Hall lettings generated income of £9,622 which was a small increase compared to the previous year; however this represents the first year of hiring/activities in the re-ordered Church; this source of Outreach etc. income is crucial to the Church's finances as "giving" income is steadily dropping (by £7,644 over the last two years) as stated earlier; significant importance/effort has to be given to this source of income generation.

The Treasurer referred to page 38:

1. Note 2d 'Income from Church Activities. The PCC fees are starting to increase now that the church is available for funerals and weddings.
2. Note 2e 'Nursery rent/ service charge'. There is a significant increase because the previous year related to a 4-month period whereas 2018 was for a full year.

The Treasurer referred to page 39 and Note 3a.:

1. The Treasurer gave an explanation of the depreciation shown in the Unrestricted Funds. There is a depreciation charge of £10,117 for 2017 which represents, in respect of the capitalised "Re-order, Hall Improvements & Audio/Visual Equipment (as shown in Note 6a. on page 40) which was only a 1 to 2 month charge; the 2018 charge of £23,948 is significantly higher as it is for a full 12-month period.

2. The Restricted Funds show an amount of £5,451 for Organ tune and maintenance. This figure includes a £4,800 refurbishment needed on the organ after the completion of the re-ordering work in the Church

3. In the Restricted Funds there is expenditure of £4,160 for Hall maintenance being covered by the £5,000 gift as referred to earlier

Staff costs on page 40:

1. Wages increased from £5,348 to £6,114 because 2018 related to wages for cleaning the church for a full year.

2. Included in 1. Is £1,720 related to payments to the organist.

The Balance Sheet on page 34:

The total funds in the Balance Sheet for 2018 are £347,461; however this does not make the Church wealthy as the majority of this figure is represented by the "re-ordered Church" amount of £328,640; and remember that the PCC does not own the Church Building so the works carried out were for the benefit of both the PCC and the Diocese..

Current assets show cash wise the PCC's position is satisfactory at the end of the year. RBS bank balances were £28,330; deposits were £21,860 of which £12,500 is on deposit with CB as part of the security for the Loan.

The Treasurer referred to the Notes to the accounts (pages 35 to 43):

1. Page 40 Note 6a 'Tangible Assets' written down value of the re-ordered church £328,640. Keith explained that the Diocese owns the building.

2. Page 41 Notes 8 and 9 'Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year' Under Bank Loan £3,439 is shown at note 8 and £167,698 at note 9. Keith explained that the Loan has to be reported in this way.

3. Page 41 note 8: The bank loan is secured both on the Church Hall and a £12,500 deposit account in the name of the PCC. Interest is payable at the Bank of England base rate plus 5%. During 2018 this equated to an interest rate of 5.5% to 1 August 2018 and 5.75% from 2 August 2018.

4. Page 43 – Note 14 - Utility costs: the heating, lighting and water costs for the church and hall. The Nursery pay their share under the terms of the lease. The actual receipts in the year, per the Lease, were £5,000. This was adjusted once the calculations, per the Lease Terms, were made and came out at £5,027 (for the three cost headings) for the year.

The Treasurer thanked the wardens Rob and David, Ruth Wake, Lynne Grice and Brian Sutcliffe for their help and support throughout the year.

The Chairman invited questions to be put to the Treasurer; they were as follows:

1. David Phipps asked how long do CB retain the deposit of £12,500 which was retained as a condition of the loan.

The Treasurer responded that CB will only release the deposit when they are satisfied with the PCC's financial performance. He is unable to say when that will be as it is for CB to say when.

2. David Phipps asked if there was any room for manoeuvre with regard to paying off the loan early.

The Treasurer explained that at present all the "surplus" cash from the Nursery is being used to cover cash flow shortages and would no doubt do so for the foreseeable future. It would not therefore be possible to consider paying off the loan early at the current time or at any time in the future unless financial performance, and cash surpluses, improved significantly.

The chairman thanked Keith for his report and for his work throughout the previous seven years, He also thanked Olivia for agreeing to put their retirement on hold while Keith acted as Church Treasurer.

The chairman said it was great to hear that it has been a good year. The regular giving is decreasing so the PCC needs to maximise other streams of income. It is important that people support events as this is a crucial part on income for the church. PCC fees are another important source of income. The Diocese has expressed concerns about the reduction of funerals being held in churches as independent firms are promoting funerals. However, the accounts show an increase in PCC fees and there have recently been several enquiries about weddings which is encouraging.

David Phipps proposed a vote of thanks to Keith for the many hours he has spent in this role in the previous seven years.

**11 PROTECTION FOR ALL POLICY DOCUMENT:** Marie Hyland read out the safeguarding policy as required by the Diocese.

Marie Hyland has stepped down as Protection Officer and Chris Thursfield has taken over this role from 26 February 2019. Chris sent her apologies for not being able to attend the APCM.

**Chris Thursfield and Linda Davies** are currently the Protection Officers and have attended the relevant courses so they are fully up to date with the legislation. We are meeting all the Diocesan recommendations.

**12 CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT on fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church:** Rob Williams said he will be continuing as warden in a reduced capacity for one more year but this will be his final year as warden.

Rob reported that all the expensive items (ornaments and silverware) are in pristine condition.

There are currently 150 chairs, including the additional chairs purchased thanks to David's donation. The new chairs match the existing ones and all the chairs are used on a regular basis. The plastic chairs have been retained for garden parties.

There is a snagging issue with the paintwork of the rainwater goods but we have retained funds from the Contractor which will cover the cost of repainting. Frank has offered to repaint the rainwater goods in the areas where the paint has started to bloom because the paint was not mixed properly. We have been advised that the Rainwater Goods will last for one hundred years in spite of the issues encountered.

Rob finished by thanking Keith for his very professional work over the past seven years.

**13 REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS OF THE DEANERY SYNOD:** Paul Ellis had produced a written account of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod; this is in the Annual Report (page 20).

Paul explained the Deanery Synod has been restructured to form new partnerships. This works better with the slimmed down, smaller partnerships having more flexibility. St John's are on our own but we are expected to co-operate with the other churches in the Deanery. There is also more flexibility about how the Parish Share is raised but the Deanery still has to decide how much each parish will contribute towards this.

The focus has changed onto the Local Mission and how Working Together Churches (WTC) can support the Mission across the Deanery. At St John's we have the expertise of working with other churches through our work with Churches Together in Ainsdale (CTA) but the Deanery also have the expertise we can use,

**14 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Graham began his report by saying, that it is with mixed feelings he stands before everyone this evening – so excited about everything that we have seen taking place at St John's over the last 12 months, but also sad that this will be his last address at an APCM. Hopefully, this time next year, the new Incumbent will be standing here, excitedly setting out their hopes for the future.

Graham said that most of what he wanted to say is in his introduction to the annual report and asked everyone to ensure they have read this. He said at last year's APCM that it was so encouraging to see the early sign of God's blessing, following our return to the church building, and those blessings have continued to be evident in so many ways over the last year.

Due to the hard work and commitment of so many of the people here, as reflected in another wonderful annual report, we are continuing to see growth in numbers in attendance at church services and also in the various church groups. We are seeing so many new people become part of the fellowship here at St. John's and we are seeing the lives of many people in our community transformed as a result. Whether that is through the genuine love and welcome that new people experience when they come to church for the first time, or whether it's through ministries, such as the Job Club, St. John's truly is becoming a fellowship at the heart of its community.

The coming year will bring new challenges and it is so important that everyone plays a part in supporting their leaders. Any interregnum is always a great challenge to a church and that will be even more so with the recent successes and growth that we have seen in the fellowship. It is so important that, during this time of transition, the church continues to move forward and doesn't make the mistake of 'just keeping things going' until the next Vicar arrives. The interregnum will undoubtedly be a challenging time but nothing like what we have already shown that we are more than able to cope with! More people in the church will mean more activities and more responsibility to keep things 'moving forward'. It is so important that as many people as possible within the fellowship become active in supporting the Wardens and others in places of leadership, to help to carry that load and to ease the extra responsibility and workload of church leadership.

In the time that Graham has been here, it has been so moving and an incredible privilege for him to see the amazing commitment of all the Wardens & Deputy Wardens, Readers, Worship Leaders, PCC members, Treasurers, Fundraisers, Group Leaders and so many others here at St John's. He cannot thank them all enough for the sacrificial giving of their time, skills and their energy, which has enabled the church to come through this time of transformation in such a positive way. He considers it to have been a huge personal joy to have been a part of that journey. It has also been a truly humbling experience.

Graham has always said that he believed God had a special plan for St John's as a very special group of people - and he believes that even more now. He does not doubt that God will bring the right person in as Vicar, to build on the work that has already been done and lead the church further forward in mission. Whoever they may be, Graham asked that we 'go easy on them', as it is very unlikely that they will have the charm, wit and all-round awesomeness of their predecessor! It is also very unlikely that they will have had experience of working with such a unique group of people!

Whatever the future may bring, he does not doubt that we will be more than able to rise to the challenges God brings our way, as our faith has already been shown in hard work and sacrifice. Just remember to always listen to God and to one another and never stop asking the question – "What does God want us to be as a Church?"

Now is the time of the Harvest for St John's always being thankful and making the most of all the opportunities that God brings in the coming years. By doing those two things we will ensure that God's Spirit continues to move among us and bring blessing upon blessing to the Church and this Community.

#### **Following Graham's report.**

**Mike Jones** proposed a vote of thanks to Graham and his team. He felt that everyone has done a tremendous job this year resulting in the church prospering in a spiritual way.

**Marie Hyland** proposed a vote of thanks to Gill for organising the flowers in the church; the flowers at Easter and throughout the year were beautiful.

- 15 **ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL:** The following, having been proposed and seconded, were accepted by the meeting to serve on the PCC for a period of three years, **Lesley Phipps, Val Sinnott and Steve Cox.**
- 16 **ELECTION OF SIDESPERSONS:** The following were accepted to be Sidespersons by the meeting, **Gill Cox, Steve Cox, Irene Davis, David Evans, Ena Gamble, Heather Griffiths, Donald Haddock, Ian Haddock, Helen Hardman, Ashley Hughes, Edna Ledger, Nancy Lloyd Parry, Philip Righton, George Slater, Ruth Wake, Ann Walton, Jean Washbourne, Joan Williams and Rodney Wood.**
- 17 **ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVE:** The following, having been proposed and seconded, were accepted by the meeting to serve on the Deanery Synod for a period of three years, **Jean Washbourne.**
- 18 **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:** As there were no other nominations the meeting agreed that **Neil Latham** of Harrison, Latham & Company should be reappointed as Independent Examiner.
- 19 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** None
- 20 **CLOSING PRAYER:** The meeting closed with a prayer at 8.30 pm.