



PARISH OF CHURCH HULME – ST LUKE

Meeting to Elect Churchwardens and Annual Parochial Church Meeting: 23rd April 2017

Minutes

Welcome

The Vicar and Chairman, Revd Paul Mason, welcomed everyone and opened the meetings with the Easter acclamation.

He explained that there were two meetings, the first short one to elect the churchwardens for the coming year, and the second, the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to elect other Church officers and carry out other formal business as set out in the agenda on the service sheet. Technically, anyone living in the parish could vote in the first meeting to elect the churchwardens but only those on the Church Electoral Roll could vote in the APCM.

It was good again to hold both meetings in church within a service of Holy Communion. This provided an appropriate spiritual context in which to appoint Church officials for the coming year and review the work of the Church since the last Annual Meetings.

Hymn: 489 – O God beyond all praising we worship you today...

Reading of Banns of Marriage

Confession – Order 1

Gospel: John 20, v 19 – 31, read by Jayne Weaver

The Creed

Attending Meetings: 72 (attendance sheets available on request)

Apologies for Absence: 14

Apologies had been received from: Sue Bell, Julian and Wendy Bond, Graham Ede, Derek and Judith Copley, Carole and Martin Elliott, Trevor Jenkins, Alison Kay, John Murfin, John Oram, Ian Senior, James Pullé.

MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

1 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting, prepared by Barbara Smith, had been circulated by email to the Church Council and had been publicly available on the website since mid-2016. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Peter Cotton and seconded by Mike Street. This was agreed unanimously and the minutes were then signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2 Election of Churchwardens

2.1 The Chairman explained that, for personal reasons, Tim Fryer was standing down after five years' service as churchwarden. He thanked Tim for his personal support and for his considerable contribution to developments at St Luke's in recent years. He also recorded his thanks to Tim's wife, Val. The day to day work of churchwardens is considerable, goes largely unseen but provides vital support for him and the smooth running of parish affairs. He has been

blessed at St Luke's with a long line of excellent churchwardens and Tim has followed in that mould. The congregation applauded Tim enthusiastically for his valued service as churchwarden.

2.2 Two nominations had been received for Churchwardens for the coming year:

ALASTAIR CRAGG: nominated by Graham Ede, seconded by Kevin Fryer

JAYNE WEAVER: nominated by Alan Rickards, seconded by William Hall

No further nominations were possible and Alastair and Jayne were duly elected.

Tim will continue in post until the Archdeacon's Visitation on 22nd May at St Mary's Nantwich.

Alastair will then take over Tim's role as lead churchwarden and Jayne will replace Alastair.

This meeting ended at 9:45am.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

1 Minutes and Matters arising from previous APCM

The minutes of the previous meeting prepared by Barbara Smith had been circulated by email to the Church Council and had been publicly available on the website since mid-2016. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Bill Paton and seconded by Kevin Fryer. This was agreed unanimously and the minutes were then signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2 Election of Deputy and Assistant Churchwardens

Three nominations had been received for Deputy and Assistant Churchwardens for the coming year:

VAL CRAGG – as Deputy Warden; nominated by Steve Smith, seconded Alan Rickards.

ALAN RICKARDS – as Deputy Warden; nominated by Steve Smith, seconded Bill Paton.

STEPHEN HAIGH – as Assistant Warden; nominated by Steve Smith, seconded Val Cragg.

No further nominations were possible and Val, Alan and Stephen were duly elected. The deputy churchwardens are *ex officio* members of the Church Council.

The Chairman welcomed all three to the wardens' team, particularly Stephen in his new appointment, but expressed his sadness that Jane Thomson had stood down after four years of diligent service. He would miss her enthusiasm and sense of humour. The congregation responded with a round of applause.

3 Election of Parochial Church Council Members

Five nominations had been received for the five vacancies on the Church Council:

TIM FRYER: nominated by Steve Smith, seconded by Val Cragg

STEPHEN HAIGH: nominated by Steve Smith, seconded by Val Cragg

BILL PATON: nominated by Kevin Fryer, seconded by Graham Ede

FIONA PULLÉ: nominated by Kevin Fryer, seconded by Graham Ede

STEVE SMITH: nominated by Kevin Fryer, seconded by Wendy Macdonald

No further nominations were possible and Tim, Stephen, Bill, Fiona and Steve were duly elected to serve on the Church Council for the next three years that is until April 2020.

The Hon. Secretary, Steve Smith, confirmed that a list of all members of the Church Council (including *ex officio* and co-opted members) will be posted on the notice-board in the church porch and on the church website: www.holmeschapelchurch.com. The Vicar, Curate, Lay Reader, Churchwardens, Deputy Churchwardens and Deanery Synod representatives are *ex officio* members of the Church Council.

4 Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

The Parish is entitled to provide three representatives to the Congleton Deanery Synod who serve a three-year term but are then eligible for re-election. The current representatives are William Hall, Barbara Smith and Dinah Wainwright. For personal reasons, Dinah is not seeking re-election and so the two nominations for election received were:

WILLIAM HALL: nominated by John Land, seconded by David Thompson

BARBARA SMITH: nominated by John Land, seconded by Tim Fryer

No further nominations were possible and so William and Barbara were duly elected to serve as St. Luke's representatives on the Congleton Deanery Synod until April 2020. The Chairman thanked all three current representatives for their work on the Deanery Synod over the past three years and William and Barbara for their willingness to continue representing St Luke's.

5 Election of Sidesmen and Assistant Sidesmen

The following 23 nominations had been received:

Sidesmen	proposed by:	seconded by:
RAYMOND DAVIES	JOHN ORAM	JEAN PATON
GRAHAM EDE	KEVIN FRYER	STEVE SMITH
KEVIN FRYER	STEVE SMITH	JANE THOMSON
RICHARD GABBITAS	TIM FRYER	VAL CRAGG
JOHN JACK	JANE THOMSON	ALASTAIR CRAGG
SANDRA JACKSON	ANNE SMITH	ALASTAIR CRAGG
GLEN JACKSON	JANE THOMSON	ALASTAIR CRAGG
TREVOR JENKINS	JANE THOMSON	ANNE SMITH
JACK KELLY	STEVE SMITH	JANE THOMSON
JOHN LAND	STEVE SMITH	JOHN ORAM
ANNE LANE	JANE THOMSON	JOHN ORAM
ALAN LANE	JOHN ORAM	ANNE SMITH
JIM LINDSAY	STEVE SMITH	JOHN ORAM
JANE MASSEY	ANNE SMITH	JOHN ORAM
JOHN ORAM	JANE THOMSON	STEVE SMITH
JEAN PATON	KEVIN FRYER	ANNE SMITH
BILL PATON	KEVIN FRYER	JOHN ORAM
ROD PICKLES	ANNE SMITH	JOHN ORAM
PAT RICHES	VAL CRAGG	ALASTAIR CRAGG
LEW RICHES	TIM FRYER	VAL CRAGG
DAVID SENIOR	VAL CRAGG	TIM FRYER
LUCY SUCHLAND	JOHN ORAM	ANNE SMITH
DAVID THOMPSON	JANE THOMSON	ANNE SMITH
Assistant Sidesmen	proposed by:	seconded by:
DOUGLAS CRAGG	TIM FRYER	ALASTAIR CRAGG
WILLIAM PULLÉ	TIM FRYER	ALASTAIR CRAGG

No further nominations were possible and so the nominated sidesmen and assistant sidesmen listed above were duly elected. The Chairman thanked all the men and women sidesmen and their assistants for their excellent work in greeting worshippers and helping the churchwardens in the smooth running of services. He was encouraged by the new additions to the team this year

(Richard Gabbitas, Pat and Lew Riches, and David Senior). This should ease Sunday rostering problems.

6 Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Council's Accounts

William Hall informed the meeting that Mike Cooke is willing to continue as the independent examiner of the Church Council's accounts for the calendar year 2017. Tim Fryer proposed, seconded by Mike Street, that Mr Mike Cooke should remain in post as Independent Examiner. Mr Cooke was duly appointed by the meeting.

7 Treasurer's Report on the Council's Accounts for 2016

The Hon. Treasurer, William Hall, reported on the Church Council's accounts for the calendar year 2016. Copies of the summary financial statements had been made available in church from Sunday 9th April and could be collected from the back of church after the meeting. Copies of the full accounts could be obtained from him on request.

The accounts show the overall financial position of St Luke's in 2016 with day to day income and expenditure combined with our expenditure on the church fabric. This year there has been a loss of £1,566 compared to a loss of over £44,000 in 2015.

Day to day Income and Expenditure: We originally budgeted to have a small surplus in 2016 based on the generous donations of St Luke's parishioners supplemented by Gift Aid tax relief refunds. In the event, our surplus was higher than expected at £9,680.

During 2016 we received over £19,000 from Gift Aid tax relief. We also received the balance of our Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant and further grants from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme (returning VAT paid) totalling £19,066 for our renovation works.

Church roof and other matters: Work on the roof and belfry was finally completed in February 2016 and we were able to fund all of the cost from our Fabric reserves. Other works in the churchyard included the installation of replacement notice-boards and refacing the external stone steps leading to the gallery. The cost of one of the notice-boards was included in the HLF grant since the original board was damaged in the preliminary site works for the roof works.

The title transfer for the additional cemetery land donated by Paul and Christine Ford in 2015 has been completed at a total cost of £3,888 for the necessary legal and planning permission charges to use the land for burials. Hedging of the stock-proof post and wire boundary fence is being added. Funds had been set aside in a designated account some years ago to meet these costs.

The layout and marking of the car-parking area around the Church Hall was reconfigured in March 2016 to improve access to disabled parking spaces and create additional spaces for Church and Church Hall use. The £744 cost of the line marking was offset by a grant of £200 from Holmes Chapel Parish Council.

The Chairman thanked William for his excellent work in maintaining and presenting the accounts and invited any questions from the congregation. None were forthcoming.

8 Electoral Roll

In the absence of Wendy Bond, the Electoral Roll Officer, Steve Smith confirmed that she was happy to continue in this role. He then reported on her behalf that there were now 207 individuals on the Church Electoral Roll following four deletions and six additions since the last APCM. The revised Roll is available to consult at the back of church. A further revision will be carried out for the Annual Meetings in 2018. A completely new roll must be prepared in 2019.

The Chairman recorded his thanks for the work which Wendy does in keeping the Roll up to date.

9 Reports on Parish activities, Council and Deanery Synod proceedings in 2016

The Chairman said that the various annual reports required for the APCM had again been collected together in booklet form and copies made available in church as well as on the website from Sunday 9th April. Copies could still be collected from the back of church at the end of the meeting. Therefore, he did not intend to read the individual reports but asked that they be formally received as a record of Parish activities, Church Council and Deanery Synod proceedings in 2016.

He then briefly reviewed the titles, thanking the leaders and members of the individual Church and Ecumenical Groups involved for their continuing commitment and hard work in the mission of St Luke's within the parish. He felt really blessed to have such a good team.

- The hopefully temporary closure of the Faith Group through falling numbers was a real disappointment but he thanked Tim and the other leaders for their work with the young people and exploring possible options with the Methodist Church.
- By contrast, the rebirth of Sunday School as Genesis under Fiona Pullé and her team seemed to be working well with the younger age group.
- Our Church Hall facilities continue to be well managed by the Hall Committee now chaired by John Murfin in place of Graham Ratcliffe who had stepped down after many years of diligent service.
- The Social Committee also continues to provide first class catering for Church social events, but is in urgent need of new helpers. This view was strongly supported by Pat Riches, who asked for more people to offer occasional help for individual events including helping serve food and drink.
- It was good to see St Luke's actively working in ecumenical Groups such as Christian Aid in which Margaret Thompson and Jane Thomson are very active. There is a special combined Christian Aid service at 10.30am at the Leisure Centre on Sunday 8th May.

10 Churchwardens' Report on Fabric, Goods and ornaments

The Chairman thanked the Churchwardens for their report and continuing excellent stewardship of the Church fabric, goods and ornaments. The church building is in good condition thanks to their efforts. He did not intend to read the report which had been included in the booklet of reports prepared for the APCM. He asked that the report be recorded as formally received as a record for 2016.

The Chairman advised that the faculty permission process to carry out the limited reordering of the choir pew area in the chancel is well advanced and it is hoped to complete the work before Christmas. The possible project to provide toilet facilities accessible from the church building and to improve safe access for all church users, will be developed with the new Church Architects.

11 Vicar's report and Address

[Note: this item was preceded by the singing of Hymn 631: Tell out my soul...]

The Chairman and Vicar, Revd Paul Mason, first expressed his own and the Church family's regret that Canon Ron Smith's current physical infirmities are preventing his active ministry with us. We

pray that these infirmities may soon be sufficiently resolved that he is able to participate again. The Vicar's report and Address follows:

I have just completed 13 years here at St. Luke's as your vicar and this year have passed the official government pension age. Yes, I am officially an OAP or to be more PC - a senior citizen! I love living in Holmes Chapel - don't we all?! I love the community here and I love the family of St. Luke's. It is a very special church to be vicar of. The support I get, the love I receive, the gifts we have here at St. Luke's makes being vicar a real privilege and pleasure. There are very few problems compared to many churches. There are no cliques, there are no big expenses looming, there is a beautiful old church building that is in a very good state of repair, the accounts are very healthy - why would I think of retiring? Well - I don't!

Passing retirement age obviously gave me the opportunity to retire but in my present circumstances retirement does not seem very attractive. This past year has not been an easy year for obvious reasons. It has been a year of huge change but slowly, as time passes it is getting easier. I am very good at putting a mask on but there have been many days when I have felt depressed and life seems very dark and I do suffer from anxiety but I also expect this year to be a better year. I am aware that the grief process has deprived me of energy and I just haven't wanted to do certain things. Things that I normally just take in my stride have been a real effort. I have managed the services and the baptisms and funerals and weddings but some of the pastoral visiting I have let slip somewhat this year. Again, I hope that things will get to a more normal pattern this year.

I have said I am not thinking of retiring at the moment. Theresa May said there wouldn't be an election until 2020!! - so nothing in this world is certain. However, there may come a time when I wake up one morning and think - that's it. Now is the time. On the other hand, you as a church family may think it's time I retired. If any of you think that please tell me. I would want to know - I really would. I don't want to go past my sell by date. Maybe you need a younger more energetic vicar better suited to the problems the church faces in the 21st Century. But be it I or someone else, St. Luke's like all other western Christian churches - particularly traditional churches - face decline. Let me quote some figures that have just come out this week about church attendance in Scotland. The specifics don't matter - it is the trend that says it all and I am sure the trend would be just as applicable to England.

New figures have revealed that the number of churchgoers in Scotland has dropped by over a half in the last 30 years. 2016 - 390,000: 1984 - 854,000. The age of regular Scottish church goers is also very revealing - 42 per cent are 65 or over.

These figures have an impact on the generations now coming through. Most of us were brought up to go to church regularly - and so we did and we still do. The Christian gospel was read and thought about Sunday by Sunday. Today that is no longer the case. Parents who are now bringing their children for baptism have little or no church connections. They know so little about the Christian faith. Couples who come to be married struggle to choose hymns for the service - all they know are 'All things bright and beautiful' and 'Give me joy in my heart'. Similarly hymns for funerals tend to be 'All things bright and beautiful' and 'The Lord's my shepherd'. We are living in a secular society where faith - in particular the Christian faith - is being marginalised. That is the society we live, worship and witness to even here in leafy rural Holmes Chapel. Those who collect the Christian Aid envelopes will tell you how much anti-Christian feeling there is here in Holmes Chapel. We are going against the tide of modern thought and culture. I pose the problem which is very real. Sadly, I don't have answers. The church has come up with all kinds of ideas to try and address the problem with such initiatives as fresh expressions and messy church and cafe church.

It seems to me that there are few conversions these days. Who are the people who come to church? In the main they are people who know God through Christ and want to join with fellow

Christians to worship God. They are converted, they are people of faith - they have had - and still have a need for God. Today this generation feel they have no need for God, even if there is one. 'I am doing very well on my own thank you'. 'You might feel a need for God, and that's fine but it's not for me.' We are in the business of God. If people feel they have no need for Him, if they are managing life very well on their own without Him, then why should they come to church? What for them is the point?

The only time people will want to come to church these days I suggest is if they meet the risen Christ. That is when they will feel a connection with God. Our gospel reading today has in it a man who didn't believe. I speak of course of Thomas. No, I will not believe. But then he met with the risen Christ. His doubts went and he gave himself to Christ with the words 'My Lord and my God' What I find relevant to us now is the response that Jesus gave. Then Jesus told him. 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'. Nobody is going to see the risen Christ like Thomas but we can introduce Christ, not with words and theological ideas trying to describe Jesus as both God and man, but by being Jesus by our actions to our family, our friends, our neighbours and yes, even our enemies, because as Jesus said in the parable 'And the King will say,' I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of my brothers and sisters you were doing it to me' The truth is that actions speak louder than words.

Much of what I have said is quite depressing but I hope realistic. St. Luke's is very much alive and kicking. There are encouraging signs but the warning signs are there. There are no easy answers to a national, even a western problem. Christ promised he will build his church. The very least we can do is to be faithful.

Services continue in the same format after having our survey this past year. Attendances are pretty static. Most people are being pleased most of the time!

The building and fabric are in the best state of repair for a very long time and we hand over to the next generations a wonderful old Parish Church that the community can be very proud of. After a few years absence, we are having a Community Service on 25th June. It was called the Civic Service but we are trying to spread its appeal by calling it a Community service and include more of the community as well as some of our councillors and civic dignitaries.

This time last year we were looking forward to having Gail stay with us as our new Curate. The ordination took place last July and her ordination as priest will be again at Chester Cathedral on Sat 17th June at 5.00pm. This further ordination means she will then be able to preside at the Communion service which she will do for the first time the following Sunday 18th June at both services. It is interesting to listen to what I said about Gail at the APCM last year:

'She will be a valuable asset to the team but let me remind you of two important facts. Firstly, Gail will be here primarily as part of her training not an extra pair of hands for me. She will have a lot to learn as a curate and a curacy enables her to have hands on experience - on the job training if you like. Secondly Gail is part-time and not paid. All she will do here is voluntary. As well as work in the Parish she is also completing an MA this year, still working in the chaplaincy team at Thorn Cross prison, earning money in her business and running a home with two teenage children plus husband. That, you will appreciate, is a massive work load and I know you will support her every way you can.'

It was a massive work load - an impossible one- and so with full backing from the church authorities she hasn't progressed her MA this year and she has also ended her business meaning a drop in the family income. It has been a joy for me to have Gail working alongside me and I know you have very much appreciated her ministry. After her priesting, it will be good to welcome her more fully into her ministerial role. As always, Anne has been a great support and again I know her gifts are greatly appreciated.

This year has seen Beryl Philpott end her time as vergger and church cleaner. Her health is suffering at the moment enough to prevent her being here today for a presentation to mark 50 years of service but I am sure you will join with me in thanking Beryl so much and wishing her a speedy recovery. I am delighted that Michelle has taken over the cleaning duties and at the moment members of the warden's team are filling in as verggers until we find a more permanent solution.

This report gives me opportunity each year to remember those of our church family who we love and see no longer. The list this year is quite long but we remember with thanksgiving those who have died this year: Barbara Boulton, Don Medford, Pauline Cawood, Richard Eades, Mary Gresty, Doris Perkins, Richard Rayner, Peter Hardwick, Pat Brocklebank, Mabel Johnson, Eileen Jeffery and John Brocklebank. Let's just take a moment to remember them.

Finally, can I say thank you again just for being you. I count it a privilege to serve you. Thank you for putting up with me and loving me.

Vote of Thanks

On behalf of the congregation, Tim Fryer thanked our Vicar Paul for his continuing ministry and leadership during the past year particularly challenging for him on a personal level. He thanked him for all he gave us and prayed that he would be strengthened by the love and support of the St. Luke's family. The congregation enthusiastically applauded Paul for his continuing ministry with us.

Tim concluded by thanking his fellow churchwarden, Alastair Cragg, and the other members of the wardens' team, for their help and support during his time in office. He wished the new team well and looked forward to St Luke's continuing to develop its mission to reach out into Holmes Chapel. He particularly thanked his wife, Val, and all the spouses and other family members who support so many who help St Luke's, in whatever capacity. He himself would continue to remain in contact through membership of the Church Council.

End of Annual Meetings

The formal meetings ended at 10:45am with Prayers of Intercession and the singing of Hymn 361: Jesus shall reign where his successive journeys run... before the celebration of Holy Communion with the Vicar presiding.

Signed: _____

Date: _____