



PARISH OF CHURCH HULME – ST LUKE

Meeting to Elect Churchwardens and Annual Parochial Church Meeting: 22nd April 2018

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 another year and review the work of the Church since the last Annual Meetings.

Hymn: 573: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation...

Confession – Order 1

Gospel: John 10, v 11– 18, read by Alastair Cragg

The Creed

Attending the Annual Meetings: 61 individuals signed in; attendance sheets are available on request.

Apologies for Absence: received from:

Julian and Wendy Bond, Valerie Cragg, Karen Cragg, Judy Copley, Annette Morgan, Jean and William Paton, James Pullé and Jaquie Rickards.

MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

1 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated by email to the Church Council and had been publicly available on the website since mid-2017. There were no amendments to the minutes and approval was proposed by Peter Cotton and seconded by Barbara Smith. 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

The Chairman was pleased to announce that both Churchwardens were prepared to continue in service for a further year if elected.

ALASTAIR CRAGG had been nominated for election for a 3rd year by Steve Smith and Jean Paton.

JAYNE WEAVER had been nominated for election for a 2nd year by Alastair Cragg and Steve Smith.

There were no further nominations, and Alastair and Jayne were duly elected. There was no other business and the meeting ended at 9:50am.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

1 Minutes and Matters arising from previous APCM

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated by email to the Church Council and had been publicly available on the website since mid-2017. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Tim Fryer and seconded by Barbara Smith. This was agreed unanimously and the minutes were then signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2 Election of Assistant Churchwardens

The Chairman explained that, to conform with Church Representation Rules, we are no longer able to have Deputy Churchwardens, but Assistant Churchwardens, appointed annually. The consequence, other than a change of name, is that they would now need to be elected members of the Church Council rather than automatic members because of their office (“ex officio”). Their duties and key role as members of the churchwardens’ team would continue unchanged.

Nominations for Assistant Churchwarden for the coming year had been received from:

PETER COTTON – nominated by Alastair Cragg and Steve Smith.

VALERIE CRAGG – nominated by Alastair Cragg and Steve Smith.

STEPHEN HAIGH – nominated by Steve Smith and Anne Lane.

No further nominations were possible, and Peter, Val and Stephen were duly elected. The Chairman welcomed all three to the churchwardens’ team, particularly Peter in his new appointment, but expressed his sadness that Alan Rickards was standing down for personal reasons after many years diligent service in this role for which he and the rest of the parish were very grateful. He was very pleased to add that Alan would be continuing as Editor of the Church Magazine and wished to remain a member of the Church Council.

3 Election of Parochial Church Council Members

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

RACHEL COPLEY - nominated by Stephen Haigh and Steve Smith.

VALERIE CRAGG – nominated by Steve Smith and Raymond Davies.

WENDY MACDONALD – nominated by Kevin Fryer and Jayne Weaver.

ALAN RICKARDS – nominated by Steve Smith and Alastair Cragg.

JANE THOMSON – nominated by Steve Smith and Valerie Cragg.

No further nominations were possible and so Rachel, Val, Wendy, Alan and Jane were duly elected to serve on the Church Council for the next three years, that is until April 2021. The Chairman congratulated all those elected and expressed his pleasure that Rachel was joining the Church Council and looked forward to her contribution, representing the views of a younger age-group in the parish.

A list of all members of the Church Council will be posted on the notice-board in the church porch and on the church website: www.holmeschapelchurch.com. The Vicar, Licensed Lay Reader, Churchwardens and Deanery Synod representatives are *ex officio* members of the Church Council.

5 Appointment of Sidesmen

The following 22 nominations had been proposed and seconded for the men and women named below to be appointed as Sidesmen for the coming year:

Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
DOUGLAS CRAGG	Alastair Cragg	Pat Riches
RAYMOND DAVIES (Wed.)	Steve Smith	Alastair Cragg
KEVIN FRYER	John Oram	Alastair Cragg
RICHARD GABBITAS	Steve Smith	Alastair Cragg
JOHN JACK	Jean Paton	William Paton
GLEN JACKSON	Valerie Cragg	Steve Smith
SANDRA JACKSON	Valerie Cragg	Steve Smith
TREVOR JENKINS	Alastair Cragg	John Jack
JOHN LAND	Barbara Smith	Trevor Jenkins
ALAN LANE	Glen Jackson	Alastair Cragg
ANNE LANE	Glen Jackson	Alastair Cragg
JAMES LINDSAY (Wed.)	Jean Paton	Alastair Cragg
JANE MASSEY	Barbara Smith	Steve Smith
JOHN ORAM	William Paton	Jean Paton
JEAN PATON	Steve Smith	Alastair Cragg
WILLIAM PATON	Alastair Cragg	Steve Smith
ROD PICKLES	Steve Smith	Alastair Cragg
WILLIAM PULLÉ	Alastair Cragg	Pat Riches
LEW RICHES	Glen Jackson	Valerie Cragg
PAT RICHES	Glen Jackson	Valerie Cragg
LUCY SUCHLAND	Barbara Smith	Steve Smith
DAVID THOMPSON	Jean Paton	John Oram

No further nominations were possible and so the nominated sidesmen listed above were duly elected. The Chairman thanked all the men and women sidesmen for their excellent work in greeting worshippers and helping the churchwardens in the smooth running of services. He was particularly pleased to welcome Douglas Cragg and William Pullé to full membership of the Sidesmen Team.

6 Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Accounts

William Hall informed the meeting that Mr Mike Cooke is willing to continue as the independent examiner of the Church Council's accounts for the calendar year 2018. William proposed, seconded by Barbara Smith, that Mike Cooke should remain as Independent Examiner of the Church Council's accounts. Mr Cooke was duly appointed by those present.

7 Treasurer's Report on the Accounts for 2017

The Treasurer, William Hall, reported on the Church Council's accounts for the calendar year 2017. Copies of the summary financial statements had been made available in church from Sunday 8th 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.

Day to day income and expenditure for 2017 was in line with our estimates with a small surplus of £5,855. However, the cost of the chancel reordering works carried out in 2017

exceeded our estimate leading to a deficit of nearly £8,000 which has been covered by our reserves.

Contributions from members of our Planned Giving scheme continue to enable us to meet our Parish Share payment to the Diocese of £74,757 (an increase of 2.5% over 2016). Other Church running costs are largely met from collections, fees for weddings and funerals and other income. Generally, our running expenses were higher in 2017 but this was offset by Gift Aid tax relief of £17,400 and a grant from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme of £4,079 for VAT on eligible project costs.

Work to re-order the church chancel area to create a more flexible space by removal of the fixed choir pews and moving the pulpit, first considered in 2015, was completed in late 2017 following eventual faculty permission in October 2017. The permission was conditional on replacing the pews with wooden chairs of approved high specification, the cost of which, with three similar chairs for clergy, a matching prayer desk and lectern amounted to £11,310. The cost of the flooring works was £13,551, giving a total cost for the re-ordering of £24,861. Over half of the cost of the furniture has been offset by donations from parishioners (some Gift Aided) in memory of their loved ones.

On August Bank Holiday a thief gained access to the vicar's vestry, damaging the door and its frame. Cash of about £600 was lost in the burglary but £467 was recovered from Ecclesiastical Insurance, the church's insurers. On advice from the police, a closed-circuit camera system is being installed at a cost of £1,200 to deter similar incidents.

The new churchyard extension land was consecrated by the Bishop of Stockport in early January and suitable hedging was planted on the boundaries. A quotation has been accepted to install an all-weather path down the extension land from the new side gate in Knutsford Road. The work will include preparing an area for the interment of ashes and is scheduled for completion by mid- 2018.

Ways to reduce the Church's carbon footprint are being considered. In 2015 solar panels were added to the roof of the Church Hall and this has already off-set our electricity costs. Faculty permission to replace the current high energy and high maintenance floodlights in the church with a low maintenance and low energy LED lighting system is being sought. The estimated cost is £27,000 including VAT which may be refundable.

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 the Electoral Roll Officer, Wendy Bond, the Secretary, Steve Smith, confirmed that Wendy was happy to continue in this role. He then reported on her behalf that there were now 203 individuals on the Church Electoral Roll following seven deletions (five deaths, two moved away) and three additions since the last APCM. The revised Roll is available to consult at the back of church. This is the final revision to the current Roll; we are required to compile a completely new Roll before the 2019 APCM. The Chairman recorded his thanks for the work which Wendy does in keeping the Roll up to date and was pleased to hear that she is prepared to continue for a further year. Her appointment, like that of other Church Council officers, will be made at the first meeting of the Church Council on 30th April 2018.

9 Reports on Parish activities, Council and Deanery Synod proceedings in 2017

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 8th April. He thanked the Secretary for consolidating the reports and Jayne Weaver for arranging for their duplication. 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 largely during the calendar year 2017.

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 himself truly blessed to have such a good team supporting him.

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 would not read out the report as it 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 2017.

11 Vicar's report and Address

[Note: this item was preceded by the singing of verses 1,2 and 4 of Hymn 303: I cannot tell how he whom angels worship...]

In today's passage from John, Jesus says that he has come so that his sheep – his followers, all of us – may have life and have it abundantly. Life, obviously, is good, desirable, important. How much more so, then, abundant life. The chance to not simply persist, but thrive, to not simply exist, but flourish. To have a sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfilment; to know and be known, accept and be accepted. I believe that this is the one thing that I'm sure everyone at St Luke's desires. I'm sure it is something that everyone in Holmes Chapel would desire. The question is – how do you find it?

Techniques used in advertising – called in the trade emotional branding – seek to persuade us into thinking that whatever their product, it is going to provide the abundant life of meaning and fulfilment and purpose that we all seek. But of course, things don't.

I want to invite you and me to take an honest look at the choices we have made, the strategies we have employed, the things we have relied upon, to bring us authentic, abundant life and ask whether or not they are satisfied. Because the fact of the matter is that after all of our seeking and searching and shopping, we still end up far short of experiencing the abundant life Jesus promises.

I suspect that authentic abundant life – which Jesus here describes as flowing from relationship with Jesus and through him with God – demands that we be more vulnerable than we're most often prepared to be. So much of our life is about protecting ourselves: giving the impression that we really do have it all together and, in this way guarding ourselves against vulnerability. The difficulty, though, is that we cannot experience abundant life without exposing, even lifting up, those very vulnerabilities we want to hide.

Think about it: so much of our life is caught in this double-bind of wanting intimacy and honesty in our relationships – with each other as much as with God – and yet simultaneously holding back, not risking exposing ourselves fully to others for fear that they may reject us. It's a legitimate fear, of course; people have rejected us in the past. And so we ensconce ourselves in emotional armour, living half-truths and sometimes outright lies about who we are, hoping to protect ourselves from hurt, perhaps all the while knowing that as long as we are not honest about who we are we cannot trust the love and acceptance others would offer us. After all, would they accept us, we silently ask ourselves, if they really knew us?

It is this very real human condition and dilemma that God embraces in the incarnation, taking on our lot and our life in the flesh and blood of Jesus. The man born of woman, born under the law; the one who experienced love and laughter, sorrow and disappointment; the teacher of love and peace who was executed on the cross – this one knows the deepest recesses of our fears and insecurities and has embraced them all. And when he is resurrected, he comes bearing the peace he has offered all along accompanied with the promise that his love is greater than fear and that his new life is greater than death.

We need to continually live out and declare this promise. And remember - it is a promise! Abundant life is not something to earn or achieve, buy or barter for. Rather, it is a gift, the sheer gift of a God who loves us enough to lay down his life for us. There are so many thieves and bandits in this world who would rob us of life, who would cheat us of abundance. And so, Jesus comes as the gatekeeper and good shepherd, the one who knows his sheep – intimately and truly – and who calls us by name so that we, hearing the difficult truth about ourselves, may believe and receive the second and wonderful truth about God's great and victorious love for us.

The problem we at St Luke's face – indeed all churches today – is that the vast majority of people think we as a church or we as those of the Christian faith have nothing to offer modern culture. We are seen as irrelevant, boring people who believe in fairy stories. But they are human beings who want to live life to the full. And Jesus says I have come that they might have life – life to the full. Let me ask you a rhetorical question. St Augustine is the Patron Saint of brewers. He would have shared a pint or two at the Bottle Bank – well in his early years anyway! He loved the stuff and was in his youth a very worldly man who loved to live life to the excess including parties, booze and sex. He made a dramatic conversion to Christianity and became a priest and Bishop. He was a prolific writer and was one of the greatest saints and theologians ever. His most famous quote is the question I want to ask you. Do you believe this is true?

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you”

For me that is another way of saying “I have come to bring you life – life abundant, life in all its fullness.” Do you believe it? If we believe that and it's true then, to be perfectly honest, we are not doing a very good job of getting our message across are we?

Well that's very encouraging Vicar. Thanks a bunch!

I like to think I'm honest and real. This is not just a problem for St Luke's. It is a huge problem for the whole of the Christian Church in the west, and indeed the whole of the first world. So what can I say by way of encouragement? At the end of the day, this is God's work. Our mission statement you know well and emphasizes our part. “Making Christ known in the community of Holmes Chapel so that all can share in God's love” That is the gospel, that is our message, that is abundant life – to know and experience God's love - a love that is unmerited and undeserved but is totally unconditional. The abundant life Jesus talked about is the life of love. It is the heart of the great commandment, to love God and to love our neighbour. Our mission is to share that love in word and deed. If others reject it, that is their problem. We are asked to be faithful - faithful in our worship, faithful in our witness and faithful in our walk of faith.

This past year has been a year of faithfulness. These reports show how much faithful work is being done by so many at St. Luke's. Again, thank you. This past year we have lost a number of our wider church family. We remember and give thanks for the lives of Joan Harris, Alan Bartrum, Eileen Jeffery, John Brocklebank, Dorothy Barnett, Vernon Thornhill and Brian Shreeve. Let's remember them now in a moment of silence.

This year we have had five weddings, fourteen baptisms and thirty-four funerals!

This year we have had to say goodbye to Gail as our curate. She of course has had a difficult time recently, but the good news is that tests show there is no active cancer. Good news indeed! So

hopefully soon she will be able to take up the Chaplaincy ministry to which she feels God had called her.

Finally, I want to say a huge thank you to Anne. She has been a great support to me personally since I lost Sue and she has been a great support in ministry. I can't imagine ministry as a vicar without Anne there as my reader. Thank you so much Anne and thank you so much St Luke's for all your support and encouragement. I love you so much and look forward to serving you for another year.

Vote of Thanks

On behalf of the congregation and all the wardens team, Alastair Cragg thanked Vicar Paul for his continuing ministry and leadership during the past year. He added his personal thanks to Paul for his guidance, support and friendship. He also thanked his fellow wardens, Jayne, Val, Alan and Stephen, and all those named in the Reports as well as those unnamed, working behind the scenes; together they ensure parish activities run smoothly. Lastly, he particularly thanked his wife, Karen, and all the spouses and other family members who provide continuing support for those working for St Luke's, in whatever capacity. The congregation enthusiastically applauded.

End of Annual Meetings

The formal meetings ended at 10:32am with Prayers of Intercession and the singing of Hymn 168: Father who in Jesus found us.... before the celebration of Holy Communion with the Vicar presiding.

Signed: _____

Date: _____