

# Parish of St James with St Matthew, Muswell Hill

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Date: Monday 19 October 2020

Venue: Online via Zoom

Present: Chris Green, Phil Mullins, Mark Murthen and 87 parishioners

## Annual Meeting of Parishioners

### 1. Opening prayers, worship and word

Chris welcomed attendees and explained the process of contributing/asking question via 'Chat', and the process of voting. If two people were sharing a device, the second person should email their vote to Gabrielle Moris. He led prayers and introduced the first worship song 'Lion and the Lamb.'

Chris read the passage 1 Thessalonians 2: 7 – 20. We are not the first Christians who are unable to meet, and we can be reassured by this passage and encouraged to go on worshipping, meeting in small groups and supporting one another.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Steve Sexauer, Sally Ross, Ann Lofgren Glaser

### 3. Minutes of the AMP meeting held on Monday 8 April 2019

The minutes were approved with no changes. 48 people voted in approval, and there were 4 abstentions.

### 4. Election of Churchwardens

Chris thanked the current Churchwardens, Ian Roberts and Alison Vincent, for being a rock of support especially over the past six months. Both were re-elected unopposed.

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

### 5. Elections for the PCC and Deanery Synod

Minutes of the APCM meeting held on Monday 8 April 2019 were approved with no changes. 47 people voted in approval, and there were 4 abstentions.

Chris thanked those who were standing down from PCC and Deanery Synod: Michael Bleakley, Clare Davey, Sue Picano, Eric Ortlund, Anne Ayles and Jane Davidson. Richard Brueton was re-elected to PCC, and Ajay Gohil and Dave Williams were re-elected to Deanery Synod. New members elected to PCC were Michael Dufour, Katherine Adams, Jo Hutchinson, Steve Sexauer and Andrea Bleakley. These were all unopposed.

## 6. Reports:

### a. Electoral Roll

Chris reported that there were 348 on the Electoral Roll in 2019. 11 were removed and 14 were added, making the total, for 2020, 351.

### b. PCC – Annual Report and Accounts

Michael John was erroneously listed as Curate on page 10 of the Annual Report, and this would be corrected.

### c. Fabric

Chris Law (Chair of the Buildings Committee) gave an update on buildings work. Following major water damage to the church last Spring, roof repair work had begun with scaffolding erected in August. High level stone and guttering repair was now finished. The main roof was found to be in good condition, but the side aisle roofs **needed stripping back completely and tiles and horsehair membrane replaced and new batons installed**. Repair to the bookshop roof would also be carried out. The estimated date for completion of Phase 1 was 14 December 2020. Over £2K had been raised at the 'Sponsor-a-Slate' day. Chris Law welcomed any new donations.

Chris Green thanked Chris and Gill Brazier for the work they had done to make these works possible. Chris Law commended Gill especially, as the co-ordinator of the project.

A question was raised about how the roof project was being financed. Chris Law explained that donations had covered the costs of Phase 1 but there were no available funds for Phases 2 and 3, which were not likely to happen this year or next. Each phase costs £100-125K. Chris Green is approaching Trusts for grants, and has already received £5K.

### d. Deanery Synod Report

No questions were asked about this report.

### e. Finance

The Finance Report was presented by Seb Butter (Honorary Treasurer). Seb presented the data for 2019, compared to 2018. He reported that it had been a positive year, resulting in a surplus of £38K as a result of one-off giving on Gift Day and regular giving. This meant that our cash reserves had moved to £50K. Seb confirmed that the accounts had been audited and approved.

Seb described 2020 as a challenging year financially: there was a decrease in income because of fewer physical cash receipts and events. There had also been a reduction in property income. To offset this, costs were lower, non-essential work had not been carried out and the furlough scheme had been utilized. This, together with over £50K raised on Gift Day, would leave a small surplus by the end of the year.

Chris thanked Seb and Anand for their hard work in producing this report, and thanked church family members for their generosity.

A question was raised about Gift Aid and Anand explained that the church claims this every month. From Gift Day donations, £10-15K was raised in Gift Aid.

A possible new wave of Covid 19 made financial predictions difficult, but Seb expressed appreciation of donations made electronically and hoped these would be unaffected.

**The appointment of Lakin Rose as auditor to the parish for the year to 31 December 2020 was approved. 51 people voted in approval and there were 2 abstentions.**

## **7. Vicar's Report and Questions**

Chris explained that his review would be of the last 6 months, not 12 months as usual. The first impact of Covid 19 was postponement of the Holy land Pilgrimage. From then on, the journey through restrictions had been extraordinary. Services had started with livestreams from homes, then from church without a team, then with a team and finally with members of the congregation and four services each Sunday. With every step it had been necessary to consider the needs of Youth, Pastorates, Community Café and all the other ministry areas; and we have missed gathering as Christians. Many staff members had risen to the challenge of solving practical problems, including past staff members Alex and Lane Jacobsen, Tara and Ethan Gillespie and Tam Szilard. Other members of staff had accepted being furloughed with grace.

We are determined to be a Biblically-healthy church, following all the guidelines to remain safe. This will probably mean livestreaming for 12-18 months. Chris reported that he had spoken to two schools about hosting an Alpha course and possibly livestreaming, but that that had not been possible. As we are currently at capacity for the 10.30 service, we may livestream at the Birchwood Centre as well as in the church.

The Holy land Pilgrimage was now planned for March 2021, but the ultimate decision about whether to go rested with the tour operator, McCabe. Our Church Weekend Away was postponed indefinitely, but a Weekend 'at home' was planned for next year.

A question was raised about 'Black Lives Matter'. Chris explained that he had made a video at the time of the protests. St James should be a safe place for all. Chris would personally speak to members affected by this and listen to their stories.

A question was raised about safe-guarding. Chris drew attention to headline news about appalling abuse in the Church of England. He was committed to ensuring that everyone was safe, and called for any concerns to be raised promptly. Safeguarding procedure for Youth, especially online, had been revised. There was generally a clear procedure for reporting.

Chris reported that in the next few months there would be a Memorial Service, for those who had experienced loss of a family member or friend, and a free Art Exhibition. Plans for Christmas included recordings of three Carol Services: traditional, with choir; contemporary; and children's. There would be an 8.00am service on Christmas Day. It was not practical to hold services in church over the Christmas period because of numbers and the need to log personal details for track and trace. Outdoor services were restricted by the ban on singing.

January to March 2021 would be difficult, and Chris reported plans to provide on-line support for those with mental-health issues and addiction.

On staffing, Chris described the gaps left by the relocation of the Jacobsen family. The decision to appoint someone to oversee worship and technology depended on our financial position in 2021. He thanked Dave Cornes for stepping in to bridge the gap.

Mark Murthen, Phil Mullins, Dave Cornes, Ashley Nichols and Hannah Whitehead made their presentations, with many positive reports for 2019 and 2020. Chris thanked all the Heads of Ministries and the teams behind them.

**8. Announcement of election results for 2020**

No election was held.

**9. Closing prayers and worship**

Chris led the closing prayers and introduced the song 'Only a Holy God.' IMR thanked Chris and Sharon Green and all the other staff members who had worked on the technical side of this meeting.