

Minutes of Annual Church Meeting – Monday 15th March 2021, 7.30pm on Zoom

Present:

Matt Trendall (Chair), Pat Sawyer, Wayne Webb, Gloria Terrelonge, Paul Terrelonge, Ian Corlett, Sandy Grey, Dawn Bromley, Nick Mills, Alise Trendall, Barny Daley, Carolyn Sanderson, Rosie Neale, Ayokunnu Otunla, Brian Quentin, Catherine Marangu, Cath Segers; David Sawyer (Election of Churchwardens mtg).

Apologies:

Virginia Kagunda, Brenda Daglish, Sandra Mills, Catherine & Michael Held, Pippa Daley, Sylvia Bennett, Pauline Webb.

1. **Opening devotions:** the meeting opened with a reading from Hebrews 13 and the encouragement to keep loving and sharing with each other. We prayed Sunday's closing prayer from our Worship in the Wilderness series as an invitation to keep following Jesus and the way of the cross.
2. **Election of churchwardens:** Pat Sawyer has kindly agreed to serve for another year. She was proposed by Ian Corlett, seconded by Carolyn Sanderson and elected unanimously to serve as churchwarden. Matt proposed a big vote of thanks to Pat for her outstanding work, and reaffirmed that he and Pat are actively looking to find a second churchwarden in the near future.
3. **Apologies:** see above.
4. **Minutes of 2020 ACM:** accepted as a true record of the meeting nem. con..
5. **Matters arising:** *Walton Churches Partnership's registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.* This was due by the end of March 2021, but the Charities Commission has extended the deadline by 10 years! Nevertheless, we are still determined to register by the end of 2021 regardless, as it puts us on a more secure legal footing and limits the liabilities of trustees. We have draft paperwork agreed and are awaiting Watling Valley's experience (agreed to be the 'test LEP' for MK). We have also initiated legal advice to transfer our Baptist Minister's employment status safely to the new CIO.
6. **Reports:** (a) Matt thanked Pat for her excellent **Churchwarden's Report**, which includes a full update on matters relating to the building and churchyard – a copy of this report is available separately (on the church website).

(b) Ian gave a **summary of the 2020 accounts**. Overall we had a deficit of approx £3k, which translated to a £5k loss on our unrestricted (day-to-day) funds, and a £2k surplus in our Building Fund. Given the loss of income in 2020 from fees, occasional collections (generated by weddings, baptisms etc) and fundraising income from the Christmas and Summer Fairs, this was in fact much less severe than we might have feared. A very positive development was that planned giving had increased significantly.

We have set a conservative budget for 2021, forecasting a loss of just under £4k, assuming relatively few fees generated. Matt thanked Ian for his outstanding work, and also Pat for banking monies (less needed this year!). Ian is happy to stand again as treasurer. He was proposed by Sandy Grey, seconded by Gloria Terrelonge and re-appointed unanimously

Appointment of Independent Examiner: Manish Patel was proposed by Ayokunnu Otunla, seconded by Pat Sawyer, and re-appointed by the meeting nem. con.

(c) Matt reported that **church membership** stands at 64 adults and 24 u18s – this compares to 62 and 21 last year, so represents modest growth. The 64 adults identify as 35 Anglican and 29 non-Anglican. We are a very diverse congregation now, the figure of non-Anglicans having increased markedly over the last 5-10 years, which Matt welcomed. For comparison the equivalent last year was 35 and 27.

Our reported Electoral Roll is 40 (vs 39 last year) – this is calculated in a fairly esoteric but consistent way, to avoid double counting church members with our parent denominations.

Brief summary of other church life in MK: Matt updated the meeting that in April 2020 long-held plans for our parish's new Pioneer post were dropped – we are now looking at forming something smaller and organic, led by people living on the new estate. A couple who might fit the bill had recently connected with St Mary's, which is very positive news. Funding for the post was now allocated to a new Community Organising role on the Lakes Estate in Water Eaton parish.

Our own Partnership of churches had survived remarkably well financially over the last year, however the picture is much less rosy across the other ecumenical partnerships in MK, all of whom are forecasting a significant loss for this year.

7. Elections:

- a. Election of Church Stewards, proposed by Rosie Neale, seconded by Barny Daley, all appointed unanimously:

Brenda Daglish (Secretary)	Virginia Kagunda (Prayer Steward)
Ayokunnu Otunla (WCP Link Rep)	Paul North (Mission & Community)
Carolyn Sanderson (Worship)	Gloria Terrelonge (Worship & Weddings)
Mark Mitro – role to be assigned	Moir North (Special Events)
Wayne Webb (Building & Maintenance)	Paul Terrelonge (Building & Maintenance)
Dawn Bromley (Families/Children & Young People)	

Pat Sawyer (Churchwarden), Ian Corlett (Treasurer) and Matt (Chair) are all ex officio stewards.

Matt welcomed Brenda to the Stewards' Council, and also noted that Virginia (who started in the Autumn) was doing a great job in the new role of Prayer Secretary.

- b. MK/WCP link posts: all current reps are standing again and were unanimously re-appointed:

Sandy Grey & Ann Harris (Mission Partnership Link)
 Carolyn Sanderson & Ayokunnu Otunla (Walton Churches Partnership reps)
 Carolyn Sanderson (Deanery Synod rep) – *appointed for a 3-yr term in 2020*

Matt proposed a vote of thanks to all those serving in these leadership roles, and for all they bring to our church's life.

8. **Safeguarding and re-appointment of Safeguarding Officer and Responsible Adult** (previously known as Children's Advocate). The current policy current (the summary page of which is in the meeting pack) was accepted nem. con. Matt advised the meeting that the policy was currently being updated in time for the WCP AGM at the end of April, and once approved there would be received by the Stewards' Council at the meeting following. The main changes were a policy for safe working with young people online (already being used but not yet formally added) and changed training requirements for various roles. These changes would be communicated to all relevant parties asap.

Rachael Jenkins (as Safeguarding Officer) and Sandra Mills (as Responsible Adult) were proposed by Carolyn Sanderson, seconded by Rosie Neale, and both re-appointed unanimously. Matt proposed a vote of thanks to both for their continued work in this important area.

9. **Rector's Report**: available separately on the church website.
10. **Questions/Feedback** – An online poll was conducted with four questions relating to what people missed most, and how they viewed any possible return to in-person services and events. Results of this poll are available on the website, but indicate that most attendees at the ACM see online as a

valuable accompaniment now to in-person church, but that what they miss most (and want to see return) is corporate singing and communion. Whilst some are happy to attend in-person services regardless, many will only choose in-person worship again when these are re-instated. Until that point, online worship is a more satisfying alternative.

The meeting then split into 5 'breakout groups' to reflect on everything that had been shared this evening. After everyone returned to the plenary session, a lively discussion then ensued, with the following main points made:

- Church life will be a combination of face-to-face and online from now on, so the key question is how to run both effectively. People value the choice, and spreading the load via a wide involvement from the congregation will continue to be important.
- How do we generate real engagement with those connecting with us (for the first time) online? How do we maximise social media and other connection points (e.g. Whatsapp) to do this? Will people try us in the building too – will the appetite to meet 'real' people be the trigger for people to do that?

11. **Any other business** – none

12. **Closing Devotions** – we concluded by saying the Grace together at 9.50pm.