

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF ST JAMES' CHURCH, HEMINGFORD GREY held on Sunday, 19th April 2015

75 people were in attendance. The meeting was led by Rev. Peter Cunliffe (henceforth referred to as Peter). The meeting opened with prayer.

Vestry Meeting to appoint the Churchwardens

1) On behalf of the church family Peter expressed thanks to the two Churchwardens, Cynthia Reed and Tim Drye for their encouragement, support and wise counsel over the past year. There being only one nomination Clive Joseph was appointed to serve as Churchwarden for the coming year. As there was only one nomination Mandy Latimer agreed to put her nomination forward and serve as the other Churchwarden.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

2) **Apologies for absence** were received from 25 people. A register of those in attendance and those who gave apologies is retained on record.

3) **Minutes of the last APCM.** Minutes of the last APCM were accepted as correct, save for an error in the heading which should read "Sunday 27th April 2014" and under the heading of Flowers and Gardens "Thanks go to the flower team and also to Jim Winton who diligently mows the grass in the churchyard." The minutes were then signed by Peter.

4) **Matters Arising from the Minutes.** There were no additional items to those on the agenda.

5) **Electoral Roll Report.** Rachel Winton, Parish Operations Manager, reported that last year there were 184 names on the electoral roll. This year a further 12 names have been added. One member has deceased and one has been ordained which makes a total this year of 194.

6) **Appointment of the independent examiner to the PCC:** It was agreed that Tacconi Green, accountants, should be appointed as independent examiners of the church accounts for the coming year.

7) **Election of Assistant Wardens and Sides-persons:** A full list of those people appointed is attached to these minutes.

8) **Finance:** Copies of the statement of financial activities for the year ended 31st December 2014 were circulated; full copies of the accounts are available if required. The Treasurer wished to thank everyone who contributes towards the finances of the church. There should be a correction to the figure given in the Year in Review to record that the overall surplus in the General Fund for 2014 was £26K and not 19K as stated. 8K was transferred from the General Fund and 10K from the Development Fund to help with Church repairs which came to £37K. An interest free loan from Churches Heritage Trust has to be repaid by four instalments of £3,750 and the first of these instalments has been repaid. Open-plate giving and gift aid donations are both down on last year. Income for the year was £10K less than budget but expenditure was £6½K less than budget. The parish share for this year was £66K. All income received into the church is tithed and this tithe is used to support our mission partners.

The property at Margetts has been sold and after expenses the sale proceeds of £282,372 have been placed in a 90 day high interest account until needed.

The Treasurer expressed his thanks to Lionel Wright who does the paying in and counting of cash and also to Rachel Winton in the Parish Centre for her help and support.

PCC wished to thank Clive Sprawson for his sterling work as our Church Treasurer. The accounts will be approved at the next PCC meeting.

9) **Introduction of those standing for election to the PCC:** Peter expressed thanks to all those who have served on PCC and Deanery Synod over the past year. Thanks to all who have prayed and given their time and gifts in support of the work of the PCC.

Election to the PCC is proportionate to the numbers on the electoral roll. One third of PCC members are

elected each year to serve a three year term. This year there are four elected full term vacancies to be filled and three casual vacancies (2 for 2 years and 1 for 1 year) to be decided at the next PCC meeting. Those standing for election are Tim Drye, Becca Pluke, Mark Latimer, Steve Moller, Allen Foster and Wendy Halls. Allen Foster and Steve Moller agreed to take two of the casual vacancies.

There was a proposal that next year if there are more nominations than places available the church will consider that all those people will be accepted on PCC. It was also suggested that those filling casual vacancies might feel of lesser value than those filling an elected position but it was stated that everyone who is on PCC are our representatives and are there because they have a part to play. Those taking casual vacancies are of no lesser value than the elected members. Peter gave a short explanation of the rules governing election to PCC which have been long established and it was felt that we should be cautious before making any changes. After some discussion it was decided that this should be considered before the next APCM. This issue will be discussed within the new PCC and if it needs to be taken forward it was felt that we should not wait for the next APCM to get the church to ratify any changes to the procedure.

10) Strategy Update: An update was given by Lisa Nelson, Chair of the PCC strategy sub-committee, which exists primarily to move our strategy forward and support the working teams. Strategy is built upon our vision and mission statements:

To grow together as disciples of Jesus, to demonstrate the Kingdom of God and to proclaim Jesus as Lord, in order to achieve our vision: To see lives transformed by Jesus

After consultation with home groups and the wider church, 11 priorities were identified and it was decided to focus on the top 5.

1. Families, children & youth; 2. Encourage regular corporate worship; 3. Teaching; 4. Fellowship; 5. Outreach.

At the PCC Away Day in October the priorities were reviewed and it was decided that these five priorities are the right ones on which we should continue to focus.

It was suggested that we can all help to support the strategy and move it forward, by adopting one of the five priorities and making it a focus for regular prayer. This suggestion might also be adopted within the home groups. Members of the Church family may feel they can contribute by joining one of the working teams.

Future plans:

Families, Children and Youth: Under the leadership of Dave and Claire this ministry is thriving as outlined in the Year in Review.

Teaching: A sermon series which will focus on what it means to be part the Body of Christ begins in May.

Worship and Fellowship: After much discussion the Worship and Fellowship working groups have merged. A Church Family away day is planned for Sunday, 4th October and a weekend away is planned for 10th-12th June next year.

Outreach: The focus for outreach was originally on the London Road development but now includes the entire village and prayer walks have taken place encompassing the whole village. A number of events and activities and events are planned, for which a budget has been approved.

Strategy will be reviewed by PCC during the second half of the year and the other six priorities will be revisited. At some point in the Autumn there will be consultation with the wider church family, possibly through the home groups, in setting priorities for the future.

It is considered vital that prayer should underpin all of our strategy.

11) Basis of Faith: We have a strong evangelical heritage and a copy of the Basis of Faith approved and adopted by the PCC on 1st April was circulated. This based on the Church of England Evangelical Council's Basis of Faith with a small addition to reflect Mission. Any comments on this Basis of Faith document should go to Peter by 18th May and will be taken forward to PCC at the beginning of June. A teaching series on Grace as expressed in the Basis of Faith is planned for the autumn.

12) Year in Pictures: This was presented by Gair Matthews with a series of slides illustrating the life of the St. James Church Family over the past year.

Bell Tower: It was reported that the Church clock is now fixed. A demonstration of hand bell ringing has been held which has resulted in two people wishing to learn the art of campanology. Anyone else who would like to learn would be very welcome and should contact the Tower Captain, Michael White.

Music Worship Group: We are very blessed by our worship group which has been led over the past year by Alwyn Frost, Ian Cooke and Nick Greatorex-Davies who co-ordinate the sung worship at the I I am service. At 9am a rota of organists accompanies most of the services and occasionally a small worship group plays for this service and is much appreciated by those who attend.

AV and Sound system: There are now only two people operating the AV and two the Sound systems. More help is urgently needed, ideally two more people.

Coffee shop, Parish Centre and Post Office: We are blessed by the group of people who are willing to serve our community in the Coffee Shop, Parish Centre and Post Office. Continued prayer would be much appreciated for the work of this hub within the village.

World Mission: The World Mission sub-committee has expressed thanks for all our prayers. We need to continue to pray for all of our mission partners.

Evangelism/Outreach: People need to know that God loves them and a number of courses are planned or are already taking place: e.g. Alpha, Outreach UK, Christianity Explored and Introducing God. A report of outreach and evangelism is available.

Corporate Fellowship and Worship: The I I am service has been re-ordered so that the young people and children join in at the end of the service and the Church family can enjoy worshipping together.

Families, Children and Youth: A short video was shown of the young people enjoying spending time together having fun and fellowship

Dave Parr is encouraged by Kings Kids and assemblies held in the school. He and Claire are working to make connections with people in the village. He asked for prayer for greater contact with the school and for unity amongst the youth leadership team and across the whole church but particularly in the youth and children's work.

F4: A very popular Sunday afternoon service for children and parents encompassing Faith, Fun, Friends and Food!

Men's Group: There are plans for developing this ministry and forging greater relationships with the men of the Church. Events are planned for the summer months and we are asked to pray that God will bless this ministry.

Fabric and Grounds: Thanks to all who have said that they are willing to help cutting the grass. This also enables time to be spent in fellowship whilst working. The new porch door is installed and welcoming. The glass door means that we can now look outside into the community beyond the church building. Approval for the new path has now been received and the work will be going ahead as soon as a Faculty is obtained.

Peter concluded the meeting by stating that God our Father is very gracious towards us. As Christians we are set apart for his purposes. His grace is life-giving and we should live our lives showing His love to those around us, being open to anyone needing a place of safety.

The date of the next PCC meeting is Wednesday, 6th May.

The Churchwardens proposed a vote of thanks to Peter and Rosie for their unstinting leadership, after which the meeting closed with a hymn.