

## ST JOHN'S NEVILLE'S CROSS

### MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS HELD ON SUNDAY 22 APRIL 2007

The meeting was split into 2 parts, namely the Annual Parochial Meeting followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The Chair for both meetings was taken by the Revd Barnaby Huish, Rector.

Approximately 38 people were present. Apologies for absence had been received from Gordon Terry and Dorothy Terry.

#### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING

##### MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 April 2006 were accepted as a true record.

##### ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

The sole purpose of the meeting was to elect churchwardens for the coming year. Two nominations had been received for two posts. Stephen Cheffings and Margaret Jefferson were therefore declared elected.

#### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

##### MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 April 2006 were accepted as a true record.

##### MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

##### ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO DEANERY SYNOD

There was one vacancy for representatives to Deanery Synod, for which only one nomination had been received. Anna de Lange was accordingly declared elected.

##### ELECTION OF PAROCHIAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PCC

Two nominations had been received for 5 posts. Richard Harvey and Ann Ridley-Chamberlain were accordingly declared elected.

##### APPOINTMENT OF SIDESPEOPLE

The following were appointed as sidespeople.

David Atkinson	Ken Garbett	Gordon Terry
Mavis Atkinson	Isobel Harvey	Keith Twomey
Stephen Cheffings	Richard Harvey	Lavinia White
Robert Clement	Gerry Milton	Colin Williams
Derek Corner	Marion Milton	Mary Williams
Molly Corner	Dorothy Ridsdale	
Clare Firth	Corinne Slee	

##### APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

It was agreed that Dr Campbell-Grant should be invited to continue as Independent Examiner.

##### ELECTORAL ROLL

Clare Firth reported that in accordance with procedures a brand new roll had been drawn up this year. There were 126 names on the new roll compared to 154 on the roll for 2006. She added that there might be some people who had not submitted their forms, and their names could be added once the forms had been completed and sent to her.

## FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

In presenting the accounts the Treasurer thanked all those who had contributed to lightening the task of their preparation. He highlighted an increase in fixed assets, which was due mainly to a change in accounting rules.

Although a surplus had been achieved in the year it was important to bear in mind a number of factors which in the past had cushioned St John's from the financial reality faced by most churches.

- ◆ The expenditure of £125k on the reordering would reduce income from interest by £5k a year
- ◆ The percentage amount of gift aid reclaimable was to reduce
- ◆ General inflationary pressures
- ◆ The Church Estate Charity was currently paying the whole of the cost of the Rector's Secretary, and St John's contribution to LOL. But its primary purpose was the upkeep of the fabric of St Margaret's, and its future contributions to St John's could not be assured.

The Parish Share for 2007 was unchanged: a new formula for its calculation had been introduced but there were transitional arrangements in place. More work was being done on how the Share was to be allocated among churches, and a future reduction could not be assumed.

The Chair thanked the Treasurer for the amount and complexity of the work he had put in, especially in a transitional year resulting from the change in accounting rules.

## FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

The Churchwardens reported that much of the focus during the year had been on the reordering project. Progress was on target, and redecoration had begun. The aim was to reopen on 17 June, although the new chancel furnishings would not be available then, as the DAC had asked for a more enterprising approach to meeting the requirements.

There was also a plan to regenerate the church grounds, using mainly a grant from the Banks Community Foundation. The Quinquennial Inspection was also due to be carried out in 2007.

On behalf of the meeting and the Parish, the Chair thanked the Churchwardens for their hard work.

## DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

David Atkinson gave a report, see Appendix A.

## SHARED MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Chair reported on behalf of the SMDT. The first team had reached the end of its life span, having focused on St John's being a welcoming church, such as after service prayer, Taste, and some reorganisation of the foyer. In November a new team had been formed, and had held two meetings in 2006 in preparation for being commissioned in January just gone. The team was now to concentrate on developing the theme of making connections, both within and outside the church.

## YOUTH WORK

Susanne Bendoraitis reported on her first full year in post. Deeper and LOL had already been running, and other activities had been revived and revised. Deeper and Dive had both grown, and were enthusiastic and inspiring groups. LOL continued to run once a month at St Margaret's.

Special events in 2006 had included taking a group of 12 to Spring Harvest, NE1 throughout County Durham (15 had come from this group), and H<sub>2</sub>O, a holiday club for years 5 to 8. There has also been a weekend away. Plans for 2007 were to try to extend and improve outreach by running a county-wide Alpha course.

Richard Alty added that he endorsed Susanne's report. The youth work had benefited enormously from Susanne's enthusiasm and commitment, and also the tremendous commitment from the youths themselves.

#### **SUPERKIDS**

Richard Firth outlined the purpose and background of Superkids. Grace Newton the chaplain had left in December, and Superkids was being run by a group of adults. Numbers attending had fallen from 12-18 to 7-10 towards the year end.

Superkids would be put into abeyance during the reordering, and it would anyway not be possible to make a new appointment to chaplain much earlier. Two possible candidates had been identified, and it was hoped to appoint in September.

#### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

The Chair said that he understood things were going well and there had been an increase in the numbers attending.

#### **MOTHERS' UNION**

A report by Janet Attfield was read out, see Appendix B.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The date of the next PCC was 24 May.

#### **PARISH ANNUAL REPORT**

See Appendix C for the Rector's presentation of the report.

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Appendix A

#### **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

Just a quick word for the benefit of anybody who does not know and an apology for those who hear this every year: the Deanery Synod meets three times a year at different churches throughout the deanery, or area of Durham for which the rural Dean (Rev Richard Davison, the Rector of St. Giles was appointed to this post during the past year) is responsible. It is a vehicle for disseminating information from the centre, about policy within the diocese, which the deanery synod reps can refer back to their own PCCs, and to a lesser extent, conveying information and views from the churches to the higher echelons of the Church of England. Sadly, the reality is that this seems to happen less than would be desired.

To anybody who has never been to a Deanery Synod, it might seem as if it would be very boring, but the reality is not so. There is a presentation on some topical issue given every time, and it is not onerous being on this committee. In the light of the infrequency of its meetings, membership can scarcely be described as onerous.

Colin Williams and I represent St Johns on the Deanery Synod, and this works out very handily for car sharing.

There have been 3 meetings since the last AGM. The first of these was in June, when Mr Ian Boothroyd, Diocesan Secretary, gave a presentation on the new Diocesan Share scheme. The new scheme is based on the cost of clergy, together with a contribution to the shared administrative costs of the Diocese and a small adjustment for deprivation index. The ministry cost is £24,997 plus a housing cost of £3,594 less a church commissioners' subsidy of £5,000 giving a cost of £23,591 per parish priest. The

contribution to the shared cost is 34.13% of 2004 parish unrestricted income. The 2007 Share for Durham Deanery is £589,000 a 4.18% increase over 2006.

At the second meeting in October, Dr Nigel Oakley, Diocesan World Development Officer, gave a presentation entitled "Global Warming and Slavery". He gave a brief account explaining that the effects of global warming are likely to affect the poorest populations of the world the most severely. As Christians we must each consider our lifestyle and our own contributions. He went on to describe the growing trade in trafficking of people for work, sex and begging. In spite of 2007 being the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade by William Wilberforce slavery still continues.

At the most recent meeting in February, which was held in the recently restored church of St Brandon's at New Brancepeth, Archdeacon Ian Jagger gave a talk entitled: "How we use our church buildings". St Brandon's is now a building which combines light, space, dignity and sanctity, the different parts lending themselves to different purposes. Church buildings are both a resource and a constraint. Buildings may become redundant as a community changes or moves. He had recently visited a former mining village with a large redundant Victorian church, where the pit had long closed and the population gone leaving just 23 on the Electoral Roll who could not afford the upkeep let alone the parish share. There was an excellent organ and the carved wooden war memorial still had ties into the community. Parish buildings do not now belong only to a parish but spread over parish boundaries.

A pilot study "Building for Mission and Ministry" carried out at Stockton and Stanhope Deaneries, showed that often individual churches were moving in the same direction which would be more efficiently served by having a Deanery plan. The parish share is now divided out between parishes at the deanery level and the formula is likely to become more complex as it takes in the various issues. This leads to churches needing to collaborate, to put their balance sheets and staff on the table and to tease out a sense of corporateness.

*David Atkinson*

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Appendix B

## **MOTHERS UNION BRANCH REPORT**

2006 has been an active and busy year for our branch. We have had 10 meetings with an average attendance of 16. The year started with a Corporate Communion celebrated by Rev. Gillian Pocock; this included the Wave of Prayer and was followed by the Annual General Meeting. One of our own members, Betty Cooper, spoke to us in February about her visit to Ghana last year in connection with the Serving Africa Mission and again in November when she gave us an account of the work of the mission and her preparations and plans for a return visit there in 2007. Rev. David Couling led a Quiet Afternoon for us in April. In May, the Rev. Margaret Bianchi gave a vivid presentation on the situation in our link Diocese of Lesotho. In June, Susanne Bendoraitis, Youth Pastor at St. John's and St. Margaret's, spoke to us about her work with young people at our churches. Pat Francis, Chaplain of Earl's House Hospital, talked to us about Spiritual and Religious Needs in Mental Health at our July meeting which ended with a delicious Strawberry Tea. Our August outing consisted of a visit to Ripon Cathedral where we enjoyed a talk on the magnificent Millennium Tapestry there and how it had been made. In September we welcomed Carole Hopkinson, M.U. Diocesan Coordinator, Action and Outreach Unit who

spoke to us about M.U. Overseas Projects. Roger Norris gave us a most enjoyable talk about Stained Glass Windows at our October meeting. And the year ended in December with our Christmas meeting of Carols and Readings, followed by a delicious Christmas Tea.

Members have attended the M.U. Deanery services - Lady Day, Overseas Day and Christmas Carol Service.

Members have contributed generously to the work of the M.U. in the UK and overseas and we have sent donations to the M.U. Overseas Fund, the Gateway Project, AFIA and the IMPC. Some of the donations came from members using the Durham Diocese M.U. Lenten 'Count Your Blessings' Prayer sheet.

We continue to send Baptism Anniversary cards to children baptised at our church and some of our members help on a regular basis with the Superkidz after-school club.

It is with sadness that we record the death of 2 of our long-standing members this year: Doreen Squibb and Nancy Stevenson. They are greatly missed. No new members have been enrolled and our membership now stands at 31.

We were delighted this year to welcome our new Rector, the Rev. Barnaby Huish, and we are grateful to him for his help and support.

The branch continues to be run without a leader by a committee of 5 - Mavis Atkinson (Treasurer), Janet Attfield (Secretary and Contact), Annette Geragusian, Jill Oakley and Gladys Richardson. It could not however function without the hard work and faithful support of all its members who contribute in so many different ways to what we do:- coming to meetings and taking part in our worship, providing transport for members who would otherwise be unable to come, organising outings, providing delicious refreshments and - above all- helping and supporting each other. A very big Thank You to everyone.

And please pray for our branch as we start this new year 2007.

*Janet Attfield*

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Appendix C

## **PARISH ANNUAL REPORT**

I encourage you to read the copy of the Annual Report which accompanies the Accounts, and which you have a copy of. The problem with this annual report is that it always focuses on the calendar year just passed; so by the time it's delivered things have inevitably moved on a bit. What I want to take the opportunity to do now is to 'bridge that gap' a little by thinking about where we are now, and where we might be going.

The question "where are we" is often used in a figurative sense, to gauge where our priorities are, where our energies are focused. But this year, we have been asking ourselves literally "where are we going to be worshipping" from one Sunday to the next. Changing venues from week to week is a challenge; but there is, I hope, something genuinely creative in our bringing the Body of Christ out into the local community. And I hope that this year the literal answer to the question 'where are we' might begin to inform the figurative one. In other words, I believe that our local community is where our energies

and priorities as a Church ought to be focused over the next twelve months.

The reason for this is obvious all around us. The amount of new housing recently completed or in the process of being built is pretty striking to say the least. It really is imperative for us as a Church that we connect with these new people – many of whom are entirely new to the area.

The time has also come, it seems to me, to draw a line under the sad saga of the Church Community Hall that a few years ago looked likely to be built on this very site. A new location is now proposed for a community hall adjoining Nevilles Cross Primary School. I went to a public meeting on the subject a few weeks ago; and said, in response to some criticism levelled at St John's, that whatever may have happened (or not) in the past, I was committed to moving forward, and that as a Church we are committed to serving local people and building up our local community. Clearly, for some people there, it was important to hear that; and I hope that, together, we can indeed be, and be seen to be, a Church at the heart of Neville's Cross.

But in order to do that – to connect with people outside the Church in a meaningful way – we need to ensure that we have the right tools for the task, and that our tools are duly sharpened.

One area which is frequently highlighted as one where we might do better is the area of communications. (And that means how we communicate with each other within our Church as much as with those as it were on the outside).

In order to address this challenge I have asked Anna de Lange, one of our lay Readers, to serve as Communications co-ordinator for the parish. It is a post which she will hold primarily as a member of the SMDT; she will report to the SMDT and to me as Rector, and the post will come to an end when the SMDT is dissolved in 3 years' time.

The reason for investing this role in a particular person is not so that they can do all the work – far from it; this has to be a team effort. But it gives her licence, together with the rest of the team, really to focus on this key area; to come up with ideas and (crucially) to put them into practice (without necessarily having to run every detail by the Rector). The last thing to say on this is that it is a significant and substantial area of work; Anna is there to co-ordinate, not to do everything. Please don't be backward-in-coming-forward when we're looking for help.

I ought also to say that I hope that this will become the first of many such coordinating roles rooted in the SMDT. I hope that, by the end of the year, there might be a whole series of people with a coordinating role relating to different areas of parish life – particularly those in which we want to develop things. This I'm sure will help us move forward in a number of areas; it will also, I believe, make the role of the SMDT much clearer in the eyes of the people that it's here to serve.

Which areas might we want to develop, you may ask? Well you gave us some answers to those questions in the yellow Shared Ministry forms that you returned. We are already looking at areas like pastoral care, welcome and hospitality, the possibility of a regular Alpha course or something similar; all in response to what you said in those forms. We will be bringing forward new initiatives in these and other areas; and if we can get the communications right then you'll certainly be hearing about them all before long.

I've highlighted two areas as a focus for this coming year – our Community and our Communications. That's more than enough to be getting on with – although focusing on them as a priority does not imply that we give up on everything else, as I hope I've made clear. Rather, by being more focused, we can actually do more, better.

But I want to leave you with one more area to think about. It struck me when I came here that there is a real gap in our congregation in the mid-teen age-bracket. People have said from time to time that it's a fact of life that people of that age won't want to come to a church like St John's; that they'll inevitably want to go off elsewhere (or nowhere).

But I want to say that I don't subscribe to that view; and in fact I think that it's really important that we as a church don't automatically assume that it's true. I've come here from a church where teenagers were locked in to the life of the church right the way through. That isn't going to happen in every church, sadly; but it strikes me that St John's is just the sort of church where it should be happening (and frankly if we can't find a way of making it happen in St John's then it's sad not just for us, but for the Church of England as a whole).

I mention this now because we have, at the moment, a really great group in the top age-range of John's Juniors – 10-13, as they are at the moment. They are as a group really committed to St John's. We need to work hard now to ensure that in the next few years they are going to want to stay with us, and be able to enrich us as a Church by contributing in ways which are meaningful to them.

I'm quite keen to give that age-group – the 'Think Tank' – a bit of responsibility, and more opportunity for creativity. For example, we're updating our service booklets in the not too distant future; why not give them the task of updating our all age service? They could become like a 'junior SMDT' – and perhaps we all might learn something from them. In one way or another I am determined to ensure that they can feel that this really is their Church; so that in a couple of years' time, when they're old enough to vote with their feet, they might just decide to stay here with us.

Where are we? Where are we going? I hope that gives you something of an idea. But we won't know precisely until we actually make the journey, all together. In a discussion at the SMDT about our Church's identity and how we can communicate it to local people, someone suggested that just as St Nic's is known as the Church in the Market Place, we ought to call ourselves the Church at the Crossroads. I like it, because it reminds us that together as a Church we're all following the Way of the Cross; but it also reminds us that as a Church, as in life, we are faced with decisions (it's part of what faith is about).

*Barnaby Huish*