

## **ST JOHN'S NEVILLE'S CROSS**

### **MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS Held on Sunday 20 April 2008 AT 11 am**

There were two meetings, 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 42 people were present. Apologies for absence had been received from Paul Chandler, Mike and Nicky Chater, Ken and Anne Garbett, Richard and Isabel Harvey, Paul Jefferson, Roy Roberts, Gordon and Dorothy Terry.

#### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING**

##### **1. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2007**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 April 2007 were accepted as a true record.

##### **2. Election of Church Wardens**

The sole purpose of the meeting was to elect Church Wardens for the coming year. Two nominations had been received for two posts. Margaret Jefferson (proposed by Antony Friswell and seconded by Elizabeth Budgen) and Keith Twomey (proposed by Stephen Cheffings and seconded by Clare Firth) were therefore elected by acclamation.

The Rector paid tribute to Stephen Cheffings, who was standing down from his position as Church Warden, and thanked him for his love, enthusiasm, plain good sense and care combined with a sound faith. Stephen has worked hard during a busy period of interregnum and reordering. The Rector thanked both Stephen Cheffings and Margaret Jefferson for their time and hard work over the past years.

The Rector welcomed Keith Twomey to the post of Church Warden.

The meeting closed at 11.15am and was followed immediately by the

#### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

##### **1. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2007**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 April 2007 were accepted as a true record.

##### **2. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

##### **3. Election of Representatives to Deanery Synod (3 x 3 year term)**

There were three vacancies for representatives to Deanery Synod, for which only two nominations had been received. Anna de Lange (proposed by Tim Marjoribanks and seconded by Stephen Cheffings) and Adriel Yap (proposed by Stephen Cheffings and seconded by Margaret Cheffings) were elected by acclamation. The third post remains vacant.

##### **4. Election of Parochial Representatives to the PCC (3 x 3 year term)**

There were three vacancies. Two people had stood for one year and were willing to stand again so Paul Chandler (proposed by Richard Firth and seconded by Stephen Cheffings) and Tim Marjoribands (proposed by Anna de Lange and seconded by Stephen Cheffings) were elected by acclamation. Pippa Bell (proposed by Margaret Jefferson and seconded by Clare Firth) was elected by acclamation.

##### **5. 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    | Jill Oakley      | Colin Williams |
| Derek Corner      | Dorothy Ridsdale | Mary Williams  |
| Molly Corner      | Corinne Slee     |                |
| Clare Firth       |                  |                |

The Rector thanked the sidespeople, commenting on what an important role this was.

#### **6. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

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

#### **7. Electoral Roll**

The Rector reported that there were 128 names on the Electoral Roll, 6 having been removed and 7 added.

#### **8. Financial Accounts** (see paper *Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007*)

The Treasurer's verbal report is in **Appendix 1** following these minutes.

There were no questions or comments to the Treasurer.

The Rector drew attention to the list of recipients of the 10% of the church's income donated for mission. Mike Chater is in charge of overseeing this aspect of the church finances. For 2008, the list is blank and church members are invited to suggest recipients both from the existing list and new organisations.

The Rector thanked Antony Friswell for his hard work and efficiency in his role of Treasurer and pointed out that Antony would be stepping down from this post at the APCM in 2009. This will mean there will be a vacancy and church members were asked to consider who might fill this very important post.

A question about the grant of £9,000 from Banks, the civil engineering firm, was answered with the information that, as part of the planning permission for the Sheraton Park development, Banks were required to donate £100,000 to community development and this £9,000 is part of this.

#### **9. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Churchwarden's Report): see Appendix 2**

Margaret Jefferson read the report on the fabric, goods and ornaments.

The Rector thanked Margaret for this report.

#### **10. Deanery Synod Report: see Appendix 3**

David Atkinson presented the Deanery Synod Report.

The Rector thanked David Atkinson and Colin Williams who are stepping down after some time as Deanery Synod representatives. The Rector commented that the next years will be crucial for decisions made by Deanery Synod.

#### **11. Shared Ministry Development Report: see Appendix 4**

Richard Firth reported on behalf of the SMDT members.

#### **12. Rector's Report**

The Rector read the Annual Report Review of the year on pages 2-4 of the document *Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council*.

He continued with his vision for the coming year: **see appendix 5**

There were no questions or comments.

### **13. Any Other Business**

The Rector thanked everyone who has helped to make this meeting happen.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 12.20pm.

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1 Item 8 Financial Accounts: Treasurer's Verbal Report:**

I should like to start with apologies and thanks. Apologies that I am presenting 9 pages of accounts, but let me start with the thanks. First to Keith Twomey who looks after the counting and banking of the Sunday collections; second to Lavinia White who administers the envelope scheme and completes the regular gift aid claims and third to all the members of the congregation who have continued to give generously towards the maintenance and mission of our church. Without the first two, my job as treasurer would be much more arduous; without the third this report would be very different. I should also like to express thanks to Colin Williams who has been treasurer of the Community Hall fund since it was set up, a good number of years ago. The whole fund was used as part finance of the reordering project and so the fund has now been closed. Thank you Colin.

This is also the time for me also to record my thanks to Campbell Grant, our independent examiner. I can assure you that Campbell takes his role extremely seriously; he has checked every single figure in the 9 pages and sort an explanation from me of anything that he has been unable to reconcile with invoices, cheques etc. Campbell is unable to be with us today, but I am delighted to see his predecessor, Gordon Smith, sitting a few rows back. Gordon no longer has a direct involvement with St John's but we do continue to owe him a debt of gratitude as he is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Church Estate Charity.

The 9 pages of the financial statements are, unfortunately, required by the Charity Commission; I have adopted as closely as possible the layout recommended in their Statement of Recommended practice. If our total income was less than £100,000, we would be able to produce accounts in a much simpler form. It is because the income and expenditure of the LoL Youth Ministry is included in the St John's accounts that our total income is greater than £100,000. The Youth Pastor, Susanne is employed by St John's and the other three participating churches each contribute to St John's their share of the employment and other costs.

I do not propose, this year, to give a detailed explanation of the accounts. This has already been inflicted on members of the PCC who have given the accounts their approval, but I will be happy to answer any questions – either at the end of my report (if the chairman considers that to be appropriate) or at any other time.

I would, however, like to attempt to answer three likely questions and to comment on my answers. They are:

- 1 How much did we spend on the re-ordering of the church?
- 2 Did we make a profit?
- 3 How much do we have in the bank?

The answer to question 1 is not abundantly obvious in the accounts, but can be found on page 5. Near the bottom of the column headed "General Fund"(in note 3(g) you will find the figure £67,900. This is mostly the cost of alterations to this building. Add to that the figure at the very bottom of the

page (£31,690) which is the cost of furniture and equipment and add the £28,731 in note 3(b) Designated funds column (£28,731); this is the cost of work classed as maintenance, including the improvements to the grounds. The answer is £128,321. We received grants totalling £12,241 making a net cost of £116,080. So, in round figures £116,000 plus an anticipated £20,000 to be spent on chancel furniture.

Question 2, "Did we make a profit?" ought to be answered on page 2. (SOFA). Three quarters of the way down the column headed "general fund" shows a loss of £11,164. But if we exclude £67,900 spent on the reordering project and £56,353 transferred into the fund to help finance the reordering project, we end up with a surplus of £384. So, after some creative accounting, the answer is "Yes, we did make a profit, but only just". So this is a cause of some concern.

If you now look at the recent record of giving to the church, on the screen, you will see that there has not been the general increase that we would hope to see. Of course we can look for explanations of why 2006 was a specially good year and it is easy to explain why loose plate collections were down in 2007, but this does not persuade me that all is well.

Last November, I presented to the PCC projected income and expenditure for 2008. If planned giving returns to the 2006 level, my projection suggests a loss of £2,300. If planned giving remains at the 2007 level, the loss becomes £4,200. A major cause of the loss is the reduction in interest received because we have spent £116,000 that was previously earning interest.

In view of these projections, the Diocesan Stewardship Officer is being asked to lead us in a stewardship campaign in late 2008 or early 2009. It is important, at this juncture, that I should not say anything that would reduce the impact of that campaign. But I would suggest that all of us who give regularly to the Church should ask ourselves how long it is since we reviewed our level of giving and whether an increase would be appropriate. All other things being equal, I would suggest an increase of 3% per year, since we last increased our regular giving.

Now to question 3. How much do we have in the bank?

The answer is that after we have purchased the chancel furniture, there will be a little over £100,000 available to spend. So you may well ask why we are concerned about a potential annual loss of a few thousand. We could lose £4,000 per year and still keep going to 25 years! But I have failed to find anyone who seriously believes that this should be our philosophy. On the contrary, there seems to be a unanimous conviction that we should always plan to make a small surplus and that we should not plan to rely on our reserves to make up for shortfalls in our income.

I have said, in the written report, that this cash reserve allows the PCC to be less cautious over expenditure on the mission of the church than would otherwise be the case. A recent example is the decision of the PCC to donate £2,000 to Just 10 and to pay for the coach transport, in advance of any receipts for this purpose from church members.

Another example is the decision by the PCC to continue to support LoL Youth Ministry after the number of contributing churches is reduced to three – and not to ask the Church Estate Charity to make up the difference.

I hope that these examples are just the beginning of a continuing policy, not of spending our money irresponsibly, but of using our resources to further the mission of the church.

So, I would like to close by giving a treasurer's vision. It is, that in 5 years time, the treasurer will be standing here, reporting on many thousands of pounds that have been spent on the mission of the church and reporting that there is still a little over £100,000 in the bank.

### **Appendix 2 Item 9 Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Church Wardens' Report):**

A significant body of work has been completed during the year. The long awaited internal re ordering and refurbishment was completed in June 2007, the work having taken four months. The Chancel has been cleared and the floor levelled. Much of the wood was recycled through St Margaret's Centre and one of the choir stalls was used to fashion a screen for the organ. The main body of the church and the Baptistry were stripped and cleared. The pulpit and six pews removed. All faulty plaster work made good. The ceiling lined and lightened. New lighting and audio visual systems have been installed.

The interior of the building has been painted and new carpet laid throughout.

Fifty new chairs have been purchased.

A new fire detection and alarm system has been installed.

The vestry passage has been markedly improved by the construction of new storage cupboards, improved lighting and the whole being painted.

A further item of improvement has been the transformation of the Church grounds.

A new parking surface has been laid and provision made for restricting entry to the area before funerals and other such occasions.

The five yearly electrical inspection has been completed.

The Quinquennial inspection was carried out during the latter part of the year and the report received in December. Two minor defects were identified and repairs undertaken.

### **Appendix 3 Item 10 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 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. Representatives from Deanery Synod can also be voted on to Diocesan Synod, and from Diocesan Synod onto General Synod and the very echelons of power within the Church of England.

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. In the light of the infrequency of its meetings, membership can scarcely be described as onerous.

Colin Williams and I have represented St Johns on the Deanery Synod for a while now, and this last year Anna deLange has been a very welcome addition. Although Anna does not particularly live near to Colin and me, you will be pleased to note that the green arrangements for car sharing continue.

There have been 3 meetings since the last AGM. The first of these was in June, when a presentation was given by Revd Peter Sinclair on 'After Sunday.' The aim of this project, which is supported by the Diocese of Durham Mission Fund, is to encourage Christians to strengthen the connection between their faith and their daily work.

Peter, whom nobody could accuse of lacking enthusiasm for his work, informed us that there are at least two ways to think about what it means to be a church., the "Gathered Church" and the "Dispersed Church." The former is the conventional church building with regular services format, and the latter is the church in the world. It is with the Dispersed Church that After Sunday is principally concerned. We were so impressed with Peter's presentation that we invited him to St John's to lead a session of Taste, and I am sure that everyone there remembered that as a really good evening.

The second meeting was in October, where Revd Nils Chittenden, Director of Development at Durham Family Welfare adoption, gave an account of the work of the agency, which is based at Agriculture House, Stonebridge. It was started in the Edwardian era as the Diocesan Morale Welfare but since 1946 has been an adoption agency. Their main aim is helping children to grow up in loving caring circumstances. They now have 10k case files held on about 0.5M pieces of paper, but there are plans to scan and digitize this archive. This too, was quite a moving meeting, and as the uncle of an adopted child, it gave me insight from a different perspective into the process.

The third meeting was in February, where a presentation was given by John Roberts, the Stewardship Adviser: John said that he was retiring later this year after 27 years as a Stewardship Adviser during which time he had seen visual aids change from a roll of wallpaper to today's laptop and data projector. The main principle of his stewardship campaign, GEM (Giving Enables

Ministry), was that each presentation, given in sermon time, was tailored to the particular parish, its finances and its people. Comparisons were made with the change in every day prices over say the last 4 years with that of church costs and giving. A simplified explanation of the Parish Share and Diocesan costs was included. Each church member was given an envelope which was to be returned over the following 3 weeks containing their pledge. Each envelope also contained a piece of a parish jigsaw, previously made up from photographs, which would complete a collage of the parish. Smaller versions of these jigsaws had become very popular and were sold for fund raising purposes. The GEM system has become very successful and has been franchised to other dioceses and even into Europe. Barney will be meeting with him before he retires, and his successor will be coming to St John's.

Rev Richard Davison, the Rector of St. Giles will be retiring at the end of this month, and unless Barney knows something I don't, his successor has not yet been named.

#### **Appendix 4 Item 11 SMDT Report:**

The group has a routine of meeting monthly apart from in the summer and. This year we have looked at consolidating the new team which re-formed in 2006. The SMDT has a role in the parish to work together to consider how St John's might be encouraged to express the ministry to which we all are called to as members of God's church in this place.

We spent some of our meetings early in 2007 reading and discussing the book 'Mission Shaped Parish' and to use this as a base to help us as we thought through the issues facing us as a church in an increasingly secular framework of society. We had in mind the church re-ordering, and wanted to think through how we might build on the work we were undergoing that year, especially the new worship space. In April we had a day away, which was led by Robin Greenwood now vicar of a parish in Newcastle but who has written extensively on shared ministry. This helped us to consider how we work as a team, but also we related this to our work in the church. We looked at:

- Use of the new worship space. How this might be used imaginatively. We are still experimenting, but hopefully we have experienced some of the new possibilities offered by the reordered space
- Use of the church other than on Sunday. This was part of understanding the church building as a community resource. This discussion started to help us and the PCC start to think about the theme of our work this year of reaching out into the local area.
- We also considered our community role. How can we make the church, and in particular St John's relevant in our modern world. Over the year we considered how the Hope 08 and Just 10 initiatives might be used in the local area. This is an important part of our reaching out to those around us. If we are not seen as relevant then we, and the gospel will not be taken seriously.

Some initiatives that came out of these deliberations have been:

- It was reported to the last APCM that the SMDT would look to appoint individuals to have a 'brief' to keep the team and the wider church in touch with areas of our mission.
- Anna de Lange had already accepted the role of communications co-ordinator
- Mike Chater has taken over the lead in our outward giving ministry and to help us be more aware of the organisations we support
- Sheila Alty now has an interest in local outreach, and she and Richard look after our posters. Their main work this year has been preparing for the Just 10 meetings which start on Tuesday
- Dorothy Terry has agreed to take an interest in pastoral support, and we are currently developing a small network of links to help support the church congregation.
- Rebecca Grundy has helped manage our music each Sunday following David Lee's departure. Ensuring the organists and the music group have the right music and know when to play is vital for our worship! This role is now currently under review as we look to reform our music coordination over the summer months.

- We see our social life as a congregation is important as part of the glue that holds us together. The Whitby weekend was one such event when many of us here today had a good weekend away. It was agreed afterwards that we should have a parish away-day every 2 years and a full weekend every 4, just to give us a different focus and re-charge our batteries.

So in summary we hope that the congregation has both taken part in and enjoyed some of the initiatives the SMDT has been part of in 2007.

### **Appendix 5 Item 12 Rector's Report:**

....but that was last year. I want to spend a few brief minutes bringing us up to date.

We are at something of a turning-point, having completed the long-planned refurbishment of our building, and we have begun the important work of looking outwards, to our local community and beyond, consolidating our relationship with the world around us. I see this year as a time of trying out ways – big and small – to fulfil this aim.

We've had a Church Open Day and a Fairtrade Wine evening – small, but significant events to which local people were invited and which attracted an encouraging range of participants. And we're about to embark on a much larger undertaking, in partnership with Churches across the North-East (Just 10) – which likewise aims to engage non-Christian as well as Churchgoers, with what it means to follow Christ.

As the year goes on, the aim is to continue to hold events, big and small, which might engage people of various ages, interests, and so on with the life of their parish church. For example, we're looking to organise a parish fun day in July on the sports field behind the Church. But the hope is that a variety of you might come forward with ideas for events and be willing to help take a lead in organising them. That's the way in which our Church will really begin to be alive.

Ultimately, of course, the hope is that, as new people come into contact with the Church, some of them might discover, or rediscover, a life of faith; and it's vital that we have in place the means of nurturing these potential new Christians. To this end, we intend to run an Alpha course here in the autumn, with a view to establishing it as a regular feature in the life of St John's in future years. This will be our main focus for the autumn 'term', and we'll be encouraging wide involvement from members of the congregation when the time comes.

There is still some outstanding work to be done on the building; since returning from my Easter break I have made it a priority to get moving with the final phase of the reordering, which is to commission new Sanctuary furniture, proper accommodation of the audio-visual kit and some additional decorative items. We have invited the Bishop to come and dedicate our (not-now-quite-so-)newly-refurbished Church; he is enthusiastic about coming here, but the complex question of a date has yet to be resolved.

It strikes me that there is another area of 'unfinished business' from last year; and that is the Whitby Weekend. We were confronted by the huge issues of climate change and trade justice, and began (or continued) to explore what our response should be – as individuals, as Christians, as a Church. We cannot afford to lose that momentum. The hope is that informal conversations will continue in the coming months, facilitated by members of the SMDT, with the aim of keeping us engaged as a Church, in one way or another, with these crucial issues. It's vitally important that, in keeping ourselves engaged with these world-wide issues, we will, without a doubt find ourselves engaging anew with the concerns of God.