

St Mary's Church, Weaverham ACM 13/02/23

Attendees: Lynda Bantock, Rosanne Bland, Carol Boardman, Liz Burdett, Sue Cameron, Lesley Craig, Dot Foster, John Freeman, Jonathan Gore, Mike Hornby, Lindsay Hough, Bob Hough, Pat Hull, Carol Johnson, Linda Jones, David Kerr, Ruth Kunzi, Gilly Latham, Jerry Marshall, Sue Marshall, John McCall, Jackie McCall, Cherry McCallum, Gregor Morcom, June Morcom, Lis Rushton, Vicky Rushton, Mike Sanders, Jules Sanders, Pam Thomson, Colin Weeks, Chris Weeks, Sheila Whitfield, David Whitfield, Yvonne Williams, Marion Wilson, Stephen Wilson, John Wilson, Sue Winnington, Phil Bishop, Rev. Paul Withington, Rev. Janet Aspey

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Bible Reading & Prayer

Rev Paul Withington gave us a thought from Matthew 5 v 13-20, part of the Sermon on the Mount. It makes challenging reading - Jesus wanted us to take seriously why he was here on earth.

We have had a challenging year, but also a good year. We were still socially restricted at the start of 2022. The Healthy Churches Review highlighted some interesting challenges – we want to share our faith, and we know we need to grow a younger congregation. PW gave a precis of what has happened over the year, particularly the positive impact of the Healthy Churches review, the Talking Jesus Course and the development of our Café Church service. We have proved and are proving to be Light in the world. For the future, we need to be facing the cost of change and seeking what God wants.

PW reminded us how Jesus affirmed the law during His sermon on the mount, calling us back into line with God's design for life whilst showing us the true cost of Love of God, love of each other and love of self. PW went on to ask us to consider - What does Holy love look like?

Election of Churchwardens

2 nominations for Colin Weeks and Vicky Rushton. Unanimously agreed.

General Church Meeting

Rev. Janet Aspey opened the meeting. JA advised that they are in the middle of a Circuit Review, which will determine their focus and the resources needed. JA asked for our prayers in this challenging year.

Election of Methodist Stewards

2 nominations for David Whitfield and Mike Hornby. Unanimously agreed.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Apologies: Yvonne Travis, Kath Henshall, Sue Wilkins, Georgina Withington, Greta Fox; Stuart Bracegirdle

The minutes of the previous AGM: No errors raised. Majority agreed and minutes were approved.

Electoral Roll Report

JS presented the report. There are 130 people on the electoral roll. In line with GDPR, only necessary information is collected and is stored on a password protected database. JS encouraged us to invite others to sign up to the roll.

Annual Report on the Proceedings of the ECC & activities of the Parish

JS gave a summary of the year as detailed in the Annual Report.

Action: JA requested that JS provide her with data for Methodist specific church members and funerals etc in the year.

Action: SM advised that YPF is up to Year 13, and asked that the Annual Report be amended accordingly by JS.

Annual Report of the ECC and the Financial Statement

JF presented the financial report. He confirmed that we have ended up the year better than expected, and we would have had a surplus if the gift aid had been claimed.

JF advised that he has been doing the treasurer role for a third of a century, and requested that someone be willing to shadow him this year.

Churchwardens' Report on the Fabric of the Church Buildings

CW gave a report on the Lighthouse and Church.

Lighthouse

All statutory tests carried out in relation to the IEE regulations. General upkeep of the building is in good order with the help of asked volunteers, its use by both the community and church have increased. Comments received by users are always positive. This coming year extra work will be required above the general maintenance, such as painting the walls in the main hall and installation of a handrail from the pathway up to the new side gates.

Church

All statutory tests have been carried out. The general upkeep of the building is an on going task again with thanks to volunteers for the larger tasks. Overall, the general condition of the building is in line with a church of this size and age. However to keep the building water tight, the quinquennial report has identified that roof and pointing maintenance must be carried out as soon as possible before another bad winter comes (circa £20K to achieve this). Fund raising for this is being looked at by a small committee and ideas are being progressed. Other works were recommended in the quinquennial report, some of which are unrealistic due to the high cost involved. Fortunately, these are not immediately detrimental to the structure of the building, but we must consider them in the near future if we want to preserve the church for the future generations. Again, looking forward, MS has commissioned an Energy Efficiency and Zero Carbon advice report. The main advice in this report is our inefficient heating system, which in time needs serious consideration.

Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

JF advised that they met 3 times in the last year.

February: Bishop Julie presented as the safeguarding expert

June: Peter Froggat presented as the director of Outreach, and is also an expert on the environment.

October: Simon Chesters presented as Director of Ministry. JF advised us to consider contacting Church House if we are interested in training for lay or paid ministry.

The General Synod have proposed that a service of Blessing can be given to same sex marriage.

Elections of Deanery Synod Representatives

2 nominations for John Freeman and David Whitfield. There was unanimous agreement, this leaves us with one vacancy.

Elections of Trustees

PW advised that we should have 12 Trustees

Completing their 3 year term are Gillian Edwards, Carol Johnson and Sue Winnington. Chris Hornby has also stepped down.

There was unanimous agreement for Gillian Edwards and Sue Winnington to be re-elected.

This leaves the ECC with 6 vacancies.

PW encouraged others to come forward and volunteer to be Trustees. All Trustees are required to have a DBS check.

Appointments

JF proposed that Kevin Pickering be reappointed as our independent Finance Examiner. This was seconded by JG and all agreed

Terrier & Log Book

VR confirmed that the Church silver was checked last weekend and there were no changes to the Terrier & Log Book, other than approx. 20 kneelers being sold this year

Progress Report on the 7 Marks of a Healthy Church

PB provided the report on the progress in the last year. Overall there has been a significant positive change to our perception of the 7 Healthy Church marks, and PB outlined the practical changes and increasing service attendance over 2022, particularly with regard to Café Church.

Fundraising – Raising the Roof

PT presented the fundraising plan to maintain our beautiful grade 1 listed building and as this is a parish church, to share the burden with the local community.

Planned events are a Concert in May and an Abseil down the church tower. Also there is potentially a CWAC crowdfunding scheme, in which monies raised will be match funded by the council.

Chairmans Remarks

PW advised that there has been so much tragedy and loss globally in 2022. As we are called to be Salt and Light, PW explained that Light illuminates and cast out fear, and reveals where we're going. Salt sterilizes, preserves and enables our heart to beat.

As ordinary people we are called to generosity, faithfulness, respectfulness; being holy but not judgemental and founded on Jesus' teaching and God's word.

How we live in God's Kingdom matters and PW asked how are we salt and light?

PW asked why is it so difficult for us to attend a United Service? It happens just 4 times per year. He confirmed that there are still 6 vacancies on the ECC. He advised that we owe an enormous debt to those that do serve. PW asked again: Could you help? Could you serve?

PW advised that PB has looked after the baptism families and enquirer courses. Also the prayer meetings and has taken us through healthy churches process as well as helping to identify and progress the Café church initiative. PW thanked PB for all his support.

PW highlighted that the Eco Team has enabled us to achieve a bronze award. PW gave genuine thanks to all the different groups and individuals that invest time and energy in the work of the church. PW confirmed his belief that when a church seeks God's will, God provides. PW quoted that the Queen was said to always have moved at the pace of the slowest person in the country. PW encouraged those impatient for change to keep pushing, and also those that were slow to progress to perhaps increase their pace, as we want to move forward together this next year.

PW shared a PowerPoint of photos and text that showed the church highlights of 2022.

The meeting was finished with prayers.

ECC Meeting (ECC Members only)

The following post holders were agreed:

ECC Chair and Deputy: Paul Withington (Chair), Jerry (Deputy)

ECC Secretary: Pam Thomson

ECC Treasurer: John Freeman

Gift aid Secretary: Sue Marshall

Date of next ECC meeting: 20/04/23