

MINUTES

Present: 44 members of the electoral roll, 2 clergy, 10 observers. Chaired by Rev. Henry Curran.

1. **Apologies**

Eloise Hurst, Brian and Vicki Robinson, Emily Devas, Struan Ayre.

2. **Election of Churchwardens (2)**

There were two nominations:

Daniel Bauhahn, proposed by Gemma Drew and seconded by Hannah Weden.

Rebecca Haines, proposed by David Gibson and seconded by Kathryn Hubbard.

Daniel Bauhahn and Rebecca Haines were duly elected to serve as Churchwardens for the coming year.

As Daniel may be unable to serve for some of this year due to a placement at another church, Henry proposed *that we unofficially appoint Chris Drew as Deputy Churchwarden this year, with a view to appointing Chris as Churchwarden as and when Daniel needs to step down.* Passed. Henry prayed for the wardens.

4. **Election of PCC members (2)**

There were two nominations:

Chris Drew, proposed by Daniel Bauhahn and seconded by Rebecca Haines.

Fiona Houghton, proposed by Debs Hunt and seconded by Sarah Roggendorf.

Chris Drew and Fiona Houghton were duly elected to serve as members of the PCC for a term of three years.

Thanks were expressed to Andrew Gomm, who had completed three years' service as a member of PCC. Rev. Tom Devas prayed for the PCC.

3. **Election of Deanery Synod representatives (2)**

No candidates stood for these positions. *Two vacancies remain.*

5. **Vicar's Report and Vision**

The Vicar's report and vision were delivered during the service immediately before the APCM. The full version can be listened to at <https://www.stmaryswollatonpark.co.uk/sermons/nehemiah-3-building-agm-2018/>

Henry began by asking how we are doing at fulfilling the church Vision statement agreed in 2016. He could see progress in some areas, but in other ways challenges were becoming clearer.

Two highlights of this year had been the Evangelists' Group and Connect Groups. The Evangelists' Group had hugely encouraged its members to be intentional in personal evangelism, for example leading to a new contact attending the Christianity Explored course through street questionnaires. This represented a significant step towards fulfilling point C1 (A hundred people, from all ages, becoming disciples of Jesus), though we still have a long way to go. Connect Groups had been launched this year to replace our much-appreciated house groups, with the aim of better prioritising Calling In and Sending Out as well as Building Up. Connect Groups are for us to connect with God, one another and the world around us, and for disciples to make new disciples. Henry felt the Connect Groups had made an excellent start and would have a significant impact on fulfilling all parts of our vision.

Two important areas of ministry facing crisis are Explorers toddler group and our Sunday children's ministry. Explorers welcomes around 30 children and their carers each week, mostly not Christians, and we have the

opportunity to teach them from the Bible each week. However, four of the five Explorers leaders and one of the helpers will be leaving Explorers this summer, all for good reasons. No new leaders have come forward yet, so we are not sure how Explorers can continue. Our Sunday children's groups have not had enough leaders available to run every week this term, and Debs Hunt needs to step back from leading this ministry (see report). Again leaders have left and not enough new leaders have come forward. Henry would be devastated if these ministries should need to close.

The PCC's first step in fulfilling our vision statement was to commission Home Visiting and Prayer Ministry teams to address B2 (Every member feeling that they belong to a church family that supports, encourages and cares for them, and to the worldwide church). These teams started but have struggled to find enough people willing to be involved. Other ministry teams such as duty managers, sound and computer, refreshments and welcome need more helpers or for those involved to offer to serve more regularly.

Henry felt that our biggest challenge is introduction to the vision statement: "As members of St. Mary's, we are each called to be praying and working towards the following by 2022." At the moment many members are serving faithfully and generously, but to make progress it is not enough to have a team of heroes. Instead we all need to give ourselves in a wholehearted, generous and sacrificial way. Henry quoted Romans 12:1, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." Serving at church when it is convenient and fits around the rest of life is not the sacrificial worship appropriate to God.

Henry used Nehemiah 3 as a picture of how a church can work together to build God's kingdom. God's people were working together to build the wall of Jerusalem, making sure no part of the job was neglected. Henry addressed some bad reasons for not serving. We may feel we do not have the gifts, skills or experience to serve in certain areas, but God can equip us and we can be trained, like the perfumers and jewellers in v8. We may feel we are too busy at work, but the rulers of districts made time to be involved. We may feel hampered by family responsibilities, but Shallum repaired with his daughters. Our children can be included in our serving, though we may need to change the way we serve. Both glamorous and unpleasant jobs are equally important, like building both the Dung Gate and the King's pool. No task should be above or beneath us. Some people built the wall near their own houses because they had a personal interest in the job being done, others built for the greater good. For example we may do children's work because we have children, or because we can see that it matters. Most people in Nehemiah 3 saw that the job needed doing and got involved.

For those who are already serving wholeheartedly, Henry encouraged us to see that we are building God's kingdom. For those who are not yet serving as well as they could, Henry encouraged us to get stuck in and build God's church. Henry prayed for us.

Questions and Answers in response

Mary Norris asked whether we have compared the number of able-bodied church members with the number of jobs needed. Henry replied that church works more like a family, and jobs differ in terms of time commitment. There are very few people who are unable to serve because of ill health, in fact even frail church members are serving informally. Henry's challenge was focused on those who are busy and fitting church around other things rather than making serving a top priority. Mary asked whether we are trying to achieve too much for the number of church members we have. Henry replied that the PCC has agreed with him which ministries we have, and they are good and possible, but we need to create the vision to get church members excited about joining in.

Jonathan Larsson asked if Henry could go through each point of the Vision statement to report on progress. Henry replied that the PCC has not approached this by focusing on all ten points at once, but at several points has worked on what is the next step to take. We had first addressed B2 (Every member feeling that they belong to a church family that supports, encourages and cares for them, and to the worldwide church), which led to the creation of Home Visiting and Prayer Ministry teams, though we still need help to make these work well. We

had then focused on the Sending Out section on evangelism, which led to the Evangelists' Group and Connect Groups. There are aspects we have not yet started to address, though we feel Connect Groups will address many parts of the Vision.

Val Bowyer emphasized the need for faithful prayer. She also reminded us that nearly a third of church members are over the age of 50. Henry thanked Val for her call to prayer as a whole church. He explained that the staff team and PCC have given thought to ways that people of different ages are able to serve. We do have a large number of people who are not serving or serving at very restricted times.

David Gibson asked if we can think of ways to help families serve. Henry replied that we cannot provide childminders, but we that we have found ways of things working when there is a desire to serve. The challenge is for parents who have completely stepped back from serving.

Jonathan Larsson commented that we ask for rota availability several months in advance. He suggested it may be useful to have a way of indicating availability nearer the time. Henry replied that the staff team is giving thought to changing the way we do rotas. The reason for asking three months in advance is that writing rotas takes a great deal of work and two weeks of the staff team's time, regardless of how many weeks it covers. Henry felt the staff team had been wrong in the past by trying to be so accommodating that it gave the impression that serving in church is optional and to be fitted around the rest of life. For example, other churches have teams committed to serving on a particular week of the month.

6. Finance Report

Thanks were expressed to Lawrence Ward for his excellent work on the 2017 accounts, and to John Harrison for being Independent Examiner.

Questions and Answers in response

None.

7. Presentation of Written Reports

Connect Groups (page 6): Hannah Weden asked Revd. Tom Devas how he envisioned getting more people involved. Tom replied that we currently have 35 people involved in three Connect Groups, and we also see the Midweek Fellowship and Monday Ladies' Group as small groups. Once Connect Groups are running well we will look again at who else would like to be in a group, either by joining an existing group or by setting up a fourth Connect Group. Tom would like to see a fourth Connect Group set up this year, though this would require leaders. People may invite newcomers to their Connect Groups. Henry added that the old house groups had some members who came very rarely, but this did not work very well, so we have encouraged people only to join a Connect Group if they can see it as a regular commitment.

Ben Beranek thanked Tom and others for setting up Connect Groups and asked who will take oversight of these when Tom finishes his curacy. Tom replied that he does not yet have a leaving date but will talk to the PCC about everything he needs to hand on.

David Gibson commented that some people in Connect Groups struggle with reading the Bible and asked if the leadership are aware we all have different amounts of knowledge. Henry replied that we are aware, and that Connect Groups should help with this.

Children's Sunday Groups (page 6) and Explorers (page 7): Henry asked that we give importance to prayer for both of these. If you are thinking you are not naturally gifted at working with children but willing to have a go, please get in touch.

Schools Work (page 8): Kathryn Hubbard asked what the plan is when Tom’s curacy finishes. Tom replied that much of this work has been resourced by Crossteach Nottingham, but would he would like to pass on our Schools Work to one or two people in the church family who could have a go at doing a school assembly. Others at St. Mary’s have helped with the Church Experience and visits to Middleton Primary School this year. Henry added that four years ago when announcing that we would have a Curate, we said that we would be able to do some extra things while we have a Curate which we won’t be able to continue afterwards. Henry does not want to stop Schools Work and is involved himself, but we may need to step back a little without Tom’s leadership. Daniel Bauhahn added that we are praying for Crossteach Nottingham to continue to grow, with the appointment of a second worker. He encouraged us to pray and see if we can step up our giving as a church and as individuals.

Curacy (page 9): Hannah Weden thanked Tom and Emily for all the ways they have blessed St. Mary’s. She asked what happens after Tom leaves, and whether we might we have another Curate in the future. Henry echoed Hannah’s thanks. He replied that we could not get another Curate immediately, which is important to allow the next curate scope to develop in areas where he or she feels led.

Katherine Bulleid asked Tom to expand on the church’s “ability not to take itself too seriously whist taking God seriously.” Tom replied that we start morning services with interaction and there is more laughter, which lets us be family together, not with irreverence but warmth. There is a sense of working together, and at meetings we may have a giggle as well as discussing serious matters.

Ladies’ Prayer Breakfasts (page 10): Val Bowyer thanked Emily Devas for starting these meetings, which she appreciates for their informal feel and sense of the Lord’s presence. Val hopes they may continue.

PCC (page 11): David Gibson for further detail of the recent Living Out conference. Henry replied that we will gladly share Kathryn Hubbard’s report to the PCC.

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (page 12): Joyce Cooper commented that it should officially be the responsibility of Churchwardens to look after Fabric of church property. Henry replied that though this is technically correct, Henry is more interested in Biblical leadership so has looked for prayerful, godly wardens who can give good advice rather than those with building maintenance skills. Daniel Bauhahn is a practical person and has offered some time, but the Churchwardens’ job is to make sure the work is done rather than having to carry it out by themselves. Church staff work on site and are better placed to supervise contractors than the Churchwardens are. Daniel replied that the Churchwardens will do what they can.

Ben Beranek asked whether repairs to the pipe organ (**Accounts 2017, page 4**) had been sufficient. Lawrence Ward replied that we are fortunate to have a well-built organ with parts which have lasted, however very little maintenance has been done over the years and it has degraded mechanically. Last year a specialist organ builder addressed the most important faults, partly funded by special donations. We will need to address this again in future, but Lawrence wished to give thanks that the organ is currently in a serviceable condition.

a. Motion to accept reports

David Gibson proposed and Chris Drew seconded *that we accept the written reports presented at this meeting.*
Passed.

8. Any Other Business

David Gibson had proposed that we consider celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the founding of St. Mary’s in November 1938. Henry replied that he is happy to take this to PCC.

Ben Beranek thanked all the leaders of our music ministry and asked them to let us know how they would like to be supported. Henry echoed Ben’s thanks and thanked those in the congregation who bear with our two very different styles of music when they much prefer one or the other.

Ben asked about church events which had recently been cancelled (a Church Brunch and a Maundy Thursday Supper) as they were heavily dependent on Henry, and suggested we have wider leadership of these events to secure them. Henry replied that on both occasions others had been willing to step in and help, but the only kitchen available was at the Vicarage and the house was infected with a gastric virus. Henry suggested we consider how to better equip the Church Hall in line with Health and Safety considerations.

9. Closing Prayer

Led by Henry.