

ST MARY'S BARNES

Minutes of the Annual Meetings, held in church on Sunday 13 April 2014 at 11.30am.

Present: The Rector, Team Curate, churchwardens, 38 members of the congregation, and Josephine Harris.

Apologies were received from Andrew Summers and Alison Collins.

A. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the purpose of electing two churchwardens to serve for the coming year.

Paul Teverson was proposed by William Heller and seconded by Peter Boyling;

Patty Darke was proposed by Patrick Findlater and seconded by Lucy Hine.

Paul and Patty were unanimously voted in as churchwardens.

The Rector thanked Rosie Findlater very much for her five years as churchwarden. She works with unstinting commitment, energy, enthusiasm and creativity. She is an ideas person and is willing to make them happen which is 'gold-dust for a Rector'. There are a number of major initiatives which have come from Rosie, eg the Fashion Show which is now a firm annual fixture.

Paul presented a card signed by over 150 signatories, Bible, a gift token, and two bottles of champagne.

B. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 25 April 2013 were signed as a correct record.

2. Report on the Church Electoral Roll

Judy Gowing reported on behalf of Cheryl Cole, the Electoral Roll officer, that currently there were 217 people on the roll, an increase of 7 on last year.

3. Elections

a) The election of representatives to serve on the Deanery Synod for three years; Phil Bladen was proposed by Paul Teverson and seconded by William Heller. Annie Sullivan proposed by Phil Bladen and seconded by Geoffrey Barnett. Judy Gowing was proposed by Phil Bladen and seconded by Peter Boyling. All were in favour with no abstentions.

b) The election to the Parochial Church Council of representatives to serve for three years;

Alison Collins, proposed by Judy Gowing and seconded by Phil Bladen.

William Heller, proposed by Lucy Hine, seconded by Patrick Findlater.

Sue Boyd, proposed by Rosie Findlater, seconded by Tim Budgen.

Tom Ridley, proposed by Colin Yandle and seconded by Judy Gowing.

These four were unanimously voted in with no abstentions.

c) The election of sidesmen for 2014/15. All were unanimously re-elected.

For the 8.00 am service: David Barrie, Wiz Dundas, Rachel Elkington, Desmond & Josephine MacDermott and Marjorie Wing.

For the 10.00 am service: David Blacklock, Claire Boyling, Brian Cleave, Tony Dundas, Anthony & Mayella Figgis, Patrick Findlater, Ken & Tiziana George, David Heyhoe, Jonathan & Amanda Iremonger, Sarah Kearney, Neville Otty, Peter Siddall, Fiona Smith, Andrew Summers, Joan Wheeler-Bennett, Sue Dundas.

For the 6pm service: Wendy Kyrle-Pope, Andrew Summers.

Ken Hitchcock and Nina Grey, having retired, were thanked for their service.

4. Report on proceedings of the PCC. This report had been printed in the Annual Review.

Acceptance was proposed by Geoffrey Barnett and seconded by Jean Otty. All were in favour.

5. Report on the annual accounts for 2013. Patrick Findlater, Hon Treasurer, reported. Gift Aid amounting to around £40,000 has been reclaimed from the Government. Unrestricted funds fell by £18,000, partly because £10,000 surplus from last year was transferred to the Youth and Children's Worker fund. As regards the Kitson Hall fund, income had fallen, and in 2014 there will be substantial expenditure to bring facilities up to scratch. Consequently he anticipated that it would not be possible in 2014 to transfer £20,000 to the General Fund from this source, as has been the case in previous years, and so he expected a deficit in the General Fund.

He noted that the Friends of St Mary's fund is the largest restricted fund, and in 2013 the Friends raised £119,000. The Friends had hitherto contributed £5,000 a year to a Quinquennial Fund for maintenance of the church. The PCC had agreed that the Friends' Fund will in future cover all the fabric costs of the church and churchyard, so the Quinquennial Fund has been wound up and the balance split between the Friends Fund and the General Fund. The increase of £48,000 in the Friends Fund in 2013 would largely be spent in 2014. In response to a question from the congregation, the Treasurer said that payments would be made inter alia for the CCTV system, repair of the churchyard monuments and the boundary wall.

The 2015 Fund is at present entirely for the new vestments and altar cloth. The deficit at the end of 2013 on this Fund had since been eliminated.

The Youth Fund stood at £21,000. The Rector is committed to getting the right person to take on the Youth Work.

The Fairer Shares payment to the diocese in 2014 will increase by a further £10,000 and voluntary donations are static.

Tiziana George was thanked for her bookkeeping work and Chris Hine for processing all the Gift Aid claims.

Patrick was thanked warmly for all his work on the accounts.

6. Appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2014.

Judy Gowing proposed appointment of Alastair Cameron as the independent examiner for the coming year. The proposal was seconded by Phil Bladen. All were in favour.

7. Report on the fabric of the church, and of the church hall. The meeting received the written report. Michael Murison is standing down as Chair of the Fabric Committee. The Rector thanked him warmly for all his work and presented him with a gift.

8. Report on the work of the Team Council. The meeting received the written report.

9. Rector's report: see Appendix I.

10. 800th anniversary celebrations. The Rector reported.

The central service of celebration will be on Monday 15 June when The Rt Revd Rowan Williams will join us.

There will be a pilgrimage from Runnymede to Barnes. The walk will last several days. It is also possible that some will swim or row from Runnymede to Barnes.

BBC Songs of Praise: We have received an acknowledgement of receipt of our proposal, but as yet the outcome is unknown.

History of St Mary's booklet is being updated by Maisie Brown.

A major production by the Barnes Community Players is under discussion.

Short play about Bishop Stephen Langton will not happen.

Barnes Music Festival 2015 will have a theme based on Magna Carta.

Altar cloth and vestments have been commissioned from Fine Cell Work and are progressing well. They are due for completion in May 2015.

A NADFAS trail is almost completed. It will be an attractively produced child-friendly booklet.

Barnes Fair and Barnes Charity Ball 2015 will have a medieval theme.

Lent Lectures 2015 will focus on 'Faith in the Public Square'.

There was a new proposal for an engraved window in the Langton Chapel, to be engraved by Josephine Harris, who designed and created the engraved glass door at the main entrance. Michael Murison introduced a full-sized mock_up of the design. The diocese has been approached for their provisional approval and is content that the project should proceed, with a few comments. For example, the diocese has suggested that the words: 'To the Glory of God' be incorporated into the design instead of about "The English church shall be free". It is likely that the design will evolve. The Rector is committed to have full consultation with the congregation before decisions are taken on the proposal and this was just the first opportunity. Paul Teverson suggested that comments on the proposal could be sent to him, the Rector or Michael Murison. No time-scale has been set for the consultation. There will be no colour in the window.

Geoffrey Barnett expressed his concern that the engraved window would detract from the simplicity of the Langton Chapel.

It was pointed out that the design looked quite dark on the paper, but with the light coming through it would be translucent.

There was a suggestion from the congregation that the space at the bottom of the window above the main altar should be used instead of the Langton Chapel window.

It was asked whether the East window in the Langton Chapel had been considered. The Rector responded that this had been considered but was thought much less appropriate.

It was requested that it was made clear that there has been a church on this site since 1180 and that these celebrations are concerned with the consecration of the enlarged church in 1215.

11. Any other business:

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The Rector commented that St Mary's is a church which takes seriously its concern for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

We are guided by extensive regulations. We have two Safeguarding Officers. Kate Boundy has just retired and was thanked warmly for her work. Rachel Skilbeck has taken over from her, and will be working alongside Lucy Hine. However, it is everyone's responsibility to flag up any concerns and issues to either of the Safeguarding Officers or to the Rector.

Revd Ann Lynes thanked the congregation and the Rector for the warm welcome she has received from the congregation.

Paul Teverson thanked the Rector very much for all his work over the year. See Appendix II

12. Date of next annual meeting: to be announced at a later date.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

In my introduction to this year's annual review I start by writing: "the life of the church is rooted in past events but cannot afford to be backward looking." It is our cherishing of the old events which stands at the very centre of the life of the church. On Palm Sunday we are at the beginning of our re-entering the repetition of those foundational events of Jesus's passion. This culminates in the Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday all of which prefigures the great joy of the celebration of the resurrection on Easter Day. But as Christians we look back even further than that to God's activity in the world revealing himself to humanity and particularly through the history of the Jews.

These ancient events continue to impact upon us today and mostly because the recalling and celebrating of them makes them alive to us today. At the heart of our life as a church is the continual re-telling of those events in history. We repeat them weekly in the Eucharist and throughout the year through the liturgical year and a cycle of remembering and celebrating the life of Christ from birth to ascension. We are in the business of remembering but the last thing we should be seen as is a preservation society. We cannot afford to look like the National Trust at prayer. Whilst there are stories to tell and re-tell and there are buildings to protect and repair, what we are really about is the impact that we make today. It's what Rowan Williams called, at the start of his time as archbishop, "re-capturing the imagination of the people". In fact that seems to be a little bit like what Archbishop Justin has managed to do in his first year or so in post. However the two things that have probably made the biggest impact are the progress towards the consecration of women as bishops (which may well happen later this year) and his criticism of the loan shark industry and support for credit unions – both of which have proven popular with the wider society. In this way we see that the cherishing of our ancient stories is not about looking backwards but rather, looking forwards with courage.

Of course that is precisely the challenge that lies before us too. How does our rootedness in the Christian story impact our own community? We will have a great opportunity to explore ways of doing this in 2015 which is the 800th anniversary of the re-consecration of St Mary's. Actually it is what we have been doing this past year too. We seek to engage with our community being a place of gathering for events that enrich local life and serve the people of our community without forcing religion on to people. Although we do want people to see that what drives us is not simply a friendly and neighbourly spirit but a deep conviction in the love of God who calls us to reconciliation with him and with our fellow human beings. There is always a danger with us, instinctively reticent Anglicans, that this gets a bit lost in the concern not to make people feel uncomfortable.

In order to achieve all of this very important work we need to have a well-run church whose heart beats powerfully to the rhythm of the love of God. This is a dynamic coalition of paid and volunteer workers. The paid are few but very important. In many ways Cheryl is the public face of the church because when people wander into church during the week looking for something or someone she is usually the first person they meet. Cheryl provides a friendly, helpful and very efficient service to the church. She covers a vast multitude of administrative tasks and also oversees the bookings and running of Kitson Hall. I am very grateful to her. Dan is our uber-talented Director of Music and he continues to amaze us with what he can achieve and the heights to which he can take our church music. As if two choirs weren't enough for him, this year for the Barnes Music Festival he started up another one – the Festival Chorus and they wowed everyone with an amazing performance. Well done and thank you for everything, Dan.

This year we have welcomed another member of staff – Ann – our wonderful Team Curate. Ann has settled in incredibly well; she's made a great impact with all of you and also at Holy Trinity and St Michael's where she makes occasional forays. It is been a pleasure and a delight to welcome Ann and for me to work with her. She tolerates my exacting standards as her training incumbent. When I pointed out one aspect of her working pattern that might need some attention she said "Well Richard, I don't want you to think that I am already the finished article: there's got to be some room for improvement in the rest of my time here!" And that's right. Of course there are always improvements to make for all of us and we are delighted with who you are and what you do here now.

Beyond that, it's all volunteer help and so it's amazing that we are able to achieve all that we do. I am incredibly well supported by Bishop Richard, Geoffrey and Christabel for Sunday and other duties and I'm enormously grateful to them. Fiona Barnett does numerous jobs but helps us to keep up with anyone who is vulnerable or in need of prayer and support. We work as a team to provide pastoral support for many different people who are sick, grieving or facing other challenges.

In addition, we have the bellringers, the flower team, the daily friends keeping the church open Monday to Friday and cleaning. There's the coffee shop, the churchyard team, the sweepers, the choir and people who help in all sorts of sundry ways. We are well served by a hardworking PCC who make sure we get things done in the right way and the best way. Other thank yous have already been done (churchwardens, treasurer and Michael Murison). I want to make particular mention of Vic who is a wonder to everyone. Of course I don't want to be thought of as ageist but at nearly 93 to be still counting large amounts of money and banking cash, verging for every funeral and wedding, is quite amazing and I am very grateful. Sally and the sacristy team do a great job in keeping things clean, in order and properly prepared for every service. The Sunday Club and BYG are run by fantastic teams of leaders and helpers. They ensure our children and young people are included, feel valued and kept safe. Our children are a blessing to our community and I am so grateful to JulieAnn and Cate Summers for their tireless work. I am also hugely indebted to Peter Boyling for incredible back-up work in too many roles to mention – he is a wonder. I must also mention the unstinting work of Andrew Summers leading the Friends' of St Mary's with great events and raising significant quantities of money to help our church to run. What an incredible job he does. There are many other jobs going on the back-ground without most people even knowing they happen. I would like to express my thanks to Monty Brown who quietly goes about repairing all the chairs when they break and even now is sorting out the repair of the large church noticeboard and re-doing the lettering on the other one. Maisie also keeps our archives in order in keep the church scrapbook up to date. Many thanks to both of them. There are many others that do important things too and I'm not even going to try to do an exhaustive list. Let's give everybody who helps, a show of appreciation with a standing ovation!

But if any of this makes you feel that perhaps there is something more you could be doing, you're probably right. Some have done more than their bit over the years and deserve a rest (Rosie!) but everyone can do something. So please do offer your help if you feel you can. Every act of service in the church is a response of gratitude to God. I have already mentioned my gratitude to Geoffrey and Christabel who hold the office of Reader in the Church. This is a teaching role that enables them to preach and also to take funeral services. It is a real vocation and both are wonderful examples of this ministry. Fiona has trained as a Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary (SPA) and that is a vital and challenging role of service too. I hope there might be others in our congregation who have been inspired by their ministry to want to follow in their footsteps. It would also be wonderful if anyone amongst us felt called into ordained ministry. Every ministry begins with the cry of disbelief – "Surely not me!" But why not? The church needs people who can use their gifts to serve God and the church in this way. Might God be calling you? If you want to explore this do have a chat with me or Ann. For the future of our church, both here and the wider body we need people to offer themselves to serve.

What lies ahead is a very exciting year as you have heard. In the autumn we will be in full planning mode so that the year kicks off with a bang. You've heard a fair bit about that already. But we can have all the exciting events that you could imagine but it won't serve the Kingdom of God if the welcome we give to people when they visit at any time, on any occasion, for worship or other events is not warm, generous and kind. I have had some comments in recent months that some people have not been made to feel welcome when they have come to church and have chosen not to return due to that. Noticing newcomers or simply talking to someone you don't recognise, is as much a part of our Christian duty as receiving the Eucharist. Looking disapprovingly at a crying child's parent or a chatting teenager will not encourage people into our community. Being blind to someone who doesn't seem to know anyone in church will give a clear message to anyone considering if this is a place that they will feel welcome in. It is for all of us to do our bit and to do the right thing. The church often asks how can we draw people to church and into faith? Well, a good part of

that is to ensure that we have a warm, friendly and welcoming church and that is down to all of us.

The efforts of so many people help to make this church what it is – and that really is something which I believe is a blessing to our community. Some have said they were not made welcome and that is a great shame, but others have said they did have a warm welcome and really appreciated the time that people took to talk to them and introduce them to others. Only forward-looking organisations and bodies are able to meet the challenges that lie ahead. We have plenty of those and I'm sure our joint efforts, powered by the Holy Spirit and fuelled by friendship and laughter will enable to rise to the challenge both in this coming anniversary year and in the years to come.

Thank you.

Richard

Appendix II:

Vote of Thanks from Paul Teverson to the Rector

Unlike a concert pianist, a Team Rector does not get a round of applause after every sermon preached or every service conducted.

Richard, there must be times, when it feels as if everything you do for this church, the team ministry and the wider community in Barnes is simply taken for granted. It is therefore particularly important that I put that right.

The nub of it is, Richard, that you work your socks off for your team of St Mary's. Your energy both on and off the field of worship is enormous.

Team Rectors, like all individuals, have different qualities, characteristics and strengths. But we Church of England watchers, all know a good all rounder when we see one and a fair-minded captain.

We have all come to enjoy the regular Sunday morning stand up routine which begins with the line addressed to a Sunday club member "Who's going to tell us what you have been up to". This goes against all my professional instincts of never asking a question of a witness to which you don't know the answer – especially if he has a hand-held microphone. But we don't forget that children were almost entirely absent from our Eucharist when you arrived.

Richard, you have led this church now for some three and a half years. Last year we planned St Mary's today and tomorrow. This year we have been starting to implement it.

This is not simply about activity. It is about prayerful reflection and working alongside one another. It requires the leadership and dedication which you provide. We are truly fortunate to have you and JulieAnn in our midst. We thank both of you for all you have done for St Mary's in this last year.

If at any time in the future, it feels as if you are being taken for granted, please refer back to this message of thanks which I shall request Judy to attach to the minutes and put on the web-site. It is intended quite simply to say in capital letters THANK YOU.

Paul Teverson
Churchwarden
13 April 2014