

**THE PARISH OF HOLY TRINITY, LEVERSTOCK GREEN
in the Benefice of Langelei**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS
held on Sunday 18 October 2020**

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

- Rev Lizzie Hood opened the Church meetings with prayer.
- Apologies for absence were received from John Buxton and Pat Brown.
- Bishop Michael was in attendance together with 30 others in church and 20 on Zoom

Election of Churchwardens

Karen Ball (nominated by Beverley Burgess and seconded by Kathy Perry), and John Walker (nominated by Kathy Perry and seconded by Terry Perry) were unanimously appointed as Churchwardens. Beverley Burgess had completed six terms and six months in office, and was thanked for this heroic effort and for her diligence. Beverley responded. Thanks were also extended to John Walker for continuing in office.

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners closed at 11.20 am.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Bishop Michael addressed the meeting on a safeguarding matter. He also referred to a disruption in the life of the church earlier in the year when the Rev'd Maxine Howarth left Holy Trinity. Because of the Coronavirus Lockdown, sadly it had not been possible to mark the occasion in the usual way. Her departure had been necessary for her ministry to thrive and the Bishop advised that Maxine is now progressing well in her training at St Lawrence Church, Abbots Langley. The Rector then led prayers for all affected by these two matters.

1. To approve the minutes of the APCM held on 7 April 2019

The minutes of the APCM held on Sunday 7 April were approved and signed.

2. Matters Arising There were no matters arising from those minutes.

3.1 Electoral Roll Report The report is included in the APCM papers. The roll now stands at 142, an increase of six members. The Rector advised that there are 230 regular attendees at services. Thanks were extended to Norah Tattersall.

3.2 Report on the proceedings of the PCC Linda Cooke's report is included in the APCM papers and there were no questions.

Safeguarding The written report is in the APCM papers. Pauline Lindsey was thanked for her meticulous work in the face of ongoing changes to requirements.

Lizzie advised that **Parish Activities** would be covered under her report.

3.3 Report on the Financial affairs of the Parish and to approve the accounts: The Treasurer's report is in the APCM papers. Martin Chapman referred to the £8,000 gain achieved in 2019 and thanked all who helped deal with the church's money. Heartfelt gratitude was expressed to Martin for his hard work carried out on a daily basis, to the Finance Committee and all others involved in the management of the church's finances.

3.4 Report on Fabric

The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments report is in the APCM papers. The meeting was given the good news that the heating, currently out of order, should be fixed on 20 October. Thanks were extended for all the gifts that had been made during the year and also to the wardens and deputies for their work, especially Mike Hawtin for his care of the fabric of the church. Gratitude was also expressed for the work of Simon Bounds and his gardening team, the Men's Group for their maintenance work, the cleaners and the sacristy team.

3.5 Reports from Deanery and Diocesan Synods

These are in the APCM papers; there were no questions.

4. To elect lay representatives to PCC Cathy Ayling, Martin Chapman, Jean Britt and Gillian Redman had all come to the end of their term of office, Pamela Batten had resigned and there was one outstanding vacancy. Thanks were extended for all past service. Nominations had been received for Martin Chapman, Cathy Ayling, Charles Baker, Suzanne Nkonkomalimba, Chinyanta Nkonkomalimba and Gillian Redman. Their appointments to the PCC were approved unanimously. The Rector congratulated them and thanked them for being willing to serve. The next PCC meeting is at 7.30 pm on 11 November on Zoom.

5. To appoint three lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod – these appointments are for the period 1 December 2020 until 30 June 2023. All three current members (Beverley Burgess, Colin Gage and Mike Hawtin) had expressed a willingness to serve again and had been duly nominated and seconded. Their new appointments were approved unanimously.

6. To Appoint an Independent Examiner for the PCC accounts for the coming year. Geoffrey Dix had agreed to perform this task again. His appointment for the coming year was proposed by Martin Chapman, seconded by Colin Gage and agreed. Linda Cooke was asked to thank him for his work

7. To receive a report from the Rector – this is appended to the minutes. After Lizzie had given her report, Beverley Burgess, on behalf of everyone, expressed her thanks for Lizzie's calm, her accessibility and her tireless work upon which the church very much depends, and for managing to combine her duties at Holy Trinity with her wider responsibilities as Rector of the Benefice.

8. Any Other Business: Lorraine Ellis, who had joined the church in recent months and just joined the Electoral Roll, expressed gratitude for the warm welcome she had received. Lizzie extended thanks to Miles Cooksey for managing the Zoom link, the Bishop for attending and Linda for her work as PCC Secretary.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.10 pm with the Grace.

APPENDIX - Rector's report

I usually start preparing my 'state of the nation' address by looking back to where we were at the last APCM, but this year it takes a feat of mental agility to remember how things were before Coronavirus, let alone way back in April 2019. Strictly, we are reporting on the year ending March 2020, but I will include some comments on this very strange and challenging summer.

If you've read the reports on all our parish activities carefully - as I'm sure you have! - you will have a picture of the sheer breadth of what goes on here, in a very lively parish. It was helpful of Linda to group the reports into themes this year to give a clearer view of our worshipping life, the nurture and growth activities, children's groups, outreach, social events, church maintenance, and the finances and fundraising that make it all possible. I doubt any of us could list *every* little task that is involved, but just know that whether you hold a position up front, or do something quietly and seemingly unnoticed, your contribution is appreciated, and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to you all.

Permit me, if I may, to highlight some people who have given remarkable service. John Buxton has stepped down as a sidesman after 35 years - that's a long time giving out hymn books! He continues as our sacristan - looking after candles and Communion supplies and administering the chalice. And Barb Le Tallec has stepped down from the Pastoral group and being our Lead Server, having kept the sanctuary team working like clockwork over many years. The contemplative prayer group 'Coming to Stillness' closed in December, having been under Linda's leadership for 10 years, first in Boxmoor and latterly up here. We thank them all.

I would also like to pay tribute to those members of our church family who have died in the past year, all of whom have contributed something unique to our church life - remembering Jo Lyons, Joan Saxon, Keith Jenkin, Beryl Milnes and little Emily Stockley. We are richer for their company on our journey of faith, and thank God for them.

At last year's APCM I spoke about our commitment to growth - not just numerical but in our faith and service to the community. There have been lots of green shoots in our communal life.

We were able to launch two new discussion groups - Wayfinders - on Wednesday mornings and evenings.

We have begun a Pilgrim Group to nurture faith and vocation in some of our younger adults.

Much work was done towards opening the church during the day, but sadly we didn't quite make it before lockdown began. Lockdown also put a stop to our newly formed Confirmation group as several of them are not able to meet on Zoom, and we have a bumper group of children waiting to be prepared to receive their first Communion.

The diversity of the worshipping congregation has increased, and people often comment that it feels like a big family of all ages here.

In terms of my personal growth, I had the opportunity to take half a sabbatical last summer, and I want to express my gratitude to those who took on extra responsibilities in my absence. The 2nd half has had to be delayed, but in the meantime I've been able to create a labyrinth in the vicarage garden which is open to all, and several people have said how calming it has been amid all the frustrations of this year.

Frances and Rebecca Lawson have been working with me on a new prayer walk around the churchyard, and that will be launched in the next couple of weeks.

In fact that is the latest in a new collection of leaflets which we are creating to help newcomers and visitors - we have one on Christenings, one on Children and youth, and a history of the church and a brief guide. More are planned.

We had an exceptional opportunity to facilitate growth this year in the arrival of our curate, Maxine last July. What a privilege it is to contribute to someone's formation in ministry and to learn from her and the experience she brought to HT. Having an extra pair of hands also meant that we could move forward with some of our long-held plans like a Youth Group, and additional teaching input. Another aspect of growth is being encouraged by the Diocese which asks us to engage in a 'Big Conversation'. It concerns reaching younger and middle aged adults, who are often missing from our congregations. Bishop Michael was due to visit our PCC, but that has been delayed by ... Covid!

I'm sure that will feed into our Mission Action Plan, which is being actively reviewed by the PCC. It held an awayday in February facilitated by the Revd Kate Peacock of the Flourishing Churches Team. The main topic of our discussions was how we might continue to grow, and how we would manage that. We seem to have hit a glass ceiling - in that we've reached a size where it's no longer possible for everyone and everything to relate to the Vicar, like spokes in a wheel. It's well known that people need to relate to a few others in a church, not to feel like one in a huge pool. That means small groups become more important, and a larger church needs more people taking responsibility and moving into positions of leadership. But changes to our culture are not always comfortable and we need to decide if we are committed to that kind of growth. The new PCC will be looking again at this, and Kate has offered to accompany us as we do that. Do make your views known, and please pray for God's guidance as we discern a new vision for the years ahead.

One of the reasons our MAP has not had a full revision is that for a couple of years we chose to focus on one specific goal and see if we could really put our weight behind it and make some progress. That was an initiative of +Michael's, known as our WIG or Wildly Important Goal. And it was focussed on strengthening our work with children.

We had already devised a pathway for children from christening through to confirmation by way of Toddler Church, Children's Praise, Junior Church, invitational family services, first Communion and teens group. The new leaflet was designed to make that journey explicit.

For Toddler Church we hosted a training session and the very next day began to use new materials called Diddy Disciples, which have been just lovely and lots of fun.

Karen took a break from leading Junior Church and Miles stepped up, and we have other new leaders on board, so a strong team there.

We have a new link with the Beavers, who now worship twice a year and come to church the previous week for an activity session with me.

We held a Christian Parenting evening to encourage parents in nurturing their children's faith, and dealing with those big questions that come out of little people!

And there's the new Youth Group which has already been mentioned and is open to the whole Benefice for year 6 up monthly on Sunday evenings.

Terry's report shows just what a significant role we also have in our church school - by providing Foundation Governors, weekly worship, classroom sessions, and we pulled out all the stops to film a leavers' service in July so the year 6s had a memorable end to primary school.

I think you'll agree a lot has been achieved in our ministry among children, young people and families. This year we've welcomed 3 new babies - Sienna, Zach and Arthur - so they have an exciting journey ahead.

One of the key events of this year was the 170th anniversary of our church last October. Bishop Alan led the Festal Eucharist, and we had a glorious Flower Festival with arrangements depicting each decade of our church's history. We published a new church history and acquired a beautifully 'calligraphed' list of Vicars. The weekend concluded with Choral Evensong with an expanded choir. As ever, it was a great event, and we welcomed many people from the village and beyond into church.

But in the spring, with lots of plans in the pipeline, Coronavirus put a stop to life as we knew it. Our first task was to get a support network going offering practical help and telephone calls to church members and others in the community. Church was closed, and we began recording Sunday services and daily prayers from my dining room. It was a steep learning curve, and I would like to record thanks to my family for taking care of the technology so expertly. No sooner had we mastered that than we started moving back into church, first for private prayer and later for Sunday Worship. Different technologies came into play, and Miles stepped up to join Ali on the live stream. The wardens worked hard at acquiring cleaning supplies, signage, completing risk assessments. Meetings transferred to Zoom. We wondered when and how to resume small groups, how to welcome new worshippers who were now joining us online, we developed new communication patterns, online giving and so many adjustments it's hard to recall. Thank you for abiding by the restrictions so co-operatively so as to keep everyone safe in church. Now we are facing the big seasonal services and straining our imaginative thinking. Stewards are in very short supply, so please let us know if you can help with any of our services.

We are trying our best to cater for everyone, providing special service sheets for those worshipping at home without online facilities, as well as for those who can join our streamed worship. There is also prayer material in the church porch, which disappears like hot cakes, as many people pause there to think and pray.

Initially the take-up of online services was huge - 300+ for Palm Sunday, but it has reduced considerably over time, and it's getting harder to know if what we provide is meeting the need. I am concerned that with the passage of time people may get increasingly stressed and may well need more support through the winter months. Do please let me know if you know of any needs.

Of course, as all this was just beginning to develop Maxine left us for a period of furlough before moving on to Abbots Langley to complete her training. That was a real disappointment as we'd all looked forward to her being with us for longer, sharing ministry together, and hoping to see some of these plans through to fruition. But we wish her well in her new placement. And I thank you for the generous welcome, hospitality and support you gave her.

We are now looking forward to the Revd Jos Perris being licensed on January 24th as our Associate Priest.

So, it's a very full picture! Much remains to be done, but through God's grace much has been achieved. I believe we are in very good heart and have a lot to be thankful for.

I'd like to conclude by saying thank you ...

... to all of you who have continued to pray for the life of the world, the Church, and each other during these difficult times

... to all who have joined in our worship - either virtually or in person - during these past months enabling our praise to continue

... to those who have cared for and maintained our buildings and grounds, and made sure our church is a Covid-secure place

... to all who have phoned, visited, helped, and encouraged others, enabling us all to stay connected and safe

... to all who have continued to support the ministry and mission of the church here, through regular financial offerings

... for keeping going, tackling new challenges with fortitude, mastering new technology, keeping the faith, being positive and cheerful.

Thank you to colleagues in the ministry team, to the PCC, to Norma our administrator. Thank you for your friendship and encouragement to me and my family. And thanks to God who has called us as his disciples here, has seen us through our last year, and we trust will lead us into whatever future he has in store for us.