

ALDRIDGE PARISH CHURCH

ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

20 April 2009 at the Parish Church

Attendance and apologies: List appended to the Minutes of the Annual Parish Church Meeting.

Richard Cornfield, Rector, welcomed everyone, and began the evening with a Bible reading from Isaiah 54 about the promises of God. Two encouraging phrases had been given for our church at the April prayer event which had focussed on the plans for the new church rooms and work of our church:

“Clear lots of ground for your tents! Make your tents large. Spread out! Think big! Use plenty of rope, drive the tent pegs deep. You're going to need lots of elbow room for your growing family . . . Don't be afraid—you're not going to be embarrassed. Don't hold back—you're not going to come up short.”

Richard reported a 14% increase in adult attendance in 2008 and commented that progress with the building project was outside our control and we were dependent on other people to make it happen, and that we were in a time of recession. He reminded everyone of the need to focus on Christ if we were to move forward: Philippians 4:13 *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*

Building, Growing, Praying. Richard encouraged everyone to pray that we can do the things God us calling us to, and suggested that Sending or Serving should be added to the church tagline. Richard then led the meeting in prayer.

Continuing the arrangement implemented at the 2007 AGM, four wardens were to be appointed to share the work load. Four nominations were presented to the meeting: Ruth Bryant, Keith Callear, Jen Ford and Chris Leng. There was unanimous agreement (no abstentions and none against) that they should continue to serve as wardens for the coming year. Richard expressed appreciation for all they did for the church.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH CHURCH MEETING held on 20 April 2009 at the Parish Church

Attendance and apologies: List appended to the Minutes of the Annual Parish Church Meeting.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2008 were approved and signed as a correct record: proposed by Andrew Clayton, seconded by Jen Ford, and all were in agreement, no abstentions and none against.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Martin Hodges, Electoral Roll Officer, informed the meeting that the roll now totalled 380, a 7% rise from the previous year and 50% of the new adult growth in 2008. During the year there had been 27 additions and 3 deletions. Martin thanked Jenny Hopley and Maureen Rouse for their help in maintaining the roll.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Phil Young, treasurer, reviewed the 2008 accounts and looked ahead into 2009. The figures were presented on powerpoint slides and copies are appended to the Minutes.

Phil began by setting the accounts into the context of the current credit crunch and the financial results in the news, and of recent years' results for the Parish Church and was pleased to report a surplus of £6,000. He commented that although the modest reserves were encouraging, measuring the activities of the church's work in purely financial terms was a very one dimensional approach. The breadth of work carried out by our church could not be shown in the numbers of the finance presentation. So although our intangible assets were not reflected on the balance sheet, if they could be translated into financial terms we would be a wealthy church.

The financial surplus during 2008 had been generated, in simple terms, by the level of giving increasing by 9% to £218k, and this had provided a great platform for our finances for the year. Other income of £40k included income in respect of events and activities, some bank interest, room hire receipts and this year for the first time a contribution for C&J School towards the employment of Sue Fung, our church/schools worker.

Phil then itemised the expenditure, noting

£20,065 on mission, supporting overseas missionaries as well as more local organisations.

£49,298 on the lay workers: Matt, Sue, Rob and Maxine.

£105k on Parish Share and this provided salaries and homes for Richard and Gavin, our share of the overheads of the Diocese as well as substantial financial help for the work of the church in less wealthy parishes

£29,247 on general church expenditure, covering a range of items from fabric repairs to the purchase of communion wine

£11,349 on maintaining and running the church rooms. Much of this on electricity which rose in price considerably during 2008

£16,945 on church activities. This included everything from harvest lunches to Men's and Women's weekends away, much of the expenditure balanced by income received in respect of these events.

£23,929 on administration, which provided salaries for the admin staff, as well as printing and stationery costs, bank charges, etc.

Restricted income for 2008 included £26,390 of specific giving, for example towards the work of AYF and Lee and Becky in China, together with just over £28,000 of grants and giving towards lay workers salaries. The total level of restricted giving was substantially down on 2007, largely because of the return home of Lee and Becky and the consequent fall in the funds generated to support their work. Almost £25.5k of restricted income was spent on mission, including money given to Lee and Becky, Tear Fund and others. £18k was spent topping up the salaries of lay workers, supplementing the amounts paid out of general funds. Just over £2k was spent from the building fund on church repairs and improvements. About £1000 more was spent than was received (not an issue with restricted funds as the money was there to be spent) and that left restricted reserves of £9,245. Most of this was held in respect of the new building fund, but there were also smaller balances held for the organ and bell tower funds.

Phil advised that the accounts presented at this meeting were draft accounts. The accounts were currently being audited as part of the parish wide audit so it was possible that audit adjustments could result in minor changes to the figures.

Phil continued his presentation with the budget for 2009. Noting that costs were going up and income needed to rise correspondingly. A quarter of the way through the current financial year overall expenditure was on target at 25%. However, income, and specifically giving, was only at 23%, 2% less than the amount required to meet the budget, and there was a deficit of over £4k at the end of March. If the current level of losses continued, this would amount to a shortfall of £16,000 at the year end. Phil reminded everyone about his presentation to the church at the beginning of year when he had issued the credit crunch challenge – the need for us to raise our giving by 6% during 2009 to meet the budget. He thanked those who had been able to rise to the challenge. The gap was closing, and there was a very gradual upward trend, but there was still a way to go. In closing Phil gave some details of standing order giving over the past four years, which accounted for about 70% of our total giving and was easy to measure. The figures showed that the growing church finances had been largely supported by a static number of givers who on average were giving 36% more than they were 4 years ago. He noted that church attendance had risen over the past couple of years and it would therefore be good to see that reflected in the number of regular committed givers, working together to spread the load. Phil recorded his thanks to Maureen Rouse, Jenny Hopley and Mary Thomas for their help with the finances. In summary 2008 was a great year from a church finances point of view, the best for quite some considerable time, but as ever there was a challenge to meet.

Phil then invited questions. Further information about Gift Aid was requested. Phil advised that in 2008 the amount was £43,000, which represented a significant proportion of our income. It was remarked on that only one third of the members gave my standing order, but Phil pointed out that one standing order could represent one

family. Richard pointed out that if, on Sunday, 100 people gave £42 (less with Gift Aid) our arrears would be sorted. Richard spoke about tithing and the New Testament idea of being generous, and encouraged everyone to see their giving as worship and to step out in faith. He recommended one half of the tithe to the local church and the other half to other work, such as Tearfund or Open Doors. He was convinced that if everyone followed this pattern our church would not be so tight financially and we would release love and compassion into the world and out into the community. Richard thanked Phil on behalf of the church, and commented that he was constantly grateful to everyone who got on with the behind the scenes jobs.

ELECTIONS TO DEANERY SYNOD

Based on electoral roll numbers presented at the 2007 AGM, the Parish Church could appoint five representatives to serve on Deanery Synod for the three-year term of office 2007-2010. Four representatives had previously been appointed: Ruth Bryant, Jen Ford, Peter Ford and Martin Hodges. Jenny Cornfield had now been nominated and there was unanimous agreement that she been appointed to serve for the remainder of the term.

ELECTIONS TO THE PARISH CHURCH COMMITTEE (PCM/PCC)

Four nominations had been received and with unanimous agreement all were appointed to serve for three years: Katie Appleby, Chris Blunt, Annette Cook and Heather Ford.

REPORTS

Written Reports had been submitted by church groups. These had been made available (on the website and copies in church) in advance of the meeting and copies are appended to the Minutes. The following reports were included and additional comments made.

Building Group Pete Ford was invited to update the meeting on the developments with the building project and work to the church building. Referring to his report, Pete made the following comments:

New Church Rooms: The sketches for the new building were ready to take to Walsall Council's Development Team and we were on schedule for submission for planning permission in June. Some further work was being done to the plans by the architect and the plans would soon be ready to shown to everyone. It was intended that the whole site would be developed and the number of houses was an issue under consideration. The costs to planning permission would be about £24,000, but the diocese would meet these costs upfront and the church would have to find about £8,000 in due course.

Church Building: Pete thanked Tony Phillips for taking on the responsibility for the church fabric, and commented on the current maintenance work, noting John Craddock's accident and asking for prayer for safety in the various tasks being undertaken.

Stonework: Tenders had been received for the urgent work and they had not been as expensive as had been anticipated, but £34,000 would be needed to complete all the repairs. Applications for grants for the work had been submitted, but trusts do not

have money to give in significant amounts and funds were needed in order for the urgent work to go ahead.

Organ: The faculty application to remove the organ was being progressed and public notices were currently being displayed.

Church kitchen: The refurbishment of the kitchen into a new drinks area would cost approximately £4,000.

Pete considered that we were still on schedule to get the 7 aims through this year, as highlighted in his sermon and again in his report. Pete commended Nehemiah 2:8b as a lovely verse to hold on to:

“And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.” Pete was confident that if this really was God’s work then He would help us to raise the funds and move forward.

Helen Gilbert had taken on the communications role for the project and had produced the first project newsletter and copies were made available to everyone at the meeting. Regular newsletters would keep the congregation up to date with the project. A separate booklet was being prepared for wider distribution and would include plans and sketches of the proposed building.

Opportunity was given to the meeting to ask questions:

A timescale for the project was requested and Pete confirmed that it was intended to submit the planning application in June and hoped to start building within three years. In response to a question about the launch of the building fund, Richard commented that the fund was effectively open, but would be formally launched once the plans were available to be shown to everyone. Richard was pleased to advise that Ian Bryant had offered to manage the project accounts. Pete commented that £1.2 million would be required and it was hoped that at least a third of this would come from grants and the sale of the land, leaving £800,000 to be raised. He encouraged everyone to enthuse about the project and to follow up people who used to worship here and who may be interested in the supporting the project. Richard wanted everyone to work together on this, giving according to our ability to give, and, as had been done with the re-ordering, wanted also to give money away: towards maintaining the work here and towards a mission project abroad.

Fellowship Team FIT Ruth Bryant highlighted the forthcoming Summer Fayre and the help that would be needed. The fayre would take place on Sunday 21 June and Richard advised that some open air worship would be included as part of the event. Richard expressed appreciation to Ruth and all the members of the FIT team.

Global and Local Outreach GLO It was noted that giving was going to more local projects as well as overseas work. Jen Ford thanked everyone who gave to the church in order that the church could support overseas and local links. Appreciation was expressed for the gifts to the Glebe Centre via the dustbin and Richard encouraged prayer for the Glebe Centre at what was a difficult time for them. Richard also advised that Brian and Chris Clarke would be visiting the parish church soon to speak about Krasif Aid and their work in Bulgaria. Richard asked Jen to pass on thanks to the GLO team.

Operation South America OSA Laurie Budd offered praise for all that had been achieved in the past twelve months and the solid base on which to now build. Phil Grainger and Andrew and Ella Hardisty were going out to Paraguay this summer. Richard thanked the team.

Church Growth Co-ordinator Richard commented on how great it was to have Rob Cook leading the Alpha and Beta work and continuing with Youth Fellowship.

Small Groups Richard commented that small groups were a very important part of our work. Alan Winser highlighted the number of people involved in small groups and the increase over the past year and the aim to encourage regular members of the congregation back into small groups. He considered it important in a large church that members belonged to small groups for fellowship. He encouraged everyone to pray for the leaders of the groups, many of whom have very busy lives. Richard expressed his appreciation to the group leaders and to Alan and Gillian for co-ordinating the work.

Pastoral Care and Lay Worker Richard thanked Maxine Roberts for being such a brilliant person. Maxine recorded her special thanks to Gavin Burnage, who had made a real difference.

Youth Co-ordinator Matt Wallace would be leaving this summer, having been a member of the Parish Church for ten years and working with the Youth Fellowship for five, and Richard asked that everyone held Matt and the youth worker's position in their prayers.

Über This was a new group, for students, late teens and early 20s, and was particularly welcomed by the students when they came back home. Richard was appreciative of this new area of work.

Youth Fellowship Richard commented on the fantastic team which lead this work.

Pop In From the Richard's point of view Pop In was going very well. A few new leaders were making things easier for the team, especially with preparing meals.

Crafty Sew & Sews An example of friendship evangelism in a gentle way.

Book Sales The excellent breakfasts and good times of fellowship at the book sales were noted.

Fizz A work amongst adults with learning disabilities. Richard commented on the special service involving Fizz a few months previously.

Noah's Ark Richard asked that thanks be passed on to all the team members.

Little Fishes Richard regarded Little Fishes as offering the best child care in Aldridge, and did an important job for our church.

Noah's Ark, Little Fishes, Pop In and Sew & Sews were all areas of ministry where links with the community were developed.

Health & Safety The fire drill on 19 April was reported to meeting.

Safe From Harm Richard thanked Lynne Trew for dealing with this responsibility to children and vulnerable adults. Lynne encouraged prompt return of CRB forms.

Children's Work Richard thanked Sue Fung and everyone who helped with the children's work. Small groups were available for all from the age of 8 years right through to adult. Changes were being implemented in the Sunday morning children's work. Richard advised that the Cooper & Jordan school was appreciative of Sue's work in the school.

Football team Dave Carter was co-ordinating the children's football team and had further information about the proposed Wednesday evening sessions, for which extra help would be needed. Richard noted the Christian input in the motivational talks at the beginning and end of the sessions.

Prayer This work was now being co-ordinated by Gavin Burnage. Richard gave information about the forthcoming 'Healing on the Streets' training event in June with Mark Marks.

MISSION ACTION PLAN (MAP) Richard encouraged everyone to look at the MAP and to pray about the details included, and to pass on any comments to him or the churchwardens.

THANK YOU

Richard thanked all members of the church, 'Without you our church would not be the church it is' and expressed appreciation to many individuals and groups:

Jenny, who released him, inspired and helped him and kept him theologically tight, and to Joe, Maddy and Jonah, who kept him in touch with children's culture.

Gavin: a fantastic addition to the team, who had come into his own, and was very much appreciated.

Richard Taylor: who had done an outstanding job at St Thomas's, steadying the ship, bringing vision and a freshness and moving things on. Richard, Polly, Finlay and Phoebe would be moving to Clapham. The process to appoint a replacement was underway, and Richard asked for prayer that the right person would be appointed.

Joan Fisher: a refreshing and an encouraging woman, who offered a wonderful and different view in the team.

Without all his colleagues Richard observed that ministry would be very difficult.

The parish staff team: Maxine Roberts, Matt Wallace, Rob Cook and Sue Fung, and also Gary Daniel and the team at the Hothouse: Michelle Hart, John Grice and Vicky Richards. Richard also expressed thanks to the office staff: Maureen Rouse, Jenny Hopley and Mary Thomas, who all made the office a very happy place to be.

Richard continued with thanks to:

All the preachers and speakers, who shared their faith in such an open way. Richard recorded particular appreciation for the 'Grace' series of sermons earlier in the year.

The service leaders, who put in such hard work, especially so for the two morning services.

The worship leaders and musicians, Mark Trimmer and the PA team. Richard advised that it was intended that the temporary speakers would be replaced as soon as funds allowed.

Len Trew, an amazing vergger.

Jenny Hopley, for her work as secretary to the PCC and PCM.

The maintenance team, who saved the church a lot of money: Tony Phillips, Pete Ford, John Craddock, Graham Saunders, Alan Pidgeon, Mac Beddows, Brian Palmer and Mike Carr.

Everyone involved in the services to the nursing and care homes, taking church into the community.

Irene Standerwick and Lynne Trew: who helped with the baptism preparation course, and to Ann Harrison who co-ordinated wedding arrangements.

The team who provided meals, and to Jenny Wiedeman and Sarah Nowell for co-ordinating this important pastoral ministry.

Una, Phyllis, Dennis, Rachel and Jan for keeping the church and church rooms clean and tidy.

All who helped with refreshments, to enhance the times of fellowship. Richard remarked on the growing numbers of people staying on for refreshments, possibly as a result of serving real coffee.

Bellringers: Richard commended this traditional activity to do with church.

Welcome team: An important work, co-ordinated by Len Trew and Rob Cook.

Everyone who helped with Alpha, Beta and Small Groups.

Mission Partners.

Richard apologised if he had forgotten anyone. He was very grateful for any ministry, visible or invisible.

Richard encouraged all members, who were ambassadors for Jesus and this church, in their roads, streets, at work, school, and home.

On behalf of the church family the churchwardens expressed appreciation to Richard for his ministry. It was great to work with someone who was so approachable. They also recorded their thanks to Jenny for her support to Richard in his ministry.

Richard responded, stating that it was a privilege to be Rector of Aldridge, and it was an important part of his live and it was lovely to be part of what is going on here, with a great bunch of people.

In conclusion, Richard reminded the meeting of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday evening, when there would be reports on the exciting things happening at Tynings Lane Church, St Thomas' and the Hothouse as well as at the Parish Church.

There was no further business and the meeting closed with the grace.

Signed

19 April 2010