

Steve Newbold (Vicar), welcomed everyone to the meetings and thanked them for coming.

With 36 people in attendance, the proceedings were opened at 6.30pm. After sung worship, Caroline Newbold (Associate Vicar), read Mark 16:1-11 and prayed.

## **ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

This meeting opened at 6.40pm, chaired by Steve Newbold.

Steve began by noting some practical points for the meeting.

Steve offered thanks to Mary Ann Auckland who was willing to stand as Churchwarden again. SN thanked MAA for her hard work with livestreaming, faculties and the many professional skills that she has brought to the role.

Steve also thanked Caroline Jamieson who was now stepping down. Caroline has been churchwarden for four years – longer than she initially intended. SN said that CJ had been a great support to him and Caroline Newbold and that CJ truly has a heart for God and the Kingdom. Whilst some things may have been out of her comfort zone she had grown into the role of Churchwarden particularly with the Buildings Team and Entrance Improvement Project. CJ had in her time as churchwarden run women's breakfasts, organised cleaning days and has been a well respected and much loved part of the leadership team. CJ has often shown sensitivity, a good sense of fun and thinks outside the box. She will be missed.

A gift was presented to CJ and she offered some words of thanks.

### **Election of 2 Churchwardens**

There were two nominations: Mary Ann Auckland and Ann Toley

<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
Mary Ann Auckland	Mark Tate	Jen Whadcoat
Ann Toley	Liz Cooper	Noreen Barnes-Hoggett

There being no other nominations, Mary Ann and Ann were declared elected for a one-year term.

This first meeting closed at 6.50pm.

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## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

Steve Newbold was Chair of this meeting which opened at 6.50pm.

### **1) Apologies**

Apologies were received from the following members of the congregation: Tim Edwards, Jane and Peter Devereux, David Gillingham, Flo Barnes and Alan Hanley.

## 2) Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021

*Proposal to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2021.*

Proposed by Jon Yarrall; Seconded by Linda Rivans.

The meeting agreed unanimously. They were signed by the Vicar as an accurate record of that meeting.

## 3) Matters Arising

None.

## 4) Report of Electoral Roll Officer

*(verbal update provided by Morgen Edwards, Electoral Roll Officer)*

At the 2021 meeting the Electoral Roll was 201. After 22 removals and 12 additions our total is now 191.

## 5) Written Annual Church Report

*A DRAFT of The Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021* was received. The Annual Report, draft wording having already been agreed by the PCC, cannot yet be approved because the accounts have not yet been finalised or sent to the Independent Examiner. Therefore, this meeting noted the report and received comments.

*Comment – Philip Young asked why Pastoral Care was not mentioned more fully.*

*SN responded to say that a sentence on Pastoral Care was included but as the report was not finalised further changes could be made.*

## 6) Report on Church Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

*The Annual Report on the Church fabric, goods and ornaments, prepared by the Churchwardens, which had been approved at the last PCC meeting, was noted.*

No questions or comments

Proposed by Caroline Jamieson, seconded by Mary Ann Auckland and all agreed.

## 7) Elections to the PCC

Steve thanked the Church Council, particularly those retiring: **Qin Li, Jess Ely and Alice Zhang**

This year there were 3 full term vacancies and, as Ann Toley was elected as churchwarden, her place on the PCC for two years also falls vacant. The following people were proposed as new members of the PCC:

Nominee	Proposer	Second
Janet Sehgal	Sally Anniss	Liz Cooper
Jen Whadcoat	Jane Maffett	David Gillingham
Xiaoe Li	Qin Li	Sue Charlton
Alice Zhang (2 yr vacancy)	Susan Dixon	Andrew Dixon

There being no other nominations, Janet Sehgal, Jen Whadcoat, Xiaoe Li and Alice Zhang were declared elected.

## 8) Finance Report

### 2021

Steve explained that only provisional accounts were available at the meeting. Still a couple of figures to be finalised and then sent to the independent examiner. The accounts show that our income did not fall as much as feared and our expenditure fell due to the pandemic. There is therefore an unexpected but welcome surplus of just under £30,000 across all funds.

#### *Questions and comments*

*Philip Young – Expected to see Furlough income. Why was this not there, did it reflect mismanagement? How have we managed?*

*Jane Maffett responded – we did furlough both Gordon Nunn and Beth Skelton on a flexible basis – this is shown at the foot of page 4 of the accounts under HMRC Grant.*

*PY Responded - £4,000 seems very low. Concerned how we managed our finances with claiming such a small amount.*

*JM responded – Beth was only furloughed for a few months before she left us at Easter. Gordon was furloughed on a flexible basis with a gradual return over the summer 2021. Jo Leeds was on maternity leave. Morgen Edwards is the only other employee and was not furloughed as she was very busy throughout. So the furlough claimed was both accurate and appropriate.*

*JM further commented that to end the year with a surplus of £29,000 when we were expecting a deficit might sound like funds weren't managed well but we had £13,000 income we were not expecting, furlough grant monies, no salary for a Worship Pastor and there were no events so less expenditure. SN further commented that one large donation is now being used for repairs to the roof.*

### **b) Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

We need to elect our independent examiner each year and our current examiner, Val Steward has agreed to hold this role again for the next 12 months.

*Proposal that Valerie Steward continue as our Independent Examiner.*

Proposed by Jane Maffett; Seconded by Dinos Horattides and agreed unanimously.

Steve Newbold expressed thanks to Sanjay Joshi for all his hard work. He has been our Treasurer for seven years. Sanjay is willing to carry on as Treasurer. Thanks also to Chris and Helen Irwin-Childs our Giving Co-Ordinators.

## 9) Vicar's Report

- Steve started by thanking the Leadership Team for their hard work; and also Morgen Edwards who holds the dual roles of Communications Manager and Children's Worker and Gordon Nunn who manages our Church Centre.
- He also thanked Sanjay Joshi our Treasurer and Chris and Helen Irwin-Childs our Giving Coordinators for all their hard work in challenging times as well as all who have help with our Sunday services.
- Both the Pastoral Care Team and Connect Group leaders have worked hard throughout the year – thank you.
- And thanks to the many others who make the life of the church happen.
- Steve recognised that the last two years have been tough for us all and even though life looks much more normal now, the pandemic has had a lasting effect on church life.
- We are now in a season of restoration, renewal and rebuilding. It's a challenging time but also one of hope and opportunity.

- Steve highlighted some of the good things that have occurred in recent months.
  - During 2021 we ran 2 online Alpha courses and saw people come to faith.
  - We have recently seen 2 baptisms and just last Sunday 3 people were confirmed and shared powerful stories of God working in their lives.
  - We have held thanksgiving and dedication services for 3 young children.
  - We have seen a number of new people join us at both the 9am and 10.30am service – one came because she had been watching our online services but had no previous connection to a church.
  - We've had visits from our new Archdeacon and Bishop.
  - We have seen some improvements to the building – not least our livestreaming equipment and the more recent roof and cupola repairs.
  - We have also developed plans for the improvement to the front entrance and are now awaiting planning permission so that we can take the next steps. This work will be funded by the St Luke's Trust, subject to agreement from the Charity Commissioners.
- Steve then went on to look at some of the challenges affecting St Stephens.
- He stated that the most visible change is that there are now fewer of us than there were in 2019.
- The Leadership Team have done a lot of work analysing this and there are a mix of reasons with people moving away, leaving the church or not wanting to join in as they used to.
- The overall effect is that, compared to 2019, our Sunday morning attendances are now over 10% fewer at the 9am service and 25 – 30% fewer at the 10.30am service.
- Further as many have reassessed their lives in light of their own pandemic experience many are not attending church as frequently as they used to and some not wanting to do the things that they did before.
- This has affected our ability to run things as easily as we used to, for example the Café, technical rotas, youth and children's teams.
- Steve stated that we are not alone – virtually every church is going through something similar and the societal changes that were already happening have accelerated and become more pronounced.
- For the foreseeable future this reduction in numbers has a wider effect than just Sunday morning attendance.
- Not only do we have fewer people to do regular things but we also have a smaller base to put on a major event and going forward, we will have to think differently.
- Another big change over this past year has been having a smaller staff team.
- Sam Sanya left us in July and we have had no curate since then. Beth our Youth Pastor had left us last Easter and Jo our Worship Pastor decided not to return from maternity leave in November. So those of us who remain on staff have been working extra hard to try to keep the show on the road whilst trying, so far unsuccessfully, to recruit to vacant posts.
- We were grateful that Caroline Newbold was willing and able to step up and take on a temporary paid role to help out more with clergy activity and to continue to cover the vacant youth work position.
- The good news is that we will welcome the Robinson family in July when Ruth becomes our new curate.
- We are currently recruiting for a Worship Pastor and hoping and praying for a successful outcome.
- We will be advertising again for the Youth Pastor soon as it's vital to invest in our young people.
- Another change that will happen later this year is that our Licensed Lay Minister Enid Barron will be stepping back from leadership. Enid was licensed as a Lay Minister in Dec 2010 and prior to that had been serving here in so many ways. Enid will step back from her roles on the Leadership Team and PCC but will still be involved in a number of areas of church life and from time to time will still preach and lead services.

- One of the ways the Diocese of London are seeking to grow is to plant new churches and congregations.
- It's 5 years now since the PCC supported and agreed to part fund the work on Gurnell Grove led by the Tate family.
- Good to see that alongside the many initiatives that have taken root over the past few years, a new Sunday afternoon service was launched on Easter Day. This meets weekly in the Gurnell Community Centre and is supported by a small group from St Stephen's.
- This is such important work in our own Parish and we are thrilled to be a part of it – let's pray that lives would be changed and many people would come to faith in Jesus through all that is happening.
- So what of the future as we seek to rebuild, renew and restore?
- Firstly we want to strengthen our staff team.
- And we want proactively to encourage all those who are part of the church but especially those who might be on the fringes or coming infrequently. We can all help by:
  - Using Café time to talk to different people especially families and younger folk. Look out and consciously speak to someone different each week.
  - Be more intentional and invite some new people round for coffee or a meal to get to know them and encourage them. This is especially important for families.
  - We all need to become more proactive in inviting people to church and to things like Alpha. We were reminded in a testimony at the Confirmation of the importance of a repeated invitation.
  - If you are in contact with someone who used to attend church why not encourage them to return?
- We face many challenges as we seek to move forward but we are an Easter people – we are a people of hope. We believe in new life, in transformation and in a God who makes the impossible possible.
- Let's together pray for that and commit to it as we move forward so that over the next year we may see more people coming to faith and joining us and God's Kingdom coming in power.

### **Questions and comments on the above**

Liz Cooper commented that it is normal in society that people who keep the show on the road are generally 50+. Hoping that when Ruth comes she will encourage more younger people to get involved.

Dinos Horattides expressed thanks to James Harvey for playing at the 9am services when he can. Sung Worship is very important and he wanted the PCC to consider two things:

- 1) reintroduce the offertory hymn
- 2) have a supplementary person to play at the 9am so technology doesn't need to be used in place of a person.

SN replied that another member of our congregation has come forward to play at 9am but the organists we used pre-Pandemic are no longer available. We are working to address this situation.

Marni Allen expressed thanks to those running the Livestream as it has been very beneficial to her when not able to attend church to be able to watch from home at the time or later. She has even shared the link abroad to family.

SN offered thanks to Mary Ann and George Auckland and Andrew and Jen Whadcoat for all their hard work with the livestreaming.

John Anniss offered encouragement and thanks. Covid really hit us and numbers are less but he has been encouraged by seeing the return of some younger families with their children, seeing the children dancing – and seeing the work of Morgen Edwards and the children’s team. Thank you very much.

Ann Toley said that she was only a member of St Stephen’s because of the welcome she received when she first came, so it is important that we all continue to work at welcoming new people.

Ian Jamieson offered thanks to Steve and Caroline for all their hard work and leading us through the pandemic year and we appreciate them both.

The meeting closed with a song and the Grace at 7:34pm.

Signed as record..... Date.....