



Minutes of St Luke's Church Annual Congregational Meeting

held on

Sunday 23rd April 2017 at 11.30 a.m.
at St Luke's Church

Opening Worship

The Opening Worship was a Morning Worship service followed by a short refreshment break before the business meeting.

1. **Welcome and Apologies for absence:** Rev Chris Stebbing opened with prayer and welcomed 79 attendees to the business meeting with apologies received from 18 (details recorded).
2. **Minutes of the Autumn Congregational Meeting held on 9th October 2016** were approved unanimously with no matters arising.
3. **Proposal to amend the 'Same Family/Same Generation' Resolution passed at the Autumn Congregational Meeting held on 3rd October 2010**
 - 3.1. Lesley spoke to the paper explaining the reasoning behind the proposal to allow two members of the same family and same generation to serve concurrently Trustees. She made clear that the proposal related only to specified key roles and that the relaxation would not extend to membership of Standing Committee.
 - 3.2. She explained how the existing 'rule' could prevent Trustees from retaining and benefiting from particular skills and knowledge.
 - 3.3. She confirmed that in adherence to the 'rule,' the Honorary Secretary to the Trustees was standing down due to a same family/same generation clash with the Safeguarding Officer, who in accordance with recommended best practice, would be co-opted onto Trustees at this ACM.
 - 3.4. There were a number of comments from the meeting, summarised below:
 - 3.4.1. Colin Peskett strongly opposed the proposal on the basis that the existing resolution has served us well for many years and that it is a good ruling. He asserted that two member from the same family in key positions was wrong and moved that the meeting should vote against the proposal;
 - 3.4.2. Nigel Thompson referred to the Charity Commission and concerns around 'conflict of interest' and 'conflict of loyalty.' He felt it unnecessary to consider changing the 'rule' as with over 250 church members there should be enough people willing to fill vacancies. He moved we should maintain the status quo and recommended the meeting vote against the proposal;
 - 3.4.3. Rev. Chris felt the general principle behind the existing 'rule' to be ideal but the fact is, we are not getting volunteers to fill the key roles;
 - 3.4.4. Margaret Mitchell felt we should be working together in an environment of mutual trust;
 - 3.4.5. Gren Morgan spoke against the proposal on the basis that church members must take responsibility properly and get involved – we have enough skills to fill roles;
 - 3.4.6. Peter Armstrong highlighted the need for specialist skills in smaller organisations and that we need to embrace those skills to enable us to comply with the number of rules and regulations applicable to our operations;
 - 3.4.7. Alan Combe made the point that members are not coming forward to fill roles within church;
 - 3.4.8. Liz Tipple spoke of some of the difficulties she and Chris had experienced when serving at the same time;
 - 3.4.9. In response to questions from Ann Armstrong and Bill Craft, it was confirmed there are 20 Trustees plus Rev Chris as Chair and that co-opted Trustees, of which there can be a maximum of four, have full voting rights.
 - 3.5. By a show of hands, the meeting voted as follows: In favour 24; Against 30; Abstentions 20, and therefore the motion wasn't carried.
4. **Membership Roll Report**
 - 4.1. Peter Armstrong spoke to the Membership Roll Report, a copy of which had been distributed with the meeting papers. Memberships had increased by 1 during the year with 9 leaving and 10 joining, giving a total membership of 255 (this figure at variance with that in the Annual Report due to 2 late joiners).

- 4.2. The balance between denominations and also those living inside and outside the parish remained the same as in the previous year.
- 4.3. Peter encouraged people to join the church and explained the process for doing so.
5. **Election of Officers, Denominational Representatives and the new Trustees**
- 5.1. The following nominees, duly proposed and seconded, were elected unopposed:
- 5.1.1. **Churchwardens:** Steve Ashton and Colin Roberts
- 5.1.2. **Trainee Churchwarden:** Claire Marr
- 5.1.3. **Membership Roll Officer:** Peter Armstrong
- 5.1.4. **Deanery Synod Representatives:** Colin Peskett and Sue Prestwood
- 5.1.5. **Representative to South Yorkshire Fellowship of Baptist Churches:** Myra Wilson
- 5.1.6. **Representative to the Methodist Circuit Meeting:** Gren Morgan
- 5.1.7. **Trustees** (9 vacancies): Lesley Combe, Chris Ellis, Wendy Finch, Claire Furbey, Gren Morgan, Catherine Mirfin, Colin Roberts, Linda Russell and Nigel Thompson.
6. For election by Trustees but as a point of information to the meeting:
- 6.1.1. **Honorary Treasurer:** Eric Stevens nominated.
- 6.1.2. **Honorary Secretary to the Trustees:** No nominations received.
7. **Denominational Meetings to Satisfy Legal Requirements**
- 7.1. **Anglican Church**
- 7.1.1. ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS TO ELECT CHURCHWARDENS.
The Parishioners present unanimously accepted Steve Ashton and Colin Roberts as the Churchwardens.
- 7.1.2. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING TO ELECT THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL.
The Anglican and Multi-member Trustees (together with the Diocesan Synod Representatives, Colin Peskett and Sue Prestwood, the Deanery Synod Representatives, Colin Peskett and Sue Prestwood and the four Readers, Lesley Combe, Colin Roberts, Fiona Stevens and Bill Wade) will continue as the Parochial Church Council.
- 7.1.3. ELECTION OF THREE JOINT COUNCIL MEMBERS.
The Anglican nominations for election to the Joint Council, Alan Combe, Colin Peskett and Linda Russell, all being duly nominated, proposed and seconded, were elected by the Parochial Church Council unopposed.
- 7.2. **Baptist Church**
- 7.2.1. ELECTION OF THREE JOINT COUNCIL MEMBERS.
The Baptist nominations for election to the Joint Council, Peter Armstrong, Ann Emmott and Rosemary Sales, all being duly nominated, proposed and seconded, were elected by the Baptist and Multi-members unopposed.
- 7.3. **Methodist Church**
- 7.3.1. ELECTION OF CHURCH STEWARDS.
The Methodist and Multi-members present unanimously accepted Steve Ashton and Colin Roberts as their Church Stewards.
- 7.3.2. ELECTION OF METHODIST CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS.
In the light of the small number of Methodist members on the St Luke's Trustee body, all the Methodist and Multi-members will continue as the Methodist Church Council, this being the normal practice for Methodist Churches of around 50 members.
- 7.3.3. ELECTION OF THREE JOINT COUNCIL MEMBERS.
The Methodist nominations for election to the Joint Council, Lesleyann Holland and Gren Morgan, both being duly nominated, proposed and seconded, were elected by the Methodist Church Council unopposed.
- 7.4. **United Reformed Church**
- 7.4.1. ELECTION OF THREE JOINT COUNCIL MEMBERS.
The URC nominations for election to the Joint Council, Freda Digby and Bob Prestwood, both being duly nominated, proposed and seconded, were elected by the United Reformed and Multi-members unopposed.
8. **Trustee Annual Report 2016:** There were no questions and the report was accepted unanimously.
9. **Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements 2016**
- 9.1. Eric reported that last year the Unrestricted Fund (money we can use for any purpose) was in deficit by £4,720; including the Restricted Funds (money used for specific purposes), the deficit totalled £5,333.
- 9.2. He went on to highlight the factors that have contributed to the deficit (compared to the previous year's excess in Unrestricted Funds of £15,825):
- 9.2.1. **Giving to the Church** amounted to £163,800 in 2016 compared to £182,584 in 2015 (a decrease of over £18,784). Putting this in context, the giving in 2015 was exceptional and last year's giving continued a general trend of increasing giving.

9.2.2. **Salaries:** No new staff were employed during 2016 but it was the first full year of our Children & Families Worker. Salaries increased by nearly £6,923.

9.2.3. **Common Fund (Parish Share + Ministry Contributions):** A 2% increase amounted to an extra £1,590.

9.2.4. **Architect's Fees** in connection with work on the proposed extension totalled nearly £2,953.

9.2.5. The highlighted figures total £30,250. The difference between the 2015 and 2016 balances is £20,545.

9.3. **Reserves:** At the end of 2016, this stood at £101,493. Our Reserves Policy requires a total reserve of £64,000 so we have an excess of about £37,000 which is a healthy situation.

9.4. An explanation was provided of the difference between Designated and Restricted funds.

9.5. With increasing costs and planned/promised giving only a little higher than 2016, Eric emphasised that 2017 has the potential to be a difficult year financially. However, God can do great things!

9.6. Eric concluded by thanking Sue Craft (Assistant Treasurer) for her work on the year-end accounts. Her involvement had been extensive due to Eric's incapacity following accident.

9.7. **Appointment of Independent Examiners:** The meeting agreed unanimously to the re-appointment of Hart Shaw as independent examiners.

10. St. Luke's Church Charitable Trust Financial Statements for the year 2016

10.1. Colin Peskett reminded members of the reason for and purpose of the Charitable Trust and that it is an independent charity but associated with St Luke's. It owns and looks after 46, Peterborough Road, the house occupied by our Youth Worker and family.

10.2. There are 4 Trustees; Colin Dewick (Chair), Colin Peskett (Treasurer), Julie Heathcote and Rachel Brown who replaced Wendy Finch who had served the Trust since its inception in June 2000.

10.3. Colin highlighted various aspects of the accounts, thanking on behalf of the Trustees, the 30 families who donate to the Trust.

10.4. With the present levels of income and expenditure it is predicted that the mortgage, payable at a rate of £1,000 per calendar month, will be paid off in the next 5 years, ahead of term.

11. Vicar/Minister's Report

11.1. Chris began by stating that we have had a period of tremendous growth over the last few years. Sunday 10am attendance is now normally around 180 or 200 each week; 11:30am services are going well; midweek groups are bursting at the seams; Messy Church has attracted a whole new congregation and we're more involved in the local school. Special events are working well as is Growing Leaders. We get hundreds of people coming to special, one-off services like Christingle and parade services. We are really blessed and we give thanks to God.

11.2. He went on to make the point that if we want to continue to grow, we need to change the way we do things and view the following challenges as opportunities:

11.2.1. There are more people now than the pastoral team can keep up with, so it needs everyone to pull together to look out for people, particularly the elderly and vulnerable. To help us with this, Bill Wade has offered to be our Older Persons' worker to point people in the right direction for help and to be a voice for older folk;

11.2.2. Making Church work better for and with the younger working age adults to help them play a full part in Church life. Trustees are setting up a sub-group to look at how we can help younger working age adults play a full part in Church life;

11.2.3. The lack of space in our buildings is beginning to limit some of our activities. Having explored several options with our architect, we are now looking in detail at how we can extend the premises in keeping with our original objectives.

11.2.4. The final and perhaps most important challenge is how to help move people from contact with Church – through groups or special services – to a place of Christian faith. Chris invited the meeting to think of ways to help people make the move to a point of making a decision to follow Jesus. He made the point that people are far more likely to come to something if they are coming with someone they know.

11.3. Stating there may be other challenges that we don't yet know about, Chris encouraged us that under God's guidance and with his help and if we pull together, they will turn into opportunities for us to continue to play a part in God's purposes being worked out in Lodge Moor.

12. Churchwardens' Report - Warden's farewell

12.1. Lesley explained that the task of warden at St Luke's is made relatively straightforward because of the veritable army of folk serving God in the life of the church.

12.2. A large part of the wardens' role is to keep the practical running of the church on track, and at the end of her two year term, Lesley acknowledged the support she had received. She thanked her co-wardens Steve and Colin with special thanks to Ruth who had served an extra year after Roger Faulkner moved away from Sheffield.

- 12.3. She highlighted the many activities and roles at St Luke's involving so many people and thanked them for their involvement and support.
 - 12.4. Noting that our premises are "heavily used," Lesley pointed out that we now have a situation where virtually every available room in the church building is taken up by an activity every weekday. St Luke's remains an attractive venue for a wide variety of both church and non-church activities.
 - 12.5. Trustee sub-groups continue to work well, discussing and progressing various areas of church life and helping to shorten Trustee agendas. The Community Profiling sub-group has worked hard to bring together detailed information about Lodge Moor.
 - 12.6. Whether performing a role in the life of the church or not, Lesley thanked everyone for their faith, witness, prayers and for choosing to be at St Luke's.
 - 12.7. Thanks were also expressed to Alan for his unswerving support and encouragement.
 - 12.8. Lesley expressed her gratitude to Rev. Chris – a church leader who loves the Lord and is *the* eternal optimist. He is unfailingly positive, and when tricky issues arise, he generally simply sees an opportunity to trust God more. He has such a heart for those who don't yet know Jesus.
 - 12.9. **Looking forward**, Lesley highlighted the following:
 - 12.9.1. Finding more flexible ways of doing things – not expecting all that we do now to be done the same way in the future
 - 12.9.2. Feeling our way forward with the church extension. Finding that balance between keeping the momentum going, while taking huge care to make the right decisions
 - 12.9.3. Operating less in our own strength and listening to God – are we too busy?
 - 12.9.4. Continuing to be a welcoming church.
 - 12.10. Lesley quoted from Hebrews 10 - "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, but let us encourage one another . . ."
 - 12.11. In conclusion, we should never forget what a privilege it is to live in such a beautiful part of the world, to have our buildings as a focus for our Christian walk together, to be able to worship freely and to have loving, trusting and serving God at the centre of all we do. Thank you, Lord, for giving us this small patch of your world – may your will be done, your kingdom come.
13. The meeting closed with the sharing of the Grace.