

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, COGGES

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
held in the Church on Sunday 26th April 2009

The Vicar, Rev Andrew Sweeney, welcomed everybody to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The Meeting of Parishioners had been called under the provisions of the *Churchwardens Measure 2001*, and the only item of business was the election of two Churchwardens for the following twelve months.

Nominations as Churchwarden were received for Colin Johnson and David Lockwood, and Mr Sweeney declared that Mr Johnson and Mr Lockwood had been duly elected and congratulated them. Mr Sweeney thanked them both for all they had done as Churchwardens in the past year.

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The Annual Parochial Church Meeting then resumed.

1. Elections

(a) Elected members of the Parochial Church Council

Mr Sweeney thanked Jenny Allen, Jackie Archer, Tessa Cox, Valerie Hill and Hilary Warner whose term as PCC members was ending.

Nominations for election as members of the Parochial Church Council were received for Tessa Cox, Ali Laithwaite, Heather McCulloch, Gareth Regan and Hilary Warner, and Mr Sweeney declared that they had been duly elected to serve as PCC members for the next three years.

(b) Appointment of Independent Examiner

Mr Keith Harwood proposed the appointment of A J Carter & Co as independent examiner for the year, and this was seconded by Mr Gordon Spankie and agreed.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 27th April 2008 had been circulated beforehand, and were accepted and signed.

3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll Officer, Miss Jackie Archer, reported that the electoral roll had been revised, with 30 names added and 1 removed. There were now 218 names enrolled (compared to 189 in 2008). 119 people were resident in the parish and 99 non-resident. Miss Archer thanked Mrs Curwood for her time helping to put the information onto disk.

Mr Sweeney said that it was good that the Electoral Roll reflected the membership of the church, and thanked Miss Archer for all her hard work. He was pleased that the electoral roll numbers were growing, from 156 two years earlier to 218 today.

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Mr Tony Southern asked whether the parish boundary matched the catchment area for the Blake School, and Mr Sweeney responded that it did not, as the school catchment area was to do with the distance from home to school.

4. Annual report and financial statements

Copies of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2008 had been published with the papers for the meeting.

Dr Margaret Noble asked whether the church debts were just the reordering loans, and the PCC Treasurer, Keith Harwood, replied that there were interest free loans of £56,500 for the reordering project, although there was still £13,000 of the £72,000 cost of the project to be paid. In 2007/8, the PCC had put aside £11,000 toward loan repayment, so there was now £23,000 designated towards loan repayment in 2012.

Mr Phil Hunter noted that there appeared to be a 20% fall in income, and Mr Harwood replied that this was because there had been two very large gifts (amounting to more than £20,000) in 2007. However, voluntary giving was not increasing at the same rate as the size of congregation.

Mr Harwood reported that there had been a deficit of £7,000 of which £5,000 had been an unrealised loss in the value of investments in the Chancel endowment fund (from £21,000 to £16,000).

Mr Harwood noted that the running costs of the Cogges Church Centre had been much higher than usual — on average this was about £10,000 and it had been only £6,454 in 2007, but in 2008 the boiler had been replaced, the interior of the building had been redecorated and safety glazing had been fitted, so total expenditure had been £20,673. Mr Hunter reported that the Church Centre management committee now had a five year budget and would ensure that in future expenditure was spread more evenly.

Miss Elizabeth Knowles said that it was reassuring that repayment of the loans was in good shape, and that there was likely to be expenditure on buildings so careful stewardship was needed. Mr Harwood said that further phases of the reordering project, lighting and audio-visual equipment, had been deferred until the current debts were cleared; the reordering fund was £72,000 overdrawn.

Mr Sweeney said that he hoped that the discussion would reassure those who had been concerned about the reordering fund, as we were in a positive position to repay the debts in 2012, and would ensure that we honoured the goodwill of the lenders.

Miss Sheila Townsend asked about the £1,500 in professional fees, and Mr Harwood explained that this was the cost of auditing the 2006 and 2007 financial statements, which had been necessary because expenditure in 2006 had exceeded £250,000. In previous years Mr Alaric Smith had independently examined the accounts without charge, but he was no longer available. The cost of independently examining the accounts for 2008 would be £600.

Mr Harwood reported that the "Discovery Days" funds would be brought into the Cogges PCC accounts as a restricted fund which could only be spent on the work on Madley Park.

Miss Knowles said that it had been very helpful to have such a clear explanation of the financial statements.

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Mr Sweeney thanked Mr Harwood for doing a phenomenal job fulfilling such an important role, and said that we were indebted. There was applause.

Mr Sweeney thanked Mr Alaric Smith for all his work over the years examining the accounts.

5. Churchwardens' Report on the Fabric of the Church

A report by the churchwardens on the Fabric, Ornaments and Goods of St Mary's Church had been published in the papers for the meeting.

Mrs Gill Curwood asked whether it would be possible to have a second larger chalice as the present one needed to be refilled. Dr Noble suggested that someone might give this as a memorial, and Mr Sweeney thought that this suggestion might be included in the *Update* for a few weeks. Mr Harwood suggested using the smaller chalice at the front of church where the jug is.

Mr Sweeney said that data projection was proving useful at the 11 o'clock service, and that he was delighted that the roof was now water-tight and that the window in the boiler house had been fixed. The chancel door would be returning from refurbishment in two weeks time. He was very grateful to those who mowed the churchyard grass.

Mrs Sissel Harrison reported that the floor slabs were sometimes very slippery, and it was agreed that the vicar and wardens would discuss this.

Mr Sweeney thanked the wardens, Colin Johnson and David Lockwood, for their hard work throughout the year, and for their support.

6. Witney Deanery Synod Report

A report on the activities of the Witney Deanery Synod had been published in the papers for the meeting.

7. Report on Churches Together in Witney and District

A report on the activities of Churches Together in Witney and District had been published in the papers for the meeting, and there were no questions. Mr Sweeney thanked Mrs Hilary Warner for all she did as representative for the past five years. He also thanked those who had helped with refreshments after the Easter Rise service. Mrs Judy Poole said that she would be willing to deputise for Mr Nathaniel Miles as representative to Churches Together when he was not available.

8. Vicar's report

Mr Sweeney said that 2008 had been a challenging year, with significant numerical growth moving us from the realm of a small church to a medium church. One challenge was that the primary circle of belonging would no longer be the church as a whole, but a specific affinity group, and that men's and women's ministries had become vital. A healthy fellowship and home group structure needed to operate effectively outside corporate worship activities, and he was delighted that Mrs Jane Harper had done a wonderful job as co-ordinator. Changes were also needed in leadership to use the skills and giftedness of laity and staff and to help the church imagine its new future.

Mr Sweeney said that we had been fortunate to have Canon Chris Neal (CMS) to show us a vision of what sort of community we needed to become to help those around us. We needed to identify with the life of Jesus, transform the

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secular society and live highly communal lives. Canon Neal had led a parish away day and had then encouraged the PCC and ministry team to draw together the themes that had been emerging and to develop a values statement. This work would be continuing in 2009.

Mr Sweeney reported that a substantial gift had been given towards the appointment of a youth pastor, that we were looking forward to the arrival of Andrew Pritchard as curate in July, that he would be meeting with those who attended Jigsaw to agree a plan from September and that Greg Holmes had been accepted for training for the ordained ministry. He said that we were very fortunate to have Rev Roger Howell and Rev Cyril Tennent as retired clergy.

The full text of Mr Sweeney's talk is available on the church web site at <http://coggesparish.com/apcm/2009/vicar>

9. Church activity reports

A number of other reports had been circulated beforehand with the papers for the meeting: Children and young people's work (*Junior church and CYFA; Baby & Toddler Group; Starship Discovery Holiday Club 2008*), Prayer (*Healing prayer ministry; Thursday prayer group*), Fellowship Development (*Pastorates, Home groups*), Worship, Outreach (*Cogges Seniors' Group and Care group, Cogges Church Centre; Welcome packs; Discovery Days Community Project; Baptism preparation classes; the Marriage course; the Besom in Witney; JAM Club; Alpha, Women's events*) and Missionary links. Comments on all the reports were invited.

Children's work: Mr Sweeney said that it was encouraging to see so many young people in our church and to see the young people's music group leading worship at the celebration services.

Ministry to the elderly: Mrs Judy Poole asked about ministry to the elderly, as there were some who would like to come to church but were unable. Miss Archer pointed out that transport was no longer offered to the Cogges Seniors Group monthly meeting, and that there were no younger helpers at the services at the Elms. Mr Sweeney said that it was a complex challenge — we were very fortunate to have half our congregation in the 28–50 age range but this meant that they were usually at work or looking after young children during the day. Dr Noble asked what had happened to “Cogges Neighbours” and Mr Sweeney said that this had not taken off, but that he was discussing with Mrs Sue Spankie how to address pastoral care.

Mr Ken Smith mentioned that nobody from the church was involved in the Cogges Welfare Trust since he had retired and that the Trust needed a secretary. The Trust was concerned with the welfare of our parish, and dealt with real problems people had. The Trust met three times each year, but Trustees needed to be an ear on the parish to hear of needs. Mr Sweeney said that part of the challenge of the Wadards Meadow and Blakes Avenue estates was knowing who had financial need. Mr Smith thought that the Trust could be swallowed up into a Witney charity, but that it owned a field at the edge of the Witney development area which could be valuable.

Mrs Spankie said that a lot of pastoral care was happening through the schools, and Mr David Eaton said that all the schools in our parish were involved in trying to provide extended services for the community. Mrs Spankie said that the schools were looking out for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Mr Smith

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said that the Head of Blake School was involved with the Cogges Welfare Trust. Mr Sweeney said that pastoral care needed to get better.

10. Other matters

Mr Sweeney confirmed that there would be an Alpha course starting in September, which would be led by himself and Mr Pritchard. There would also be a marriage course starting soon.

Mr Sweeney thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

A vote of thanks was proposed for Mr Sweeney for all he did for the church.

A vote of thanks was proposed for Rev Penny Joyce for everything she had done in the parish.

The meeting ended with the Grace.