

St.Mary the Virgin Ovingham
Annual General Meeting
28th April 2019

Annual Vestry Meeting

Present: 22 parishioners were in attendance. Chaired by Rev T Birch

Apologies: Robbie Kalbraeir, Ruth Kalbraeir, Caroline Grinsted, Margaret Thompson, Simon Harper, Jane Hamilton

- 1) The meeting was held in Church at 2.00pm
- 2) The Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th April 2018 were summarised by Neil Ramsey and signed by the Chair.
- 3) Election of Church Wardens

Simon Harper and Kate Halford have agreed to continue as Church Wardens. No other nominations were received.

There being no further nominations, Simon Harper and Kate Halford were duly elected.

Simon Harper	Proposed by	C Fulton
	Seconded by	Margaret Turnbull

Kate Halford	Proposed by	C Fulton
	Seconded by	M Davenport

Simon Harper commented that we will need to consider the appointment of new Wardens next year.

Rev Tom Birch commented that it was good practice to offer opportunities for new Wardens to be periodically appointed.

The meeting closed at 2.10 a.m.

Signed by the Chair

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Present: 22 parishioners were in attendance. Chaired by P Pescod

- 1) Apologies** Were received from Robbie Kalbraeir, Ruth Kalbraeir, Caroline Grinsted, Margaret Thompson, Simon Harper, Jane Hamilton
- 2) Minutes of the Meeting** held on 29th April 2018 were summarised by Neil Ramsey and signed by the Chairman Rev T Birch
- 3) Electoral Roll** – There are now 95 names on the Electoral Roll at the date of the meeting. A new Roll has been established this year and thanks are expressed to Jackie Scrowther who has delivered this.
- 4) Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC during 2018.**

Secretary report to the 2019 APCM. Workings of the PCC in 2018.

The PCC met 5 times during the year.

The main focus of the PCC during the year involved the need to establish closer relationships with St Oswins Wylam and to complete the formal documentation leading to the establishment of a joint benefice with the Reverend Tom Birch as the Vicar of the joint Parishes. This was formally achieved in August.

The PCC discussed and agreed changes to service times to coordinated with St Oswald's Wylam. The services follow a four week cycle. Lay Led services were introduced once per month and they require development to encourage the congregation to become engaged and fully participate. This is an ongoing challenge.

In addition, joint services between the two churches now takes place whenever there is a fifth Sunday arising during a month and they encourage and enable closer relationships within the joint benefice.

The PCC also embraced the need to recognise that the church needs to adapt and evolve, to become more relevant to the communities it serves. The church needs to encourage engagement and to grow in significance, be more visible and welcoming by recognising and enabling the needs of the people it serves. In order to achieve this and to lead the Church forward a small working party was established to implement an initiative called Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCIG).

During the year the working group undertook training to enable it to launch the initiative and identify the priorities of the joint parishes in order to achieve growth. Once these have been established the PCC will take steps to ensure that the planning becomes reality and changes and improvements are made to provide the opportunity for people within our community to be encouraged to embrace the spiritual and wellbeing opportunities provided by the church to enhance our lives.

Fund raising for the Heating and Development Fund continued during the year, but it was also recognised that the community funding contributions were becoming exhausted and the need to seek institutional funding opportunities is now essential to complete the project.

The PCC established that sufficient funds were available to apply for the faculty to install a toilet in the old Vicars vestry and the work to proceed is ongoing led by the building committee.

M Davenport continues to lead the ECO agenda regarding the Church, but the PCC has struggled to find the resources with all other priorities to understand what can be achieved and how to achieve those priorities.

The commitment to contribute 100% of the requested Parish Share within the Diocese and significantly within the Parish was debated by the PCC and we continue to contribute our full contribution.

The Archdeacons visit was carried out by the Archdeacon Peter Robinson and confirmed that all procedures were up to date

Our director of Music Margaret Turnbull has again provided the church with magnificent music and singing over the year. The numbers in the choir has remained stable and young people continue to join and senior members leave. The contribution of the senior members of the choir is greatly appreciated by the PCC and the congregation.

The P.C.C. dealt with various other routine matters during the year

5) Financial Statement of the PCC to the Year Ending December 2018

Margaret Davenport presented the financial Statements ending 31st December 2018. Each Parishioner received a shortened version of the accounts. A more detailed and in depth account would be made available in Church for inspection and a copy sent to the Diocese.

The general fund is in credit at this time, as it is envisaged that income will be approximately £4K more than anticipated due to the increased tax reclaims. This is due to two main areas. The Parish Giving Scheme and the VAT returns have been applied for more promptly by Moira D'Evelein to whom we are grateful. This will however lead to a lower amount recovered from HMRC next year.

This year income is approximately be £47,000 and this will fall slightly short of our expenditure of £48,000. It is the intention to use £1000 currently held in the religious education fund to partially fund the choir and the organist's honorarium.

A meeting of the finance committee comprising of Rev Tom Birch, the Treasurer, and the Church Wardens is planned for July.

The general fund balance stood at £29,299 at the year end (31st December 2018). This is a positive result for the year as for several years we have generated an operating deficit of £2K each year. This has been funded from the general fund which reduces our reserve. Despite this year's positive return, we must continue to view any deterioration of the general fund with concern.

The Heating and Development fund stood at £16,099 at the year end and the money raised by the Hadrian's Wall sponsored walk of £4409 will be added to it.

We have secured a reduction in the insurance costs.

The Church is being used more and as a result the heating and lighting costs have increased.

Our monthly heating and lighting payments have been underestimated so our tariffs will now increase.

The costs of our Vicar are now shared 50 : 50 with St Oswins Wylam.
The new Parish Giving collection scheme has improved cashflow.
Our Treasurer Margaret Davenport is standing down at this meeting. Rev Tom Birch and Barbara Pescod thanked her and Moira D'Evelin for their significant contribution.
It was asked for clarification as to the position with the choir and flower funds.

The acceptance of the financial report was proposed by C Fulton
and seconded by N Ramsey

6) A Report on the Fabric Goods and Ornaments of the Church

Kate Halford, Church Warden gave a report on the above.

The fabric and goods have been kept in good order. The PCC would like to thank Moira D'Evelin who has been responsible for the laundry and presentation of all the fabrics during the year.

Neil Ramsey Chair Building committee reported on the fabric of the building.
25TH April 2019

Building Committee report to the APCM

The primary item on the committee agenda has been the installation of the new toilet in the church. The faculty application is ongoing (Submission May 2019). The revised drawings have been received and are ready for the faculty submission.

The possibility of using the external drain is being investigated. The drain was found to be blocked which has delayed the installation. Drain investigation is required to be subject to a faculty application.

During the year the Lady Chapel was reordered to create an area for prayer and contemplation and to provide a new home for the vestments as the new toilet is to be located in the old Vicars Vestry. The alter has been relocated into the main church.

A draft health and safety policy has been prepared, As the Church is an employer with less than 5 employees, a policy is not strictly necessary. The PCC decided to continue with a formal document but downgrade it to a best practice document.

The fire Risk assessments have been revisited.

Usual maintenance work has been carried out during the year, the drains, gutters and downpipes cleaned the fire extinguishers and boiler serviced.

Many thanks to Doreen Jordan for her upkeep of the churchyard.

The external notice boards are in the process of being updated. A new board is planned for the North Gate.

Internal notice boards have been introduced.

The fabric of the church is in good order.

7) A report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

A full report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod will be posted in the Church during May

Rev T Birch thanked the representatives on behalf of the Church

8) Election of Members to the Deanery Synod

Our representation on the Deanery Synod is complete therefore there is no new election this year.

9) Election of six Members to the PCC

The PCC comprises of Rev T Birch (Chair)

Simon Harper and K Halford serve as Church Wardens.

Martin Davenport, Anne Codd and Jackie Scowther serve as our Deanery Synod representatives.

Nathaniel Lewis was proposed by Robbie Kalbraeir, and seconded by Moira D 'Evelin

All other members of the PCC are prepared to stand for a further year. Other members of the PCC include, N Ramsey, N Halford B Pescod, P Pescod, R Kalbraeir, C Fulton.

10) Election of Sidemen /Woman

For information only the list of sidemen /women include all members of PCC except N Ramsey. The Church Wardens plus M Brown, R Harding, F Robson, I Dodd, A Dodd, A Thompson, M Wood, L Lake, V Mennear, G Hind, F Finney, C Glinfillen and Howard Glenfillen, R Kalbraeir, A Maidwell.

A full list will be prepared by K Halford. No election is necessary.

11) Appointment of Independent Examiners

It was agreed that the PCC was authorised to appoint an Independent Examiner later in the year.

12) Reports from other Church Groups

Reports were received from the following

The mothers Union

The Choir (6 members)

The Tower Captain

Child Protection

The Chairman thanked the groups for their work and continued commitment. Special thanks were extended to Margaret Turnbull who continues to develop the choir and recruit new young people into its membership.

13) APCM – Vicar's Report

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting always falls around Easter. From a practical perspective this less than ideal in that it requires the many reports which are to be made to be pulled together at the busiest time of the church year. As such I express my deep admiration and gratitude to all who have done so much in preparation for this meeting. But from a spiritual perspective it is good for this meeting to fall just after Easter. We are Easter people; we are witnesses to Christ's resurrection and seek to live the new life that the Easter revelation shows to be possible.

There has been considerable change experienced in both parishes over the past year. The new pattern of Sunday worship has been established and more recently adjusted. We are very lucky to have retired clergy within the congregations who are prepared to regularly preside at the Eucharist and provide other support. I take this opportunity to express admiration and gratitude to Angus, Robert and John for their ongoing support.

The changes to our worshipping life during the year have I believe been both good and necessary. The new pattern allows significant flexibility to accommodate different styles of worship within its regular pattern should we so wish. However, I hope that in the next year we will seek to 'bed in' these changes; our broad pattern of worship is, I hope, now established for the foreseeable future.

In the year Moira, Christine, Judy and David came with me to a three day 'Leading Your Church into Growth' (LYCIG) conference. Out of this has come the LYCIG local meetings where the ideas from this conference were shared with a wider group. Through this group discussions started as to what growth might look like in our specific contexts and our priorities for fostering growth within the parishes of this United Benefice. My thanks and admiration go to the LYCIG group and all those who have participated in conversations and meetings through the year as we consider how we are called to grow in this place.

And we are growing as church. We have, praise be, new people among us. We are, praise be, growing in our discipleship of our Lord Jesus. We are, praise be, working on new ways to reach out in service to the communities in which we are set.

Many people in our church are doing many things. Often these go unnoticed and we all need to be attentive to noticing and appreciating what is being done. But we also need to be careful not to become individuals and a community defined by busyness. Yes, a healthy church has lots going on and so has a 'buzz' about it, but churches can over extend beyond the capacity of their people especially when the same group of 'usual suspects' do lots of different things. All of us who are doing things in church need to be looking around in the church community for others we can draw in and, where possible, share our 'roles' with. In this way we build each other up, we oppose the creation of cliques and empires within the church and we 'future proof' our community to ensure there are people able and equipped to confidently be the church in 5, 10 or 20 years' time.

In the year ahead I would like us to spend time considering what sort of community we are and what sort of community we want to be. The nature of our community should have its root in the nature of God who is Love. Everything we do, from worship, to building projects, to prayer initiatives, to youth work, to bell ringing and to everything else should be a response to God and an expression of us as being the people of God in this place. We are not church for ourselves but church in response to God who is Love. As always, we have work to do in the coming year to be the people of God and therefore to be people of Love.

With prayers, gratitude and high hopes for the year ahead,

Reverend Thomas Birch BA
Vicar of the United Benefice of Ovingham and Wylam

Following the presentation of the vicars Report, comments and questions were requested. The following points were raised.

Services

It was requested that more family services be organised and delivered.

PCC Matters

Why so few PCC meetings?

It was considered that PCC meetings have become too long and actions taken to prioritise discussion. Routine items are distributed as pre-issued committee reports., taken as read, and only points of clarification and issues causing controversy are discussed in full.

Why not utilise the standing committee more effectively? Meet briefly as necessary after Sunday Worship.

This to be discussed further at the PCC.

Meeting Venue to be generally in Church whenever possible, and in the Reading Room when the church environment is not comfortable as in the winter months.

Meetings to be held on the 3rd Wednesday in the month.

Giving

The loss for the year is not sustainable, we need to prioritise spending, and generate sufficient funds to cover our costs. Legacy giving needs discussion.

We need to concentrate on LYCIG to encourage an increase in the congregation and therefore the number of people engaged with planned giving.

Do we need a giving campaign?

Advice was asked as to what an appropriate amount is to give.

Can we re-establish our Charitable giving principles?

The difficulty we have experienced is that we are unable to resume this and cover our won costs without an increase in giving. Our Charitable giving is not zero. We have generally assisted with Charitable giving through donations made at Choir concerts and fixed events such as funerals.

Meeting closed at 3.40pm

Signed by the Chair.