

**MINUTES OF GREAT BRICKHILL ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING,**  
**HELD IN THE CHURCH ON THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2010 AT 7.30pm.**

**The Reverend John Waller took the chair.**

He opened the meeting with a prayer, and welcomed all those attending.

**PART I: THE ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

**ELECTION OF THE CHURCH WARDENS:**

The Rector explained that with the New Church Wardens' Measure in 2001, the maximum term of office for a Church Warden is 6 years without a break – an exemption is possible for this Rule if a motion is passed before the meeting commences. Mrs. Turner has served 6 years and Dr. Agambar 5 years. Mrs. Turner had said that she is happy to continue as Warden for one more year, but would then take a break. A motion was proposed by Miss Anne Humphreys and seconded by Miss Kay Seaman that an exemption be passed in order to allow Mrs. Turner to stand for a further year of office. This was agreed by all present.

The two current Wardens had been nominated prior to the Meeting:

- Dr. Christine Agambar proposed by Mrs. Rosie Dawson and seconded by Miss Anne Humphreys.
- Mrs. Julia Turner proposed by Mrs. Phillipa Cook and seconded by Miss Kay Seaman.

Dr. Agambar and Mrs. Turner were duly elected.

The Rector expressed his thanks to them for all their hard work over the past year and he looked forward to continuing to work with them. He asked those present to think about who might take on the role of Warden in a year's time.

**PART II: THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**APOLOGIES** were received from Dr. Christine Agambar, Mrs. Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin, Sir Philip Duncombe, Lady Rachel Duncombe, Mrs. Helle Hopkinson, Mrs. Jean Poynter, Mrs. Janet Pritchard, Mrs. Marion Ralph and Mrs. Pauline Waller.

An Attendance Sheet was circulated. A total of 15 parishioners were in attendance.

**MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2009**

The Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting had been distributed in advance. The Minutes were then approved and signed by the Rector as a true record (proposed by Mrs. Julia Turner and seconded by Mr. David Duncombe).

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:**

None.

## **ELECTIONS:**

### **a). Nine Members of the P.C.C.**

The Rector informed the Meeting that in addition to himself, the Wardens and the Deanery Synod representatives, the number of P.C.C. members allowed for the size of our Electoral Roll is 9. At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in 2004 provision was made for the annual appointment of representatives on the P.C.C. There is also facility for two people to be co-opted on to the P.C.C. At the first PCC Meeting after the Annual Meeting it has been the custom to co-opt Mr. Neil Cook, the Treasurer.

The Rector reported that Mr. Julian Dawson had resigned from the P.C.C. in October and Miss Kay Seaman did not wish to stand for re-election. The Rector thanked them both for their contribution to the PCC and said a special note of thanks to Miss Seaman for all her work on behalf of St Mary's 2000.

Nominations had been received prior to the meeting for the following:

<u>Name of Nominee:</u>	<u>Proposed By:</u>	<u>Seconded By:</u>
Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin	Valerie Vestergaard	Anne Humphreys
Phillipa Cook	Rosie Dawson	Kay Seaman
Rosemary Dawson	Julia Turner	Anne Humphreys
David Duncombe	Julia Turner	Phillipa Cook

The above four people were duly elected to serve on the PCC.

The Rector explained that the Deanery Synod Representatives (Mrs. Clare Amies and Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson) were elected in 2008 for a period of three years and so had one more year to run.

### **b). Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2010.**

The Treasurer said that Mr. Alex Woodfield (Treasurer, Little Brickhill PCC) was unable to continue as Independent Examiner for the coming year as he had moved away from the area. The Treasurer had someone in mind to approach but he was currently away on holiday. It was agreed that the appointment of the Independent Examiner be delegated to the PCC at their next meeting.

### **c). Sidesmen.**

The Rector gave the names of those who currently serve as Sidesmen. No other names were put forward and so, following a proposal by Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson, seconded by Mrs. Rosie Dawson, all the Sidesmen on the current list were elected for the forthcoming year.

The Rector added that for some services there is only one sidesman and so there is opportunity for other people to be added to the list on an informal basis during the year.

## **REPORTS:**

Detailed reports had been prepared and included in the written Annual Report and Accounts for the year to December 2009. Key points from those reports and updates from the start of 2010 were presented to the Meeting.

### **(a). Wardens including Fabric.**

Mrs. Julia Turner presented the report on behalf of the Wardens:-

Christine sends her apologies for not being here tonight. I would like to thank her for her contribution to this report and for all time and effort she gives as Warden. We are both continually

thankful for all the help and support we receive. Firstly, thank you John and those who regularly take our services throughout the month. We were delighted that the Archdeacon, Karen, was able to attend our Harvest Thanksgiving service in October, and to stay afterwards to meet so many of our congregation.

We have been encouraged by the good attendance at most services, especially at the newly structured Benefice-wide series of Family Services, notably the service held here on Palm Sunday.

It is good to report a stronger attendance at Evensong on the second Sunday of the month.

We have supported a pleasing number of charity events and initiatives during the year, especially the concerts organised by Jerry Breslin and the Brickhills Choir.

We greatly appreciate the organists and members of the choir who give us support at the services throughout the year and especially at Christmas. Thanks go to Robin Dawson for his help with the Carol Service.

The work on the Tower and bells has brought inevitable disruption and dust and we are particularly grateful to all our loyal cleaners on the cleaning rota for their forbearance. We also want to say a huge 'thank you' to Rosie Dawson for her help and unstinting efforts in her liaison with the builders. We are greatly looking forward to the completion of the Bell Project and the opportunities to hear the bells once more. We have missed meeting the bellringers while we are getting ready for services each week.

The Church came through the exceptionally cold winter relatively unscathed. The pipes didn't freeze and the only problems concerned the snow melt that caused the lead gutter troughs to overflow and water ingress into the top section of the newly decorated North Wall. The exceptional nature of the amount of snow and successive thawing and freezing made this problem unavoidable. However, it reinforced the need to ensure that the gutters, especially on the North Side, are free from moss and dead leaves, and the grids over the tops of the downpipes are kept free of debris. In the past we have been dependent on friends and husbands to climb up when they were able to do so but a more professional solution is necessary and we hope that we can establish a regular contract with a professional used to heights and ladders to undertake the work of keeping the gutters clear.

Our main preoccupation this year has been with keeping the Church warm through a long cold winter. Thanks to a very reliable firm of Church plumbing experts whom our Architects recommended, we have had a run of underground pipes replaced from the West door to the cross aisle. The inevitable result was a higher water pressure in the entire system but that encouraged other weaker and slightly leaking joints to fail. Temporary repairs were possible to keep the central heating working and the heating engineers will return in May to replace 8 joints which have temporary repairs. The heating boiler also became erratic and required lots of 'nursing and TLC'. We are grateful to Steve Agambar for his increased understanding of the inner workings of the boiler and we can now cope with the occasional problems. We have had the boiler checked by a professional and we have installed a safety monitor and now have a full safety certificate as is required by law in a public building. The next stage involves bringing the church electrics up to standard and this work has already commenced.

It was also apparent during the year that the porch floor was constantly damp in places. At first we feared that there was a further leak in the central heating but investigation showed a leak in the Mains water pipe supply to the Church. Fortunately this was amenable to a simple repair at no cost, again thanks to Steve but it is likely that the pipe from the gate is failing and we will need to monitor water use before deciding whether to replace this pipe. If a leak is apparent then our metered water bill will rise and we will need to act.

We continue to provide Pew Sheets for each service. These give details of the actual service and news items and dates for future events. We are especially grateful for the hard work and drive made by Phillipa Cook to establish the Benefice website and for its constant and timely updating thereby helping to ensure good communications not only between the Church and its congregation but others too needing to access information on our church.

We would like to thank those who decorate the church with flowers for the altar and the windows, also the many helpers, whether it be the sidesmen or readers, grass mowers or coffee makers who strive to keep our church 'welcoming.' Finally...we would like to thank the PCC for their unstinting support and encouragement, especially to Kay whose contribution has been greatly valued, and Rosie and Betty who are so ready to step in and assist when we are away or when short-term pressures arise.

**(b). Treasurer Including Adoption of Accounts.**

Copies of the Annual Report had been distributed in advance of the Meeting. The Treasurer, Mr. Neil Cook, presented the Accounts and referred to the "Review of the Accounts" section in the Annual Report.

He added that the daily running costs of the Church are currently in the region of £99 per day, excluding any major restoration costs. The total of disbursements to all charitable causes during the year was in excess of £4,000. This represents approximately 12% of the Income Received (excluding Assignables) for the year.

The question was raised as to why the Parish Share goes up every year. As Deanery Treasurer, Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson said that in broad terms it is because the figure is based on clergy fees.

The Treasurer thanked Mr. Alex Woodfield for his role of Independent Examiner of the Accounts. Adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts was proposed by Mr Jeremy Hopkinson and seconded by Mr. Alan Poynter. The report was unanimously accepted.

The Rector thanked the Treasurer for his hard work on the accounts and work throughout the year.

**(c). Deanery Synod.**

Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson referred to the Deanery Synod section in the Annual Report.

He added that the major item of discussion has been the re-organisation of the Benefices - this does not affect our Benefice. The proposed Deanery Pastoral Plan was agreed at a meeting last night:- Stewkley and Wing/Wingrave will become a single Team Ministry with seven parishes. There will be two full-time posts and LSM's, which will give the same level of ministry as before.

The Rector added that the vacancy in Stewkley can now be filled.

The Rector thanked Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson and Mrs. Clare Amies for continuing in their role as Deanery Synod Reps, and said that he was grateful for their support at Synod Meetings.

**(d). Electoral Roll.**

Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson referred to the Electoral Roll section in the Annual Report. Since the start of 2010 there have been no changes and so the current number on the Electoral Roll is 54. He reminded the Meeting that new people can be added at any time.

**(e). High Ash School.**

The Rector referred to the High Ash Report that Christine Agambar had written for the Annual Report. He gave thanks to the Foundation Governors, Christine Agambar and Butch Baker who gave great support to the school in their different ways.

The Rector added that the school has to work hard to keep up their profile – the number of intake each year is always a worry.

**(f). St. Mary's 2000.**

Mrs. Rosie Dawson had prepared the item included in the Annual Report. She added that it was a busy time at present with the three projects on the go.

Work on the North Aisle Roof. The Retention Money was still being held, the last few tidying –up jobs would soon be done and this part of the Project would be completed very soon. The gutters had been blocked during the snow. If this happened on a regular basis there is the possibility of installing heat chasers in the gutters.

The Bell Project. Mrs Dawson thanked Mr Middleton for his work on this part of the Project. New Facilities. Mrs Dawson added that three sets of plans had been received and the sub-committee would be discussing these.

The Rector thanked Mrs. Dawson for the crucial role that she played in the Project work, carried out very effectively.

**(g). Bells.**

Mr. David Middleton was unable to attend the Meeting but had sent the following report:-

Bell Rehunging and Tower Repair Project:

The bell project is progressing well, with the bells being rehung in the Tower this week, having been refurbished and two new bells cast. All of the bells have been tuned together, and the new Treble bell carries the inscription "Donated by the Parish in memory of villagers interred at Gt. Brickhill Baptist Chapel" in recognition of the grant from the proceeds of the Cuff Lane site managed by the Parish Council. The cracks in the Tower walls have been repaired, and the new structural bell frame support grillage has been installed. It is that assembly which will brace and support the structure of the Tower, although when the old bell frame was removed, it was found that recesses had been dug into the walls, hidden by muck behind the frame, and more concreting than had been anticipated was necessary. However, some of that is being financed by the bellhanger in order to embed the grillage securely into the South wall. Also, at the requirement of English Heritage, three of the massive ancient structural oak beams have been rehung in the Tower, and that has entailed more work than was anticipated. Samples of those timbers, which could date as far back as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, when the Tower was built, have been sent to Nottingham University for tree-ring dating, for which there will be a charge of £350, and we will be seeking approval for that before we agree to that work being undertaken. After the bells and the frame have been installed, the new Ringing Room ceiling will be constructed around the ancient beams, and new benches and wall panelling will be installed. The latter will have to be adapted to accommodate the positioning of the new bell ropes, which will be several inches closer to the walls than was planned, because of adjustments in positioning the grillage on fitting into the uneven shape of the Belfry. We believe that the eight bells will be rung in early June, and we hope to be able to ring for the wedding here on 12<sup>th</sup> June, if required.

Fund raising also for the project is progressing well, and only this week, we received a £1,500 grant from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. That brings the total external grants to nearly £89,000, which, when added to £31,000 specifically raised for the Bell Fund by the church under "Project St. Mary 2000", brings the total raised for the Bell Fund alone to £120,000, which is £17,000 more than was anticipated in the budget, and we would like put on record our thanks to all who have contributed and worked for the success of the project.

The budget for the bell project was £123,000 plus a 10% contingency, totalling £135,000, and it was anticipated that the tower fabric repairs might add £5,000, bringing the total cost to £140,000. The bell project itself is slightly under budget, although the contingency has been consumed largely by engaging the architect as project manager also, costing an additional £10,000 in fees and expenses, and by additional ancillary contract costs, but they are partially offset by the expected VAT refund being higher than budgeted. However, replacing the ancient timbers has cost an additional £6,000, and tower fabric repair costs estimated to date are a little higher than initial estimates, although there may be more tower repair costs to be invoiced. To date, the total project is £6,000 over budget at £146,000, but that excess has been financed by the additional £17,000 funds raised, meaning that, currently, £11,000 less is required from the "St. Mary's 2000" General Fund than was originally budgeted.

Ringing Activities:

Bell ringing here ceased on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> October, but the band has been practising to ring eight bells at Newton Longville and Bletchley, where we have borrowed redundant bell towers for Wednesday practices, and individual ringers have been practising with other local bands. However, although we have some new learners and have an established band of ten ringers, we still have little

cover for when ringers are away or engaged in other activities on Sundays, and so we welcome individuals from the age of ten upwards who would like to come and learn to ring bells here.

These are exciting times in the history of the Church and the village, as well as much of the work being essential for tower repairs, and we look forward to being able, once again, to ring our full complement of bells for services and celebrations.

The Rector added that three of the bells had been hung today and the other five would be hung tomorrow. The Rector thanked Mr. Middleton for his work on the Bells project.

**(h). Music and Choir.**

Mr. Robin Dawson referred to the music items referred to in the Annual Report and added that members of the Bow Brickhill choir are always happy to turn out and support the Great Brickhill choir. He thanked all those who participate in music in services and concerts.

**(i). Youth Café.**

Mrs. Clare Amies reported that Aylesbury Vale Youth for Christ were contracted to run the Youth Café for three years, and this is the second of these three years. The Parish Council contributes £400 - £500 per month to fund the project.

The future of the Youth Café after the third year will depend on who might be found to run it. If the Deanery considers employing a Youth Worker to take on things such as this, it may be that the Parish Council might contribute to that.

The Rector said that it would be good to report on the project at the Deanery Synod and to find out what else is happening within the Deanery.

**(j). Drop-In, Thursday Group and Romanian Shoe Box Appeal etc.**

Miss Anne Humphreys gave an update for January to April on these various activities:-

The Wednesday morning Communion and Bible Study discussed episodes in the life of Jacob prior to Lent.

The Thursday Group eventually enjoyed lunch at The Hunt Hotel at the beginning of February. The suggestion has been made that it might be preferable to have a Spring Lunch in future to avoid the snow. Diana Miller came and gave us a graphic account of her December visit to Iasi (Yash) in Romania to deliver some of the 45,000 shoeboxes to the very needy families in the area.

During Lent the Thursday Group merges with the Lent Group. This year the theme followed the Diocesan outline of the "Living Faith". As always our very grateful thanks go to those who so kindly provide comfortable venues and good food both for the Thursday Group and the Lent Groups; we couldn't function nearly so well without you. The Lent Lunch donations totalled £222 – to be divided between Lee Abbey Conference Centre in North Devon and The MS Care Home in Leamington Spa.

The Drop-In has sent a further donation of £75 to Olive Springham for use in Constanza, Romania. We would welcome more volunteers for the weekly rota – Mondays 1.30 - 3.30pm. We say a sincere thank you to Valerie Vestergaard and Wanda Harris for producing and distributing the rotas and to Betty Kinsey and Marion Ralph for keeping the finances in order.

Mrs. Julia Turner expressed thanks for the urn purchased from the Drop-In proceeds. The Rector thanked all those who helped with these various activities.

**(k). The Benefice Website.**

Phillipa Cook reported that the website was launched in December with a section dedicated to each of the four churches. The site includes a full calendar of all dates, details of all services, all the information contained in the Rector's Newsletter, Contact Lists, reports and photos of events, Diocese/Deanery information. The website is at present geared towards Great Brickhill, but this is only because the other parishes have submitted very little data to be uploaded.

The number of “hits” on the website has been encouraging, the month with the most “hits” being January with 6492 page impressions. The most in a single day (666) came one day in January but other noteworthy days were 517 on Easter Saturday and 420 before the Plant Fayre.

The Rector thanked the Secretary for all her work in setting up the website.

**(I). The Rector.**

The Rector gave the following report:-

Family Services. Since the autumn planning meetings take place each month for a Special Family Service to be held in turn around the parishes - meeting with the Rector to arrange a different type of service. “Messy Church” had been held in the Community Centre at Little, and the Church Hall at Bow - an activity based worship to include very young children. On Palm Sunday at Great Brickhill the service had included drama, music, movement and a dramatized reading of the Passion Gospel reading. Next month on Rogation Sunday there was an outside service planned in the woods at Bow. The idea is to get people involved with the planning and to use the schools for publicity.

On a personal note the Rector thanked people again for their support to help with the challenges that the family face – thanks for the prayers and the practical support. The challenge continues, it had been a particularly testing time before Easter and he had greatly appreciated everyone’s support and understanding.

Sabbatical. Every ten years members of the clergy may apply for a three month sabbatical. With the support of the Wardens and P.C.C. he would be taking leave from 21<sup>st</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> September. Arrangements were being made to cover services during that time, and for contact details for enquiries etc. The Rector said he would use the time to take a break, spend more time with Pauline, during the rest from regular duties to reflect on his ministry and work here in the Benefice, and to experience a variety of preaching while away.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

None.

**The Reverend John Waller** thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting with prayer and a Blessing on all involved in the life of the Church in Great Brickhill, at 8.40pm.