

**MINUTES OF GREAT BRICKHILL ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING,**  
**HELD IN THE CHURCH ON TUESDAY 23rd APRIL 2013 AT 7.30pm.**

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

The Rector opened the meeting with 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. Dr. Agambar who has served for 8 years said that she is happy to continue as Warden as she would not be sole Warden this coming year. A motion was passed that there is an exemption to the Rules in order to allow Dr. Agambar to stand for a further year of office. This was agreed by all present.

The following nominations had been received prior to the Meeting:-

Dr. Christine Agambar proposed by Mrs. Phillipa Cook and seconded by Mrs. Julia Turner.

Mrs. Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin proposed by Mrs. Gillian Wilson and seconded by Mr. Stephen Wilson.

Dr. Agambar and Mrs Beardmore-Baldwin were duly elected.

The Rector expressed his thanks to Dr. Agambar for all her hard work over the year as Warden. Although she had received support from others she had done the job on her own. The Rector thanked Dr. Agambar and Mrs. Beardmore-Baldwin for standing for the coming year.

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

**APOLOGIES** were received from 3 people:- Mrs. Helle Hopkinson, Mrs. Valerie Vestergaard and Mrs. Pauline Waller.

An Attendance Sheet was circulated. A total of 25 parishioners were in attendance.

**MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 24th APRIL 2012**

The Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting had been available in advance. The Minutes were approved and signed by the Rector as a true record (proposed by Sir David Duncombe and seconded by Mrs. Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin).

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:**

None.

**ELECTIONS:**

**a). Two Deanery Synod Representatives and 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 Deanery Synod Representatives are Mrs. Clare Amies and Mrs. Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin. Their three-year term of office comes to an end next year when there will need to be an election.

All current members of the P.C.C. were willing to continue – the Rector expressed his thanks to them for the past year and thanked them for standing for the coming year. Details of all the Nominations, received prior to the meeting:-

<u>Name of Nominee:</u>	<u>Proposed By:</u>	<u>Seconded By:</u>
Simon Bennett	Julia Turner	Phillipa Cook
Phillipa Cook	Val Beardmore-Baldwin	Julia Turner
Robin Dawson	Kay Seaman	Jeremy Hopkinson
Rosie Dawson	Jeremy Hopkinson	Anne Humphreys
David Duncombe	Christine Agambar	Phillipa Cook
Jeremy Hopkinson	Helle Hopkinson	Val Beardmore-Baldwin
Kay Seaman	Anne Humphreys	Marion Ralph
Julia Turner	Simon Bennett	Val Beardmore-Baldwin
Joy Wilson	Christine Agambar	Helle Hopkinson

As the number of Nominations was nine there would not need to be an election. All nine people were duly elected to serve on the PCC.

#### **b). Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2014.**

The Treasurer said that Mr. David Beatty had acted as Independent Examiner for the current year as was willing to continue. Proposed by Mr. Simon Bennett and seconded by Miss Kay Seaman, Mr. Beatty was duly appointed as Independent Examiner for 2014.

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

The Rector gave the names of those who currently serve as Sidesmen. The Rector said that the role of Sidesman is an important task as they are the first person whom visitors meet. Following a proposal by Mrs. Clare Amies, seconded by Mrs. Jeremy Hopkinson, all the Sidesmen on the current list were elected for the forthcoming year.

### **REPORTS:**

Detailed reports had been prepared and included in the written Annual Report and Accounts for the year to December 2012. The following verbal updates were presented to the Meeting.

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

Dr. Christine Agambar presented the Warden's report:-

1. The Warden's Report each year begins with 'Thank You' and it is easy to make this thanks perfunctory. But I don't intend to let this happen. My thanks to you all are heartfelt and real. Our Church only exists as a Community in Christ because of the overwhelming support from so many friends. This year Val hosted a 'Thank you' event for all those who regularly contribute to the life of our church. The number of invites topped 80! Eighty people help us on a regular basis. The coffee morning was a huge success and despite the dreadful weather we had over 40 guests brave the deep snow to enjoy the coffee morning and to see John cut the 'Thank You' cake.

2. On your behalf I would like to thank our Rector. Our congregations throughout the year are steady in number and at Christmas and Easter we had more worshippers here than we have had in many recent years. This is a measure of the esteem that we all have for John's Ministry and Spiritual support. A second measure of the spiritual health of our community came in the enthusiasm shown in contributing to the Mission Action Plan for the Benefice and for us all to recognize and be able to celebrate the range of outreach mission that we are engaged with regularly but somehow take for granted. Thank you, also, to Jeremy and Phillipa for your leadership of services and to the many visiting clergy during the year, especially to Father Colin, who has become a close friend.

3. It has been a good year for the church building. We have had no major disruption of any kind. The building has been dry and warm, on what has been the coldest and snowiest winter on record. We have, however another leak in the central heating pipes – a legacy of the past – but it is repairable and this will happen during the summer months. We are about to have a new ring main installed with sockets all around the church to improve the life of the cleaners and to enable us to use the space that the church affords us in a much more versatile way.

4. The organ has limped on this year becoming more and more temperamental for our loyal band of organists. In a few weeks' time we will be undertaking emergency repairs, which will cost £950. We have also embarked on a fund raising initiative for a wholesale renovation of the organ, which will cost approximately £30,000. We are told that there will be grant-aided support available but we will need to be prepared to raise about £15,000 using our own initiatives. The first event of this programme of fund raising will be held in May 11th, when an exciting 'Double Concert' will be held in the church and I urge you all to support this event and buy tickets for yourself and your friends.

5. We had rather a quiet year with fewer special services than in previous years, but we celebrated all the notable dates in the church calendar – many of which gave us an opportunity to have a bit of a party. Of particular note was the Charity Evensong at Christmas when we raised over £1,000 for Willen Hospice, and the Snowdrop Walks which were supported really well and where we raised over £1,500 for the church running costs, which was the best result yet for this event.

6. There were two major events held in the village to support the running costs of the church last year. The Christmas Fair, the first year for this event, was truly a village event and was very well supported and is likely to be a regular feature of the Christmas calendar in future years. The Plant Fayre was the best yet, and sadly couldn't be replicated this year because of the terrible Spring weather. Together they raised over £4,500 to support the daily running costs of the church.

7. High Ash School held a special Curriculum Week in the church during Easter Week. This culminated in an open evening on Easter Wednesday when the church hosted a viewing of the various 'stations' of the Easter story told through the eyes of the school children.

8. The regular pattern of weekly services every month continues to work well. The 11 o'clock Prayer Book Communion Service on the first Sunday of the month is well-attended and much appreciated by a wider group of worshippers and it is lovely to have the Rector lead the service on alternate months. The best-attended service of the month is the Family Service on the fourth Sunday. The congregation for this service has grown with the regular attendance of an increasing number of families with small children, which is particularly pleasing. The numbers attending Evensong on the second Sunday of the month continues to be a worry and although the numbers are no longer declining, the challenge for the coming year is to increase the numbers particularly in support of the growing confidence and strength of the choir.

9. I am delighted to be part of the team with Val joining me as our new Church Warden. We will work to the best of my ability to ensure that the church meets the needs of its community of friends and provides a welcoming environment in every sense to ensure that worshippers of all ages want to return again and again.

**(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.

The Rector added that although the amount of Outside Giving had been reduced, there were donations direct to charities – the total of disbursements to all charitable causes during the year represents approximately 11% of the Income Received (excluding Assignables) for the year.

The Rector thanked people for their giving and help with fundraising activities. Payment of the Parish Share is always challenging but he was pleased that all four parishes had paid their Parish Share in full.

Adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts was proposed by Mr. Alan Poynter and seconded by Miss Kay Seaman. The report was unanimously accepted.

The Rector thanked the Treasurer for his presentation of the Accounts and for his work as Treasurer.

**(c). Fundraising Committee.**

Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson said that the Fundraising Committee had not managed to do all that they had said they would do. They would continue to try and make sure that regular activities take place to keep funding up to date.

The Rector added that through the PCC there would be a longer term look at events being held further ahead.

**(d). Deanery Synod.**

Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson referred to the Deanery Synod section in the Annual Report. He gave an update since the end of the year. The Deanery Synod Action Plan will be circulated to parishes. There was consistency between the plans from the Benefice. The other Benefices MAPs will be circulated and used to help us. There are Deanery funds available to help progress the MAP - £1250 for training and equipment. At the Wardens Meeting it will be discussed how best we might use that money.

The two elected Synod Representatives who serve a three-year term are Mrs. Clare Amies and Mrs. Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin.

**(e). Electoral Roll.**

Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson referred to the Electoral Roll section in the Annual Report. Every six years the Electoral Roll has to be re-formed – this has just taken place and there are 53 currently on the Electoral Roll, 13 of whom are not resident in the village. He added that at any time people can join the Electoral Roll.

**(f). High Ash School.**

Mrs. Juliet Bennett had written the item for the Annual Report. She gave the following update:

Mrs Eaton the head teacher has recently been appointed as an Ofsted inspector after a huge amount of work.

The highest number of children ever, were unable to attend the week-long trip to Flatford in February due to financial constraints. Previously, funds from the Great Brickhill Charity would be used to enable all children, whatever their circumstances, to attend this important activity week. Unfortunately, no grant was made to the school fund this year.

The children hope to continue with their 'helping hands' project in the summer term, including planting flowers in the churchyard.

The children's own work on 'reflection areas' in each classroom where they can express their spiritual thoughts and reflections was extended when end of term activities were focused on Easter

Week. Children had already reflected on the Stations of the Cross which are displayed in the main corridor. During Holy Week the children created reflective spaces in the church and invited members of the community to share reflections with them on Wednesday 27th March. It was a very spiritual occasion for the children.

In January the school was visited by the Saltmine Trust, a Christian organisation which, among other things, produces theatre events to help school children understand modern dilemmas. The play presented to High Ash was a modern version of Little Red Riding Hood 'an enchanting fairytale that teaches the principles of e-Safety. Sarah lives on the edge of a magical forest, allowed in on her own for the first time she is taught the rules for how to stay safe. There are wolves in the forest and when Sarah meets a stranger all is not as it seems. Will she remember the rules? Or will she leave the path and go her own way?' The actors were hosted by members of the community for the night before their performance.

The Rector added that the Great Brickhill Charity had some large bills to safeguard the future of the charity and so the Trustees had felt it necessary to make the decision not to award a grant to the school this year.

#### **(g). St. Mary's 2000.**

Mr., Simon Bennett presented the following report on the New Facilities:-

As most people will be aware there is a longstanding intention to provide some new facilities for the church in the form of loos, kitchen, meeting space and other ancillary functions. It has been necessary to carry out various works to the fabric of the existing building before taking the new facilities forward. With the completion of the bells project the time has now come to take the new facilities forward.

The PCC has put considerable thought and time into how the project should move ahead. There is a preliminary scheme for an external extension that is based on ideas developed around 15 years ago. Now that we are in a position to take the project forward the PCC has been re-examining these proposals, to see if they are still the correct approach. We have not yet reached a conclusion on this, but are unanimous in agreeing that the current situation needs to change. Because I have a professional background in construction I have been helping to move our work forward, and that is why I am reporting on this item to the APCM.

After much discussion we decided that we needed professional advice on the options open to us, as best practice and guidance on work to listed churches has changed much over the last 15 years. After consulting with the DAC we have appointed an architect, Bruce Deacon, to prepare an options appraisal to look at what approaches we could consider. Bruce has now completed his report and it has been circulated to the PCC. He will be presenting it to us formally at a special meeting of the PCC tomorrow. We will then meet separately to agree the way forward.

One note on funding: Some money has been raised towards the new facilities. We are aware that we may end up implementing something rather different to that which was envisaged when that money was given. The PCC has therefore agreed that, should we go down a different route to that previously envisaged, we will consult with donors about whether they are still happy for their donation to be used for this purpose. We are not doing this yet, as it is possible we will conclude that the original concept is still valid.

No final decisions have been made, but we are on the road to exciting developments in the near future.

The Rector added that the PCC would consult more widely with the congregation and village as a whole once there was a clearer view of a proposal to go forward.

An open discussion then took place where people aired their views as to how they felt the project should proceed.

#### **(h). Bells.**

Mr. David Middleton, the Tower Captain, presented the following report to the meeting:-

Ringing Activities have been somewhat routine during last year, and we continue to ring for services and to practice on Wednesday evenings with the same band of ringers, who continue to hone their skills with the help of experienced ringers from other towers.

The notable ringing event was the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, for which we rang twice, firstly at the Sunday Service and the ceremonial tree planting by Sir David Duncombe, and then on the Bank holiday, Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, we rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples after the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, and before our "Singing in the Reign" village party on the village green, which was organised impeccably by one of our ringers, Cllr. Diane Richardson, at which another of our ringers, Butch Baker, performed with the Barron Knights.

We rang for three weddings here during last year, and have rung for one so far this year, but also have rung for weddings at St. Mary's, Bletchley, as well as their annual "Church on the Green" service. Furthermore, this year we have rung on the two consecutive Sundays during our annual Snowdrop Walks.

Also, for the first time, our band of ringers entered the annual Six Bell Striking Contest at Padbury organised by the North Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers and we achieved sixth place amongst sixteen teams, which for a novice band was very creditable.

As usual, we have received a handful of visits from external ringing groups, with whom our bells continue to be very popular, and which win many plaudits as a very fine ring of eight bells.

Although I have now moved a few miles away from the Church, I continue to ring and be involved in running the bells here. However, as always, we need more ringers, and during the summer months we struggle to field a full band when ringers are on holiday or attending summer events. Again, if you, or anyone you know, would like to help us and learn to ring bells, we will be pleased to teach them, and we can draw on several very experienced external ringing teachers who help us.

#### **(i). Music and Choir.**

In addition to the "Music and Choir" section given in the Annual Report, Mrs. Juliet Bennett presented the following report:-

During the year work was undertaken to develop a full list of Benefice choir members. In addition, an email group was set up to assist in providing updates and keeping members informed. A system is being developed to work out a timetable of services that the choir will sing at within the Benefice to help with forward planning and attendance.

The Benefice choir has 20 people on its circulation list with 18 members singing during the year and attending one or more practice sessions. Average attendance at the practice sessions is 12. Of the 18 members of the choir, 6 members are from Bow Brickhill and 12 are from Great Brickhill. The choir is made up of both experienced members and relative newcomers to choral singing. The choir welcomes newcomers from across the Benefice.

The choir practices regularly on Monday evenings at St Mary the Virgin Church, Great Brickhill under the enthusiastic and dedicated leadership of Jerry Breslin benefiting from both the organ and in winter months, the heating. The choir is very grateful to Jerry Breslin for giving his time to the choir.

During the year the choir has enjoyed the practice sessions and as a result improved in both ability and confidence. The choir has developed a repertoire of anthems that it has sung at the Benefice services, Easter services at both Great Brickhill and Bow Brickhill, the Remembrance Sunday service at Great Brickhill, weddings and funerals. The choir worked hard to prepare and sing at seven services in December covering all churches within the benefice.

In 2013, the choir plans to hold regular social events within the Benefice for existing or potential members.

The Rector gave his thanks to all the organists and choir member for the services and weddings. He also thanked Mrs Bennett for getting himself and Jerry Breslin more organised.

**(j). Youth Café.**

This item had been included in the Annual Report. Mr. Marco Loxley attended the meeting and expanded on a few points in the report.

The Great Brickhill Youth Café is in its 5th year. This current year has seen the largest growth with 50 – 60 every Friday, with 50% living locally in the Benefice. The vision is to run Youth Alpha courses. There are 5 who have been on an Alpha Course and from that, four are now in a cell group.

Great Brickhill is a flagship Youth Café and the Youth Ministry called “Pulse” has been set up to pioneer the Cafés into Milton Keynes. The plan is to go into communities to set up Youth Cafés with a Christian emphasis for 11 – 17 year olds.

Mr. Loxley thanked the church in Great Brickhill and all the individuals plus the Parish Council for the backing that they had given to the Youth Café. He also thanked Michael Turner for ferrying all the equipment on a Friday evening. This is now stored in a shed on the school grounds. Mr. Loxley extended an invitation to all to attend any of the Friday evening sessions of the Youth Café.

The Rector added that we would keep his work in our prayers.

**(k). Wednesday Communion & Bible Study, Thursday Group etc.**

The fortnightly Wednesday midweek Communion sessions resumed after the Christmas break until the start of Lent. They have just started up again after Easter and will continue until the summer, usually at my house but occasionally at The Rectory.

Apart from the New Year Lunch, the Thursday Group took a break over the winter months and restarted after Easter. There is a programme of fortnightly events planned up to the middle of July – visits, speakers or afternoon tea. There will be no meetings in August but they will continue in September through to the end of the year.

On the five Thursdays in Lent, a simple sandwich lunch was held in the New Room at the Parish Hall, followed by a series of talks given by the Rector. The Donations from the Lent Lunches raised £185, which has been sent via Christian Aid, to the relief effort and appeal for Syria. Thank you to all who hosted the Lent Lunches and to the Rector for holding an additional evening Lent Course in Great Brickhill this year.

Thanks go to those who host the Thursday Group meetings and arrange the speakers and outings. Thank you also to those who help out at the Drop In sessions on Monday afternoons.

The Rector referred to the Drop In with its points of contact as an example for the Mission Action Plan - encouraged by people in the life of the church it is an opportunity for people to meet. It is an important aspect of church life but can easily be overlooked.

**(l). The Benefice Website.**

Mrs. Phillipa Cook reported that, as mentioned in the Annual Report, the number of “hits” on the website continues to grow. Following on from points that arose from the Mission Action Plan she had spent time with people at Bow Brickhill to get appropriate links set up with their village website to improve their line of communication.

With regard to general communication all the information from the individual rota sheets is combined onto the Monthly Rota Sheet, which is uploaded onto the website. Everyone is encouraged to check the website if they are unsure if they are on a rota for any of the tasks. There have been occasions where people are present at a service and not aware that they were on duty. The website is a very simple tool that is available for us all to use.

**(m). The Rector.**

The Rector gave the following report:-

He said that at times life both personally and as a family is not easy. He is grateful for people's understanding, help and prayer, and for the time that individuals spend time with Pauline. We think that we learn more about God when things go smoothly but we do learn through struggle. Things may feel hard but nevertheless at times feel blessed and encouraged for small, positive things.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

There were no matters raised.

The Reverend John Waller thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded with Compline (a short said service of evening prayer) at 8.55pm.