

The Parish of St Laurence, Northfield

Registered Charity 1132975

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 at 7pm. (summary)

13 people were present in church, 9 on zoom

The Rector, Revd Canon Janet Chapman chaired and meeting and Emily Corns was appointed Clerk to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Bob and Kathy Mayne, Sue Knowles, Peter Chapman and Revd Theresa Morton prior to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous Annual meetings held on Sunday 18th October 2020

The minutes were previously ratified at the PCC meeting on 3rd November 2020

3. Consideration of the new Electoral Roll

Ruth Clarke (Electoral Roll Officer) reported:

The total number on the Electoral Roll now stands at 130 having been at 126

4. Election of Churchwardens.

Sandra Reynolds and Roy Pouncett were declared elected.

5. Elections of Members to the Kings Norton, Moseley and Shirley Deanery Synod

(2 vacancies / 2 year term) No nominations

6. Election of Members of the Parochial Church Council (4 vacancies /3 year term)

Rowena Nicholls and Stuart Andrew were elected.

7. Annual Report of the Proceedings of the Council

Have been circulated in advance in the annual reports.

The governing body is the Parochial Church Council (PCC) which quickly adapted to zoom and has met far more frequently than usual but since March 2020 has absorbed the work of the 3 sub-committees namely Fabric, Worship and Social & Fundraising. Canon Janet thanked the PCC who worked incredibly hard last year

8. Annual report of the financial affairs of the Parish

The accounts have been approved by the PCC and have been signed by the independent examiner and two trustees.

The accounts were circulated to PCC members prior to the meeting including

a) Examined accounts of the council for year ending 31 December 2020

b) Examined statement of the funds and Property of the Council

Canon Janet talked through the statement which was included with the meeting agenda (item 4).

c) Appointment of Independent Examiners for 2020

Polkadot & Ellis were not appointed at the meeting but were subsequently by the PCC

9. Presentation of the Terrier and report of the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church

There were no updates to the Terrier last year. If anyone would like to look at the Terrier contact Roy and he will arrange this.

10. Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod didn't meet last year. A new Area Dean will be starting in autumn.

11. Annual reports for Parish Organisations

A booklet of the reports has been put together, it is also on the website and the reports have been given in church.

Every effort has been made to adapt and keep in touch, particularly the Gridiron group, the Bellringers and the Mothers Union.

12. Rector's statement to the meeting

We continue to give thanks to God for His love and faithfulness by which we have travelled through the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to do so. By His grace we have been enabled to adapt our worship and mission in order to nurture our congregation and walk alongside many community organisations to deliver effective care within the parish of St Laurence, Northfield during 2020.

The Rector gave an update on the 2020/21 goals (set late 2020)

- 1 To work towards Eco-Church Silver Award, including continuing with the porch and improving heating and lighting.
- 2 To get St Laurence Safe Spaces underway - an after school club and safe space for children of secondary school age vulnerable to knife crime. *Fr David Pycock has done an incredible amount of work to get ready for this to start in April 2021 including securing grant funding.*
- 3 Improve our ability to broadcast worship to enable more people in the community to connect with church. *2020 saw us embrace Zoom, YouTube and conference calling in order to come together as a dispersed church and broadcast services from the Rectory and others' homes. As we re-opened church temporarily in the summer it became clear that we need more equipment in order to do this to a more professional standard.*

The Rector's priority, as we went into lockdown in March 2020, was to keep the congregation worshipping together as much as possible even though worshipping at home.

The 'Look-out' groups established in 2019 came into their own offering a considerable amount of Pastoral Care to the congregation through the telephone.

We have been delighted to replace our notice boards in the churchyard and at the entrance to the Pastoral Centre.

We were greatly saddened by the death of Clare Blackshaw following a short illness and also Dorothy Giles. Both had been involved in many aspects of church life over the years. May they Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

Beer and Hymns at the local pub was the last thing we did in the community prior to lockdown.

We invested heavily in the maintenance of the churchyard during 2020 and, in a sense, this well-tended green space became our gift to the locality as many enjoyed their permitted daily exercise within it.

We were able to engage with the community in many new ways through #NorthfieldRevealed. The Northfield Stakeholders Group has co-ordinated the food bank and lots of other emergency support

Our Charitable Giving has continued in various ways:

Financially: we estimate that members of St Laurence Church raised over £3,000 for the following causes;

- £100 donation to CofE Birmingham's link Dioceses in Malawi
- 20 bags of food and goods delivered to Northfield Food Bank plus a good number of congregational donations through their fundraising page plus £302 donated through church for their Christmas Food Hampers
- Also a good number of Mothers' Union member donations to their appeal for the Democratic Republic of Congo
- £400 Christian Aid Harvest appeal and an unknown amount during Christian Aid week as at that stage we weren't able to track on-line donations but usually in the region of £1,000
- Just over £1,000 Children's Society

Also 'People Power' with Churches Together in Northfield:

- Community Christmas: as Covid meant we could not hold the usual Christmas Day lunch circa 60 Christmas Goody Bags personally delivered to those who normally attend on Christmas Day

We are saying farewell to Claire Whitmore (Ordinand on placement), who we were very blessed to have with us and was a fantastic help with setting up and hosting Zoom church.

Fr David has announced his retirement after eight years with us at St Laurence. His last Sunday will be 11th July. He doesn't want any fuss but has requested a fundraising page for Water Aid is set up for those who would like to show their appreciation.

Fr David will be receiving permission to officiate within the Diocese, but is very important takes a break from St Laurence, however he may help with "Larry's" if we are able to run it over the summer.

Canon Janet gave a special mention to Revd Donald Sampson (retired Methodist Minister) who is very committed ecumenically. At 87 the time has come for him to retire from leading Collective Worship in St Laurence Juniors and helping with reading in St Laurence Infants.

Thanks and certificates of appreciation were given to those stepping down from PCC; Jennie King and Linda Powell. Also to Linda Joyce -Wallis who is stepping down from being the team leader of the Flower Guild, thanks were given for her many years of service.

Canon Janet paid tribute to our paid staff, the ministry team and the church officers. The latter were given plants as a thank you from the church:

13. Any other business

- a) Safeguarding update (although included in the Reports booklet specific reference needs to be made at the APCM):

Going forward all volunteers will need to complete safeguarding training.

The PCC adopts all Church of England policies and guidelines covering all properties and land of St Laurence. The PCC has all the required policies in place. They are displayed on the front page of the church website and Posters are displayed in the Pastoral Centre and Church. Rowena Nicolls has reviewed all the Job Descriptions for all posts – both paid and voluntary. DBS checks and Safeguarding training are up to date. Safeguarding statements/policies are obtained for all hirers of the Pastoral Centre. Risk Assessments are completed for all church activities which includes Safeguarding.

If anyone has any concerns or queries about safeguarding issues, contact Rowena for advice.

- b) Looking ahead: Our biggest short-term challenge is opening up church more fully as the Covid restrictions ease. At present, we don't know what situation will be with social distancing and wearing masks after the next set of restrictions are lifted in July.

If we can, we will continue with the current format until the end of August and assess how to move forward from there. We will most likely go back to 8.30am and 10am services. Although, we may need to rethink Sunday School - it may not be possible to run it at both services as we are short on leaders. If anyone has got any thoughts or ideas, please pass them on.

We are hoping to be able to use the main entrance while work on the porch is paused (we are waiting for supplies before the next phase begins later this year).

- c) Fr John gave thanks to Canon Janet. He recalled her priority at the beginning of the year was to make sure worship continued and everyone stayed connected. He has been amazed at Canon Janet's skill at achieving this as she has made sure everyone feels needed, cared for and loved.

Canon Janet noted that there may be a few people we haven't been able to keep in touch with, so do let the ministry team know if anyone comes forward.

- d) Roy spoke about his concerns for the fabric of the church. He noted that although the running costs have been much lower while we haven't been able to use the church as normal, if we are forced close the building over winter again, we need to consider having the heating on to protect the building from frost and damp damage. Ideally the heating needs to be kept on low to ensure it doesn't drop below a certain temperature. The heating cost is around £5 -10 an hour.

The meeting finished at 8pm with the St Laurence prayer.