

## **PARISH OF ST MARY, SHORTLANDS**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of Parishioners and of the 99<sup>th</sup> Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary's, Shortlands, held on Sunday, 18 March 2018, in the church following the 10.30 am service**

#### **MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

1. The Rev'd Morag Finch, the incumbent, welcomed everyone to the meeting and read the following statement:

“When Richard and I came to St. Mary's in 2013 we all had high hopes for a fulfilling and fruitful ministry but for a complex set of reasons it hasn't worked out. I am sad about that and where I have let you down I'm sorry.

Richard and I are intending to move on and I told the PCC and ministry team of this on Wednesday evening.

As many of you are aware accusations have been made against me and until they were dismissed by the Bishop I have been prevented from talking about the issues and it has also had the effect of stopping us from moving. For Richard and I, life here at times has become unbearable. I would like to thank those who have been supportive and encouraging.

It is my intention to resign as Vicar on 30<sup>th</sup> June. My final service will be at 10.30 on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April after Richard and I return from our post-Easter break. I will be leading the Pilgrimage to the Holy Land at the end of May as planned. The rest of the time will allow time for preparation for our future ministries and holiday entitlement. In agreement with the diocese we will stay in the Vicarage until the end of the summer. I hope to start an MA in the autumn.

In the meantime I want to help and support St Mary's in any way I can, in consultation with the ministry team and the PCC, as St Mary's prepares for an interregnum.

*I do not intend to take any questions on this statement but ask that together we might focus on how the church heals its pains and looks to a new chapter with new leadership.”*

2. The Rev'd Morag then handed over to Sally Aldred who said:

“Morag,

I would like to thank you for reading this difficult statement to us. We too are very sad that it hasn't worked out. Thank you also for making it clear why you were unable to tell us earlier that you were intending to move on.

It is easy at this point to focus on the things that have gone wrong, but I would like to thank you for the good things that your ministry has brought to us. And although the time for a proper goodbye will come later, on behalf of all of us here, to wish you and Richard a future in which there is healing and renewal.

And as we think of the future, we now come to the APCM, where we can focus on the next stage in the life of St Mary's, where we too need healing and renewal.

In the light of the fact that Morag will not be leading St Mary's into the future, it has been agreed that Rob Hinton will chair this APCM. For those of you who do not know Rob, he is the vicar of Christ Church Beckenham and our area dean. This means that, along with Paul Wright, our archdeacon, he has oversight for the churches in our deanery. You may not have seen it, but for a considerable period of time, Rob has been very supportive of us in our profound difficulties here. He has worked very hard with members of the ministry team and others to help us find our way through this painful situation. I hand the meeting over to you now, Rob.”

3. The Rev'd Rob Hinton addressed the meeting.

“Can I welcome you to St. Mary’s Shortlands for the Annual Meetings? For those of you who don’t know who I am and are wondering why I’m here my name is Rob Hinton and I am the Area Dean of Beckenham and Vicar of Christ Church Beckenham.

In the light of Morag’s decision to step down it was decided that I should chair today’s meetings. And even though I am technically an outsider I am beginning to feel as much a member of this church as the rest of you – so great has been the time and heart-ache that I have expended in this Parish. I can tell you that, walking with all of you through these last two years of difficulty have been the most fulfilling and privileged part of my role as Area Dean.

I have witnessed your frustrations, and please believe me when I say, I have shared many of them, not least the fact that we have not been free to share with you all that has been going on over the past 9 months. We have all been at the mercy of the grinding wheels in Rochester which have, in a very very real way, prevented Morag from being able to apply for another post or even talk about her plans to move on. Tragically, this has only served to increase the hurt, grow the division and deepen the scars amongst your church family. It is going to take a real work of healing and reconciliation - through prayer, forgiveness, acceptance and humility - to come back from this. But I do believe that by God’s Grace and through a dependence on him you can do it.

As part of that process I have been talking with many in the church, with a number of your ministry team, who will play a significant role in the ministry of healing during the interregnum, as well as Archdeacon Paul, who as you know has deep personal love for this parish, and we feel that going forward St. Mary’s needs to be guided by people who have not become exhausted or overtaken by the division and pain of the past 2 years. To that end Coreen has graciously, out of love for this church, agreed to step down from being Warden, recognising the need for her own healing and more so the need for a fresh start for St. Mary’s going forward. And we will express our thanks to her in a moment.

It will fall to you today to put in place the very best leadership team – Warden’s and PCC, that you believe will bring peace, healing, integrity and reconciliation to this church. The decision you make today is critical to recovering your unity as a family and providing a genuine and generous partnership with the new incumbent.

I want to see St. Mary’s and Morag and Richard, enter a time of recovery and peace. I pray for the day when you are all flourishing and joyful again.”

### **Election of Churchwardens**

4. The Chair said there had been four nominations for Churchwardens and invited each of them to speak. A secret ballot was then taken. The Rev’d Richard Finch and Tim Dawson were appointed as tellers. As a result of the ballot, the Chair declared Adolph Williams and Sarah Leonard.

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**Present:** The Rev’d Rob Hinton, Area Dean (*in the Chair*), Rev’d Morag Finch, (*Vicar*), Rev’d Richard Finch, (*Associate Vicar*), Adolph Williams and Coreen Corbin (*Churchwardens*), Tim Dawson (*Treasurer*), Judy Rambridge (*Secretary*) and 86 parishioners

**Apologies for absence:** No apologies for absence had been received.

### **Minutes of the 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

1. The minutes of the 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 19 March 2017, which had been displayed on the church noticeboard, were taken as read. The minutes were approved and signed. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **Election of five Parochial Representatives of the Laity to the Parochial Church Council**

2. There were five vacancies for representatives of the laity on the PCC. There were five nominations duly proposed and seconded, namely Tim Dawson, Julie Fox, Mark Fox, Marian Parr and Judy Rambridge. There being no other nominations, the Chair declared these nominees elected.

## **Appointment of Sidesmen**

3. Adolph Williams said there were no new sidesmen to appoint, but all current ones were continuing.

## **Deputy Churchwardens**

4. Adolph Williams said the current deputy churchwardens were all prepared to continue, namely, Pat Chase, Stan Clark, Derek Cooper, Mark Fox and David Jefferys.

## **Presentation of the Electoral Roll**

5. The Secretary read the report from the Electoral Roll Officer: The number on the electoral roll was 238 (241 in 2017), 118 of whom lived outside the parish. There had been 2 additions to the roll, namely Daniel Beach and Gloria Sherman. One couple had moved away, although it was understood Alex Hemming had died and Joan Hemming had moved to Sussex. Three people who had passed away were remembered, namely, Caroline Farrar, Douglas Smith and Peggy Smith as well as Alex Hemming.

## **Review of 2017**

6. Trustees' Annual Report: The Chair presented the Trustees' Annual 2017 which had been circulated at the meeting. The meeting received the report.

7. Examined Accounts: The Treasurer spoke to the summarised version of the accounts which had been circulated and answered questions. There were copies of the Charity Commission accounts available for inspection. The Treasurer noted that there was a shortfall for the year of £3,500 which was greater than the budgeted shortfall of £800. This was due to higher spending on repairs relating to VAT on the work on the church roof which hadn't been included in the initial quotation, the work needed on the electrical system as a result of the quinquennial review and the work needed on the Church House flat after flooding in the summer. The accounts were received.

\* \*        A copy of the signed Annual Report and Financial  
\*        Statement is attached as Appendix I

8. Report on the Fabric and Ornaments: The Chair presented the Report on the Fabric and Ornaments which had been circulated before the meeting. The meeting received the report.

\* \*        The report is attached  
\*        as Appendix II

## **Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod**

9. Ann-Marie Jefferys reported on the proceedings of the Synod during the last year.

\* \*        The Report is attached  
\*        as Appendix III

## **Appointment of Independent Examiner**

10. The Treasurer said that Bram Waring, who had examined the accounts for several years, had stepped down at short notice for personal reasons, and Paul Hemsley had been appointed by the PCC to act as independent examiner. Paul had indicated his willingness to continue and the Treasurer proposed that he be re-appointed. This was agreed.

## **Site Development Project**

11. Robin Hogg read a statement from the PCC giving the up-to-date situation with the site development project.

\* \*      The statement is  
\*        attached as Appendix IV

The Chair closed the meeting with a reading from the letter to the Ephesians.

Date .....

Chair .....