



**Draft Minutes of the
Whitfield Parish Annual General Meeting held at
St James' Church
on
Sunday 7 April 2019**

The meeting began with a time of prayer from Psalm 136, "*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*"

Parishioners' meeting

1. Election of Churchwardens:

There were two candidates for the two vacancies: Sandie Mann, (proposed by Sue Leighton and seconded by Sheila Humphrey) and Nick Rogers, (proposed by Jane Higginbottom and seconded by Helen May).

Personal statements were read out by both candidates and distributed to the attendees. As the candidates were standing unopposed the election was based on a show on hands from the floor. Both candidates were duly elected to serve for a year.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Rhiannon Singleton, Jim Wildgoose, Lynn Wildgoose, Sue Leighton, Peter Leighton, Sandy Booth, Joanne Swindells, Jill Bradbury, Joyce Phillips, Mike Edkins, Pat Robertson, Roy Davenport, Ann Davenport, David Fennell, Alan Wilson and Andrew Howard.

2. Minutes of last year's meeting:

The minutes of last year's meeting were proposed by Ann Williams and seconded by Duncan Edge. Accepted as a correct record by a show of hands from those who were at the 2018 meeting.

3. Matters arising:

None

4. Notification of AOB

Questions were taken from the floor for AOB

Tony Williams

- Explanation as to why the minutes of PCC meetings are no longer posted on the notice boards
- Explanation as to why the Finance Committee has been disbanded.
- Explanation of the new task team system

Kate Dowland

- Clarification of church minutes (as above) – people feel they do not know what is happening.

Peter Collard

- St Luke's and Vineyard building projects

Glynn Jones

- Explanation as to why the two current Church Wardens are no longer in post.

5. Electoral Roll return

A full revision of the Electoral Roll took place in 2019. On our previous roll there were 226 over 16s. The new roll for 2019 now stands at 222. Toby expressed thanks to Ruth Bennett, Mari Brown, Jane Higginbottom and Sheila Humphrey for all the hard work this year to reach over 90% of our worshipping community. Normally at new roll time the number drops considerably and grows over the six years.

6. Reports of Parish Organisations:

These were set out in the annual report and attention was drawn to them by the Chair, Toby May who thanked those people who had led these groups and written these reports and the many who had taken part in these groups during 2018. Special thank you to Hilary Collard for collating everyone's thoughts into the Annual Report. Tracey Fellows spoke briefly re the work of Whitfield Growth Group, who due to sickness had been unable to contribute to the report but were still very active in their outreach work.

7. Questions on reports and AOB

PCC Minutes – Toby explained that the PCC had agreed a change to the practice of posting the PCC minutes on notice boards in the entrances to the church buildings. The Church Representation Rules state that these minutes are confidential to those church members on the Electoral Roll. By posting in such a way, anybody can view these and take parts, so they are out of context and share widely. With the advance of social media this could be very widely. Everyone is still able to have access to these but not publically.

Discussion was had that the policy could breed distrust and suggestions as to access were raised. A summary of what happened at PCC is published in the Grapevine. Toby shared that in the next few years there is likely to be lots of things that will be discussed that could easily be taken out of context and used against the Church in the wider context and also St James' and St Luke's in

Glossop. Toby acknowledged the need to make them more accessible, but we need to ensure that they remain confidential to church members – as per the Church Representation Rules. This is why the PCC had made the change.

The Finance Committee & Task Teams - Toby confirmed that a new structure had been brought into place and it was agreed at PCC that the FC in its previous form was to be replaced by various task teams focusing on specific financial issues and the PCC as trustees to be more accountable and responsible for the financial decisions.

Toby gave thanks to all those who have served on the Finance Team over the years. The new task teams are separate as they need different skill sets. These teams will look at

- Giving
- How we support mission
- How we pay our staff and contractors – move away from cheques to BACs payments.
- Electronic banking

A request was made for anyone who has any expertise in these areas and can help to please let Toby know. Some people have already been targeted from the PCC and the wider congregation. All findings and recommendations that the teams make will come to the PCC for decisions.

Action: Toby to reply to Tony Williams outside the meeting re all the points in his letter.

Building works – Peter asked that Toby confirm that the building work at St Luke's will be discussed again soon. Toby confirmed that would be covered later in the meeting. Peter asked about the rush of the Vineyard project when the grant could not be used. Toby spoke about the grant that has a deadline of 2020 and that it will be used as the grant proposal was based upon the money submitted in the proposals rather than was originally held in the accounts. The breakdown of the Vineyard spends and monies from grants and parish funds had been fully disclosed at PCC before the proposal was passed unanimously.

Church Wardens – In response to Glynn's question, Toby explained that Peter and Pat had decided 10 days ago to resign as Wardens and had written to the Bishop with several complaints in this resignation. As vicar, Toby expressed his gladness that the two people who have stood this year are people that represent the unity of the church and not just certain pockets. There is a need to move forward and put things behind us.

Toby gave the floor to the Wardens if they wished to add anything. Peter questioned why it had taken Toby so long to meet the wardens together to which the response was that both had been in long conversations and meetings with him individually as this was appropriate given confidentiality of certain topics.

The role of the Warden was raised and the document that has been available to all for the last few weeks was referred back to.

Pat spoke to the floor about what she wanted to do as Warden during the year, to talk to people and create unity and apologised if anything she had done had not created unity and that she loved the parish.

Further discussion then took place around issues beyond those previously notified as AOB. These included questions about leadership and unity, raised by Eric Robertson and Jan Wilson. These were responded to by Toby, Jane Higginbottom and Ann Williams and were followed by a time of quiet for prayer and repentance.

8. Elections

i. Representative of the PCC - Lay members

As Nick Rogers has been elected Church Warden, this leaves another vacancy on the PCC. One is a one-year vacancy and the other two years

There were two candidates for these positions

Candidate	Proposer	Seconded
Kathy Leason	Sheila Humphrey	Gill Booth
Nick Jones	Millie Cross	Chris Bradbury

Voting was taken by a show of hands. Following the meeting, Kathy Leason chose to take the one-year role and Nick Jones two-years.

ii. Representative of the PCC - Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod is elected every three years. As we are the largest Parish in the Deanery, we are allocated seven places and these people automatically sit on the PCC. Following Emil Shehadeh standing down, we have a one-year vacancy as all Deanery Synod will be up for re-election in 2020

Toby asked the floor in anyone would be willing to stand for Deanery Synod for one-year. Gill Ellison put her name forward. She was then proposed by Peter Collard and seconded by Helen May. Gill was duly elected by a show of hands.

iii. Sidespersons

The votes were taken *en bloc*:

Hilary Allen	Sue Latusek
Ruth Bennett	Bill Leason
Gill Booth	Kathy Leason
Jill Bradbury	Steve Mitchell
Mari Brown	Ann Mitchell
Marilyn Firmin	Judith Moore
Janet Hargreaves	Elaine Richardson
Jan Holt	Debbie Seel
Leigh Jones	Joanne Swindells
Cynthia Jones	Eileen Wood

These were duly elected by a show of hands.

iv. Independent examiner

Graham Gosling (proposed by Ann Williams and seconded by Gill Booth) and was duly elected by a show of hands.

9. Vicar's Report and Plans

Toby gave thanks to all of those who give in time, money, prayer and the many gifts and talents. A big thank you to the staff team of Julia, Sharon and Jane this year, those that serve on the PCC and in so many other ways with all the various ministries.

A special thank you and presentation was given to Rob Moore who stepped down as sacristan after 30 years of service to the church.

Toby began by referring to Joshua 3: The Israelites have been wandering round the desert guided by the pillar of cloud and fire. They have now reached the banks of the River Jordan and God wants them to cross into the Promised Land. He read Joshua 3:1-5:

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. After three days the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people: 'When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits (900 metres) between you and the ark; do not go near it.'

Joshua told the people, 'Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.'

Looking ahead, like the Israelites, we needed to:

1. Commit ourselves to God (v5)
2. Follow God – keep up, but don't get ahead. (v3-4)
3. Expect things to be different from the past (v4) – The Israelites had crossed the Red Sea in the past, but this was new and different – they've 'never been this way before'. They will need to do new things – not look backwards, but they should also learn from their past mistakes and not moan and long for Egypt or the desert. Keith Bassham's prayers from Isaiah 43:18-19 at the 11.15 service ('See I am doing a new thing...') were also relevant.
4. As we're obedient to God, he 'will do amazing things amongst us' (v5)

Toby then reminded us of the priorities of loving God, loving one another and loving others – and the great potential we have. He reminded us of some of the recent things we could give thanks for, including: Messy Church, Tots & Toast, Growth Groups, new Service Times, Christmas events -including the town square carols, the completion of the Vineyard Phase 1; Alpha; the Easter peg hunt; Street Pastors and more.

He then reminded us of some of the problems we face, including: falling numbers (Sunday attendance falling from 300 to 200 over 10 years); our age profile (20 years older than our local community – and widening), our Giving Gap (giving down 6.5% in real terms in 2018, a deficit budget and decreasing reserves); the costs of maintaining and heating 3 main buildings; youth numbers at a critical level; the division of children & youth work across the two churches; various teams who are stretched and split.

We were also reminded of the big underlying problems highlighted by the Listening Exercise carried out in October:

- 1: The disunity and bad attitudes in the church (mentioned in 30% of responses to what we could do better) and highlighted in the sermon that morning.
- 2: 'Out' (our love for others) being our weakest area.

Toby then discussed some of the ways to address these issues, including: Focusing on Up *and* In *and* Out in everything; Going to people *and* Inviting people to come; Evangelism that is *with* not *at* people; recruitment of new Youth & Children's & Families' Leaders; a Giving Team and encouraging giving out of our love for God; completion of the Vineyard upstairs; a review of our buildings – what is good stewardship of what we have? What does God want? Referring to the morning's sermon, he highlighted Unity as the biggest issue – that we would be known by our love for one another.

Going forward, it was essential that we would all be growing Up, In and Out and that Growth Groups were a key part of this, as explored in an exercise that followed...

Tent Exercise:

We took part in an exercise involving a large parachute, which represented a tent. Toby explained that the aim was to create space to for God to move (Up), space for people to grow closer to one another (In) and space for others to come in (Out).

At first just one person took the weight of the tent in the middle. Then a small group joined them. This way, one or two could sit down without affecting the space.

As more people came in, they were encouraged to form groups – so that if one member of the group sat down, the others shared the load. The groups then

moved out towards the edge of the tent which made it easier for others to join and to move around – including some children.

Toby concluded by reminding us that as a church, we had problems to address, but we also had great potential and that 'God would do amazing things amongst us' (Josh 3:5)

Date of next AGM

The date of the next Annual General Meeting is still to be fixed.

Confidential