

ST MARY'S CHURCH – ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Minutes of a Meeting held on Sunday, 23 April 2006 at 7.45 pm in Garden Hall

1. The meeting opened with a prayer by the Rev Christopher Davies.

2. Attendance

Rev Christopher Davies, Rev Hilary Johnson, Rev Bruce Rickards, Mrs Joan Ellis, the Churchwardens (Mr Anthony Leonard and Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton) and some 35 members of the congregation were present. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Ruth Cornock-Taylor, Mr Kenneth Evans, Mrs Jennie and Mr William Gubbins and Mr Colin McKerrow.

3. Minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting held on 24 April 2005

The Minutes, which had been circulated, were signed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Churchwardens' Report on the Fabric of the Buildings

Repairs to the North Aisle and Baptistery roofs, partial external rendering of the East wall and redecoration of the South-West tower were successfully completed within budget and with little disruption to Church activities. The verger, Mr Tony Winship, continues to undertake a large number of maintenance jobs which, following his obtaining the appropriate certificates, now include electrical and gas maintenance for all buildings in the Parish; this should result in savings on maintenance costs.

The Quinquennial Survey highlighted a few areas for investigation, mainly relating to the Vestry.

The protracted procedure for obtaining a Faculty for the overhaul of the organ and its conversion to an electro-pneumatic system had commenced.

The inventory was checked and items of value marked with a micro-dot system. Generous donors had provided new cruet sets to replace those broken and new altar communion linen.

A Faculty was granted for the disposal of the five altar frontals surplus to requirements; after extensive advertising, these are to be acquired by a new Chapel in California.

Repairs to the Warrior Chapel kneeler and the collection bags were co-ordinated by Mrs Wendy Ziegler.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts for 2005, as approved by the Committee and subsequently publicly displayed in the Church Porch, were tabled.

The Treasurer drew attention to the reasonably satisfactory position on the Church's normal activities. Surplus income from the letting of Garden Hall and Fellowship House had resulted in the loan from St

Matthew's Church being repaid early in 2006; after repayment of the balance of £40,000 due to the contractors, the significant surplus income from the lettings will be applied to general Church funds.

In response to a query, it was explained that, in accordance with best practice, Garden Hall would be depreciated over 100 years despite the fact that the rationale for such action was debatable as it stood on freehold land.

The accounts were adopted and will form part of the Parish Accounts to be submitted to the PCC.

The Rector thanked Mrs Alison Neilson for her work in preparing the complex accounts of the Church and for agreeing to continue as Treasurer till a replacement could be found; in recognition of her services over the past eight years, he presented her with a gift on behalf of the congregation.

7. Covenant Secretary's Report

Mr Roger Chadder reported that £247,000 (including tax recoveries) had been contributed by 300 regular givers. There had been a small decrease in numbers giving as a result of people moving away. An appeal for 'general giving' directed at those who had joined the congregation since the last appeal in October 2003 would be made in 2006.

He explained, in response to a question, that trying to recover tax on occasional substantial giving via the collection plates would involve a considerable amount of work for little gain.

The Rector thanked Roger for his work in this area over another year.

8. Development Fund Appeal

Miss Alex Brougham reported that over £50,000 plus £15,000 in reclaimed tax had been received during 2005 from 250 'responses'. In addition, the All England Lawn Tennis Club had made a significant donation and £4,000 had been received from fund-raising activities of which £2,500 related specifically to the organ. On this basis, it was estimated that if nothing was spent and no further fund raising undertaken, by the end of the 5-year period in 2009 the net balance in the Development Fund Appeal Account would be c.£280,000, of which £54,000 would have been given specifically for refurbishment of the organ, the total cost of which was likely to be c.£150,000.

9. Committee Secretary's Report

The Church Committee met five times during the year. The main matters dealt with related to:

- The ministry of the Church through the services and special discussion groups, the ways in which 'outreach' could be widened, the Church's own charitable giving.
- The recruitment of a suitable youth worker;
- The appointment of Rev Bruce Rickards as non-stipendiary curate;
- Consideration of the regular reports of the Treasurer, the Planned Giving Officer, the Liturgical Sub-Committee and the Diocesan and Deanery Synod.
- Health and safety issues within the Church buildings and working practices of the staff;
- Measures needed to ensure the security of the Church buildings;
- The danger to personal safety due to the movement of traffic within the Churchyard;
- Repairs to the fabric of the buildings;
- The lack of adequate storage facilities at both Fellowship House and Garden Hall;

- Renovation of the Organ, including the application for a Faculty and fund-raising;
- Care of the Churchyard.

Also discussed were improvements to the website, the establishment of a calendar of Church events, repair of the kneelers; retention of the grand piano in the Church following the acquisition of an electronic piano and efforts to find who donated it; disposal of unwanted altar frontals; the increase in the electoral roll and its effect on the Quota payable to the Diocese of Southwark.

10. Church Electoral Roll

The electoral roll was now 734 (up from 701), continuing the steady increase over the last 4-5 years; it was noted this figure might fall at the next electoral review because of people moving away.

11. Report on the two Church Halls

The income from rents (£77,000 in 2005) was vital for the viability of the finances of the Church. As agreed, £5,000 is being set aside each year for the refurbishment of Fellowship House over five years (the windows and roof have already been repaired and the floor would be next). All four churches will contribute to the overdue revamping of the Parish Office.

Relationships with the nursery who rent Fellowship House remain cordial; rent had been increased by 5% to £26,220.

The loan from St Matthew's for Garden Hall had been repaid. The only outstanding balance was £40,000 due to the builders; this will be repaid when it is certain that the leak in the roof had been cured. Mr John Neilson was thanked for continuing to 'manage' this. In accordance with stated policy, regular maintenance (e.g. repainting) of the Hall is taking place. The oven may have to be replaced following complaints regarding its adequacy.

Superficially, it might appear that both Halls had lost their purpose as 'outreach enablers' and become 'revenue creators'. However, 'outreach' was being achieved through contacts established via the lettings and, without this income, an increase of some 40% in giving would be required from those who are already giving generously. Importantly, this income has enabled the Church to employ a full-time youth worker for the first time – we have to thank those who had the vision to build Garden Hall.

12. Elections and Nominations for Election

- a) **Wardens:** The Rector thanked the wardens for their hard work in ensuring the efficient management of the Church; in particular, he thanked Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton, who was standing down as Churchwarden after two years, for the enormous amount of work she had done and for agreeing to continue to manage the refurbishment of the organ. In recognition of her devotion to duty, he presented her with a gift on behalf of the congregation.

Mr Anthony Leonard was willing to serve for another year and was duly elected. Mr John Neilson proposed Mrs Rosemary Chadder be elected a warden, seconded by Mrs Jenny Michalacopoulos and carried unanimously.

- b) **Committee:** The members not eligible to stand for a further period were Mrs Elizabeth Broad, Mrs Alison Osborne, Mr Robert Porter, Mrs Jane Sanderson, and Mr Gerry Robinson;

they were thanked for their services over the past three years. Nominations had been received for the election of Mr William Featherby, Mr Giles Ellerton, Mrs Anne Archer and Mr Ian Hay; they were unanimously elected.

Elections to the PCC and Deanery Synod would take place at the Committee Meeting on 18 May.

13. Any Other Business

A request was made for the establishment of some form of on-going study group similar to the house study groups arranged during Lent.

14. The Rector's Address

The text of the Rector's address, in which he highlighted, and thanked, the contribution of his colleagues and the congregation to the success in creating a vibrant and healthy Church community, is appended and will be available to the Congregation at the Cross Aisles.

15. The Rev Christopher Davies

Mr Anthony Leonard, in his capacity as Churchwarden, thanked the Rector, Rev Hilary Johnson, Mrs Joan Ellis and Rev Bruce Rickards for their care of those within this community through their generous and loving ministry to the congregation.

The meeting closed with a prayer.