

Parish of St. Peter, Stonegate

MINUTES
of the
Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting
held on
Sunday 14th April 2019

Present:

The Rev. Dr. Paul Ratcliff (Chairman)	Mary Hope
Stephen and Kate Burley	Kate Luckhurst
Neil Cameron	Susan Martin
Alan Clarkson	Martin and Tessa Moore-Bick
Malcolm and Stephanie Curtis	
David Hollingdale	

1. Apologies for absence

Ian Kelso and Peter Thompson

The Rev. Dr. Paul Ratcliff opened the meeting by reading from Romans 5, verse 6 and with prayer.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Tessa Moore-Bick and Stephen Burley were proposed by Neil Cameron and seconded by Mary Hope. Both were duly appointed to continue to serve, Tessa for her sixth and final year and Stephen for his fourth year.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were unanimously approved and adopted.

4. Matters arising

None

5. Election of members of the Parochial Church Council

The following PCC members were re-appointed: Neil Cameron, Mary Hope, Ian Kelso and Martin Moore-Bick. All appointments were unanimously agreed.

6. Appointment of sidesmen

The following sidesmen were unanimously appointed:

Victoria Bathurst	Susan Martin
Stephen and Kate Burley	Tom and Lynne McKenzie
Neil and Phoebe Cameron	Martin and Tessa Moore-Bick
Stephanie Curtis	Sian Price
David and Dorothy Hollingdale	Bella Ryan
Mary Hope	Jonny and Charlotte Snow
Ian and Dorothy Kelso	Stuart and Bridget Wood

Joanna Brickell, Deborah Duff and Nick and Fiona Higginson have moved from the area.

7. Annual Report and Financial Statement of the PCC for the year ending 31st December 2017

Kate Luckhurst, Treasurer, confirmed that our funds are in a healthy position and that the major expenditure has been the re-shingling the spire and the installation of a new sound system. Some funds were transferred from the general fund to cover this expenditure. Martin Moore-Bick proposed that the accounts be received and Neil Cameron seconded. Carried unanimously.

8. Appointment of an independent examiner to the Council

Tessa Moore-Bick proposed and Stephen Burley seconded that Mr. Chris Simmons should be re-appointed. This was carried unanimously.

9. Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

The following report was submitted by Kate Burley.

The Deanery Synod has met three times during the last year.

The meeting in July was the first with the new Rural Dean, the Rev. Sharon Francis from Groombridge. The speaker was Jessica Meale of the Children's Society, who spoke movingly of the work of the Society. She covers a very large area, Sussex, Hampshire and part of Surrey where there is a real need for help and support for many families.

At the meeting in November we heard about the visit by members of All Saints Crowborough to aid projects in Kenya.

The most recent meeting was in February which took place during Bishop Martin's Visitation to the Deanery. The Diocese is evaluating the progress of parishes over the last five years and each parish was asked to identify one thing they wished to work on to improve. St Peter's has decided to focus on the All Age Service, encouraging more families to join us. Whilst the Rev. Felicity Davies, our curate, was living in the village we had considerable success with this but, despite recent excellent services, it has been a challenge to maintain the momentum.

2019 has been designated the Year of Vocation, and Bishop Martin encouraged us all to consider what our personal calling might be. He mentioned that there are several courses running in the Diocese to help people focus on this question.

10. Report on the Electoral Roll

The sexennial review of the Electoral Roll has been completed; all members were sent the Electoral Roll Privacy Notice together with their Enrolment Forms.

There are now 45 on the roll. Of the previous 66, 8 have moved away and 17 have not responded. 4 have joined the Roll.

Anne Scoones (Electoral Role Officer)

11. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

Stephen Burley presented his report:

- The major item of expenditure during the year was the replacement of the shingles on the spire and other associated works all of which were identified in the 2017 Quinquennial Report. A faculty was obtained and the final total cost was £41,500.
- The electrical system was checked and steps taken to prevent the system becoming overloaded.
- The World War 1 Memorial was cleaned in time for the 100th anniversary of the Armistice.
- The memorial to George Courthope in the chancel was also restored.
- Since the end of the year the sound system has been updated at a cost of just over £6,000.

12. Report on the Churchyard Fund

The following report had been submitted by Neil and Phoebe Cameron:

1. Appeal letters were sent out in in the summer of 2018. We wrote to those who had made regular donations in the past, and to members of the wider Stonegate community. A total of £3,750 was received (the 2017 figure was £4,225). Donations were received from regular churchgoers and those in the wider community. Those donations indicate the general support for the church in the community and the generosity of all those who made contributions.
2. A considerable amount of work to the churchyard has been undertaken during 2018 at a cost of £7,809. That work included the work to the oak trees on the road frontage.
3. Work planned for 2019 includes renewing the gate which opens on to the turning area, and renovation of the notice board.

13. Closing remarks

Summing up the past year, Tessa Moore-Bick said:

This year has been a significant one in the life of our church. We said a fond farewell to Jeremy and Ruth last May and welcomed Paul this January, together with Heather and their sons. The period of Vacancy was as short as it could possibly be due to the help and guidance of both Archdeacon Edward and one of our patrons, Michael Hardcastle. The six churchwardens, led by Anne Brignell, worked closely together on the Parish Profile and subsequent selection process. We were blessed to have a choice of three strong candidates. The final stage will be the unification of the three parishes under Paul and for the first time since 1979 Stonegate will no longer be held in suspension.

The one thing that the period of Vacancy has highlighted, which we already know, is that St Peter's is a very friendly, cohesive and supportive community. Many people were prepared to come forward to keep things running smoothly. Neil has very kindly and effectively chaired our PCC meetings. We have had lay-led services and lay preachers.

We have welcomed a new treasurer, Kate Luckhurst, to whom we are most grateful for her help and expertise. Peter, our Reader, deserves special mention. He has become a real friend to this congregation and we thank him for his wise and gentle ministry to us all. As always, we are most grateful to our organists, Malcolm and Lisa, as well as to all those who help in so many different ways to ensure the smooth running of the church and keep everything in good order. There is one person who deserves a special mention each year and that is Mary, whose middle name surely should be Martha.

We are told by visitors, including visiting clergy, that Stonegate is a very inclusive and welcoming church. The fact that the church is open on a daily basis is appreciated by the village as a whole and we receive considerable support for our festival services. We must continue to work on bringing more people into our regular worshipping community, especially young families.

Paul added that in the limited time that he has been with us (ten weeks and only having come to Stonegate three times), he has the impression that we are efficiently and effectively run and that we are a strong and united Christian community.

Neil added the thanks of the church family to Tessa and Stephen for all that they have done as churchwardens, especially during the period of Vacancy.

14. A.O.B

Malcolm Curtis asked when we could expect the three parishes to be united under Paul as our Vicar. Paul explained that it was a complex process which would have to start with conversations with the Patrons; the vicars of Mayfield and Wadhurst are the patrons of Tidebrook.

Malcolm Curtis also requested that a light be put on the north wall on the church to light the path to the outside lavatory. This will be discussed at the next PCC meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting with the Grace.