

Annual General Meeting 2021

30 January 2022

Holy Trinity Church, Melrose

Draft Minutes

1. Welcome and opening prayer

The Rector welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the online AGM, and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Robert and Miranda Smyly, Margaret Jackson and Elizabeth Sneddon

A list of those attending the meeting is appended to these minutes (Appendix 1).

3. Minutes of 2020 AGM, 31 January 2021

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a true record. Proposed by Carey Coombs, Seconded by Liz Williams.

4. Elections

4.1 People's Warden

The Rector reported that John Williams was standing for a further year's term as People's Warden.

It was noted that the Rector's Warden had resigned. The Rector gave his thanks to Giles Cuthbert for his years as Rector's Warden, and said he hoped to announce a new incumbent shortly.

4.2 Treasurer

The Treasurer's post was elected for three years at the previous AGM and therefore John Wood will continue in this role.

4.3 Secretary

The Secretary's post was elected for three years at the 2019 AGM and Jan Howarth will therefore continue in this role.

4.4 Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator was elected for three years at the 2019 AGM and Ed Creaney will therefore continue in this role.

4.5 Lay Representative

4.6 Alternate Lay Representative

4.7 Borders Area Council Member

The Rector reported that Mervyn Anthony will continue in his role as Lay Representative and Borders Area Council Member but that the Alternate Lay Representative role is still vacant.

4.8 Fabric Convenor

It was noted that Vaughan Walker had retired as Fabric Convenor. The Rector emphasised the importance of this role, especially given the work required on the church and rectory, and the forthcoming quinquennial review. He invited members of the congregation to volunteer for this crucial role.

4.9 Six Ordinary Vestry Members

Under the new Holy Trinity Constitution, signed off by the Bishop on 9 June 2021, six further Vestry members were required.

Vestry currently has three ordinary members – Liz Williams, Pamela Gordon and Ian Skinner. The Rector asked that members of the congregation to volunteer for the three remaining vacancies by contacting either him, John Wood or Jan Howarth.

5. Draft Annual Report and Accounts

The Treasurer opened his report by thanking those involved in their preparation: Gift Aid Secretary, Elizabeth Stockdill; Alasdair Johnson who manages the Trinity Centre Finances; Independent Examiner, Alexander Storie; and previous Treasurer John Barley.

It was noted that congregational giving had changed considerably over the past two years. A reduction in the Free Will Envelopes and as collections had reduced considerably, however, this had been offset by the Smartie tube collection and increases in regular direct debits. Overall congregational giving has remained steady at £68,000, with investments up £8,000.

Taking Holy Trinity's services online had come with additional cost, however, the £3,000 cost of the new cameras had been covered by a grant from the Diocesan Recovery and Renewal Fund. The fact that the church building had been used less throughout lockdown had brought savings on heating and lighting.

Upgrading to the church's heating and rectory repairs had also been put on hold though lockdown meaning that the expected deficit in the accounts had in fact produced a slight surplus.

In conclusion, the Treasurer reported that the year has been weathered reasonably well but that an effective means of online giving was needed to replace the income lost from other sources.

Given that some members of the congregation were attending the meeting online, the Treasurer invited questions on the accounts by email.

The Annual Report and Accounts were Proposed by Mervyn Anthony and Seconded by Elizabeth Stockdill.

6. Draft annual budget 2021-22

The draft annual budget was presented by the Treasurer. He particularly brought to the attention of the congregation the proposed budget for the rectory and church repairs, as these would now be scheduled given that lockdown has eased.

There were no questions on the draft budget. It was Proposed by Malcolm McVittie and Seconded by Margaret Hawley.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Church Accounts

Alexander Storie had agreed to stand again and was approved as the Independent Examiner of the Church Accounts.

8. Rector's Report

The Rector opened his report by thanking those who had supported him through the continuing covid precautions, including Liz Williams and Ed Creaney, Lay Readers; and Claire Nicholson, Curate. He hoped that services and full communion would soon be possible. He also thanked members of the Vestry for their diligence, which had enabled him to more easily focus on fulfilling his duties as Rector.

Chris Achenbach, organist, and the choir were also commended for their input in enabling the singing of God's praises throughout lockdown. Chris had used his talents and dedication to ensure that worship had continued in the best way possible.

The Rector expressed gratitude to his mother for her dedication in producing the church's notices, given that her arthritic hands means that the process is slow. Anne Storie's pictures and words were also commended.

The Rector noted the unique position in terms of charitable law, in that as chair of Vestry he was also the head of the trustees that were responsible for his own welfare. The last two years had been particularly difficult but he hoped to take a holiday soon. He was grateful to the new ministry team who could cover in his absence.

Looking forward, the Rector asked for help, support and the patience and generosity of the congregation to take on some of the tasks he had covered during lockdown, but which were preventing him from doing aspects of his work which were important, and also preventing him being able to take days off, for example, responsibility for preparing the church for worship, photocopying, and other day-to-day administrative matters. This would allow him to concentrate on bringing new people to the love of God and advancing God's love amongst the existing congregation.

In closing his report, the Rector asked the congregation to concentrate on praying and reading the Bible every day. He urged the congregation to become a community that loved one another in order for others to witness this and do the same. He hoped that by working together "miracles could happen!".

9. Other committee reports

The sub-committee and other reports made available before the meeting were noted. The Rector thanked those who has taken the time to prepare them.

10. Any other business

The congregation recognised those who had left Holy Trinity in the previous year and that their contribution was very much missed. Elizabeth Stockdill commended the contribution of John and Jane Barley, and the Rector commended Janet Wingfield's contribution to the church.

11. Closing prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer and The Grace.

nb full copies of the papers were made available to the congregation in advance of the AGM.

Appendix 1

Attendees:

Philip Blackledge, Rector (Chair)
Jan Howarth (Vestry Secretary)
Mervyn Anthony (Vestry Member)
John Wood (Treasurer)
John Williams (People's Warden)
Liz Williams (Vestry member)
Ed Creaney (Vestry Member)
Chris Anthony
Nancy Muir
Chris Achenbach
Janet ??
Marion Clayton
Mary Cuthbert
?Liz ??
Agnes Stott
Ross Thomson
Paulina Thomson
Sue Coombs
Carey Coombs
Linda Rainey
Andrew ??
Col. McVittie
James Babbington Smith
M? ??
Elizabeth Stockdill
Pamela Gordon
Jane McCaul
Claire Nicholson
Katie Blackledge
Patricia Croall

Other members of the congregation
attended the meeting online