

**The Parish Church of St Nicholas Blundellsands**  
**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**  
**25th October 2020**

**Present in church:** Prof P Batey (Chair), Mrs J Batey, Mr D Parkinson, Mrs J Parkinson, Mrs E Sinker, Mr A Sinker, Mr T Johnston, Mrs G Johnston, Mr P Levick, Miss J Dray, Mr N Scarborough, Mr S Bailey, Mr S Chantler, Revd K Thornborough, Mrs G Mainey, Mr B Mainey, Mrs L Jones, Revd C Jones, Mr I Hardman, Mrs N Farrag, Mrs M Bird, Mrs H Pennington, Mrs A Rankin, Mr J Rankin, Miss C Hailwood, Mrs L Utley

**Present by Zoom:** Mrs G Cain, Mr S Green, Mrs J Caldwell, Mr M Kilpatrick, Revd A Brooks, Mrs E Brooks, Mrs G Enstone (Minutes)

**Opening Prayer:**

Revd Keith Thornborough opened the meeting with prayer.

**Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks:**

Prof Batey welcomed everyone to the 2020 APCM, with the reminder that this meeting had originally been scheduled to take place in April but had had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. All elections were therefore taking place somewhat later in the church's year than usual, although it was hoped that the normal cycle could be resumed next April.

Given the late point in the year, today's meeting, in addition to providing the usual review of the Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending December 2019, would therefore also provide an opportunity to update members on the way St Nicholas' had responded to the many challenges presented by the pandemic during the seven months since lockdown began on 23rd March.

**1. Meeting of Parishioners to elect two Churchwardens:**

Derek Parkinson and Lesley Utley had confirmed that they were willing to serve for the remaining six-month term of office. They were nominated by Glenda Cain, seconded by Liz Sinker and, no further nominations having been received, were elected unanimously.

**2. Annual Parochial Church Meeting:**

a) Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Mrs A Grundy, Mrs J Kilshaw, Mrs J Levick and Miss B Qualtrough.

b) Minutes of the APCM held on 28th April 2019:

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting of 28th April 2019.

c) Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

d) Electoral Roll Report:

Lesley Utley delivered the Electoral Roll report, concluding that, although the final number on the roll was only slightly up on the previous year, the detail presented encouraging evidence of growth:

Moved away: 9

Deceased: 4

Joined during year: 5

Recruited October 2020: 11

The final total in October 2020 therefore stands at 168.

e) Election of Deputy Churchwardens and Deanery Synod Representatives:

We currently have five Deputy Churchwardens: Miss C Hailwood, Mrs G Cain, Mr S Green, Mr S Bailey, Mr S Chantler.

All have confirmed their willingness to remain in post and have been re-nominated by Lesley Utley and Derek Parkinson. They were all agreed unanimously.

A new Deanery Synod will be in place from December 2020. Two previous representatives, Prof Peter Batey and Mr Stephen Green, have agreed to stand again. They were nominated by Derek Parkinson, seconded by Gill Enstone and, there being no further nominations, were elected unanimously.

f) Election of Parochial Church Councillors and Independent Financial Examiner:

Two current PCC members have come to the end of their term of office.

Miss Anne Dobie has agreed to stand for re-nomination. She was proposed by Gill Enstone, seconded by Glenda Cain and elected unanimously.

Mrs Gill Enstone has now completed two consecutive terms of office and cannot therefore stand for re-election this year. She has agreed to serve as a co-opted member for one year, was nominated by Peter Batey, seconded by Derek Parkinson and elected unanimously.

Mr David Roughley has agreed to continue to act as our Independent Financial Examiner for a further year. He was proposed by Liz Sinker, seconded by Peter Batey and confirmed unanimously. Derek Parkinson proposed a vote of thanks for his continued willingness to serve.

g) Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council and the Governors of St Nicholas' School for the year ended December 2019:

*Annual Report:*

Gill Enstone commented briefly on the Annual Report. Re-reading it in preparation for the meeting had been a poignant experience. After all that had happened since March, December 2019 seemed a world away: the report presented a picture of vibrant activity and of numerous plans for the future, most of which had had to be put on hold, with no clear idea of when they would be able to be fully restored. Nevertheless, much had been kept alive during lockdown and, by the time of the next report, she was sure there would be a full programme of activity to present once more.

Peter Batey endorsed this view: when he and Gill had completed the Parish Profile during the Autumn, they had been able to provide an impressive picture of a very active church at the heart of the local community, the result of a strong network of teams working across all aspects of church life, and it was important to keep these teams alive and active into the future.

*Financial Report:*

The Treasurer, Liz Sinker, presented the accounts for 2019, which had been reviewed and approved by David Roughley, our Independent Examiner. She intended to touch briefly on these, before reviewing the effect of the lockdown on our finances during the six month period since.

2019: The year had seen a considerable improvement in the deficit for the year, £1,645 as opposed to £15,000 in 2018, the result of the ending of curacy housing costs and of a grant from the Sefton Council Community Transition Fund. A 2.6% increase in planned giving had balanced the fall of 2.7% in 2018 and £1,000 had been raised from Christmas Gift Envelopes. The installation of a digital giving terminal had also helped. Hall rentals had accounted for £31,000 of our income. Church finances during lockdown: March 2020 resulted in the immediate loss of both hall income and weekly giving through the collection plate, but a range of actions were taken immediately to increase giving remotely and the response had been heartening, from contributions via the new Just Giving page, increases in regular giving, augmented by a small number of new members of the Parish Giving Scheme, and donations of cash and cheques through the door. Gift Aid recovery had increased from £38,000 to £45,000.

Set against this positive picture, however, was a loss of £10,000 in hall revenue and £2,500 in projected funds from a variety of cancelled social events, particularly the Music Festival. We have continued to meet our obligations to the Parish Share and proposed increases for 2021 have been frozen. We have also applied for Parish Share Credit from a Deanery Mission fund as we now have

less than three months of Parish Share instalments remaining in our unrestricted reserves.

By September of this year, therefore, our accounts showed a loss of £2,500. This would have been considerably worse, however, had it not been for a number of one-off payments and the help received from the government's furlough scheme. It is also clear that the additional income we usually receive from events around Christmas is likely to be much reduced. Hall income, having begun to pick up at the start of September, is about to dip considerably again as infection levels increase once more.

It remained important, therefore, that every church member continued to keep their own giving position under review, particularly to enable our new Vicar to make a start at St Nicholas' unencumbered by the prospect of financial crisis.

Liz concluded with her thanks to the many people on whose help she depends throughout the year: John and Angela Rankin for their work on Gift Aid and Stewardship, Julie Dray and the counting house team, Eric Molyneux for additional help since March, the Finance Committee for their help and advice and David Roughley for his advice and diligence.

The APCM 2020 formally approved the Annual Report and Accounts for the year until December 31st 2019.

Peter Batey thanked the Treasurer for all she had done during lockdown to "keep us afloat" and, in her role as Hall Secretary, for her invaluable work in maximising hall revenue.

h) Churchwardens' Address:

The Churchwardens presented a brief summary of the ways in which the church had responded to the sudden announcement of the lockdown on March 23rd and the ways in which everyone had worked to keep as much of church life going as possible under such difficult circumstances.

*Derek Parkinson*

Buildings/lockdown/grounds: As soon as it was known that the buildings had to be totally shut down, a range of emergency measures were put in place to ensure the safety and security of the premises. Rubbish was cleared out, perishables emptied from the fridge, and essential access only was permitted, controlled by the Churchwardens and recorded.

Keeping in touch with the congregation and meeting their needs: Lesley set up a networking system, with several members of the congregation keeping in regular touch with those who were shielding or vulnerable. Some were also shopping for Age Concern clients and other members of St Nicholas'. Committee and Team leaders were asked to keep in touch with their groups.

Keeping the congregation involved: the magazine was paused but the bulletin was expanded to include a weekly letter from a member of the clergy and our thanks go to each of them for responding to that request so readily. It was sent out by email, initially to 300 people, but this number grew, while Lesley also had 40 copies printed, which she delivered by hand to those not on email. Joyce put the bulletin, and later, orders of service, on the website so those watching at home could feel involved in worship.

Services during lockdown: A great effort was made by Keith and the team to stream services, initially on Facebook and then on Zoom to involve more people. Morning Prayer expanded to include Eucharist, and Toddler Church, including innovative features such as puppets, was streamed from Keith's house.

Derek expressed particular thanks to Keith for all the time he has devoted to preparing and delivering services, to all who contributed and to Joyce Batey who had a "whirlwind introduction" to hosting Zoom meetings allowing several different people to speak and be heard.

*Lesley Utley*

Opening up the church building for private prayer in July:

When government regulations changed at the end of June, allowing churches to open for worship, Standing Committee decided on a carefully phased re-opening. After the formulation of a Covid safety policy, church was initially opened for private prayer only. Once this was seen to be working safely, services were brought back, again in stages. Currently, we had a 10.30am Sunday Eucharist, a monthly 8.30am from the Book of Common Prayer, and on Wednesday, private prayer at 9.15 followed by Eucharist at 10.15. Keith leads Sanctuary at Seven on the second Wednesday of the month, and we have also been able to add in additional services such as the Hope and Remembrance Service for the Faithful Departed. Booking is required for additional services to ensure safety.

Thanks: Lesley concluded by thanking all those who have given their time and advice so willingly during the last seven months, and without whom it would have been impossible to have achieve all that we have been able to do:

Keith, Alan, Bill, Chris, Jennifer and Bill for their ministry;

Colleagues on the Standing Committee - Peter Batey who chaired our meetings and kept us all focused; Gill Enstone, who managed to make sense of our discussions and produce accurate minutes and Liz Sinker, who worked behind the scenes with the church hall users, to keep the income coming in and the church afloat;

Lesley ended with special thanks and a heartfelt blessing to all the members of St Nicholas' for helping us and each other to get through a very difficult seven months.

Concluding remarks:

There was no other business and no members of the meeting wished to suggest any items for future PCC agendas. The Chair concluded by expressing the warm anticipation felt by all at St Nicholas' of the arrival of our new Vicar, who would come, he was sure, with many new ideas for the future.

Revd Thornborough closed the meeting with prayer.