

## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Knowle Parishioners (item 2 only) and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Wednesday 24 April 2024**

111 people attended

### **1. Welcome**

Geoff Lanham welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened in prayer

### **2. Appointment of wardens**

Rod Street and Liz Welton confirmed that they were happy to continue as church wardens and they were confirmed as having been duly elected until the Annual Meeting in 2025.

### **3. Sharing thanksgiving for the life of the church**

Geoff gave a slide presentation of the activities, events and highlights from last year. We have a lot to thank God for.

3 videos celebrated particularly special occasions

- a. 9.15 Easter Celebrations
- b. members and testimonies from the changing tunes group
- c. a message from the Bishop of Bolivia.

He also highlighted examples of God working and answering prayer including:-

- a) 15 people who had made first commitments,
- b) A Full staff team,
- c) The work of the global mission committee
- d) Social justice team
- e) Intergenerational worship

He expressed his thanks for the work of many people who have decided to step down from, or move onto other roles in the church and for the people who have stepped into take their place. There is a high level of lay involvement.

**A time of prayer** in small groups focussing on one situation/person/answer to prayer/dream/struggle

### **4. Worship**

Geoff and Alex led the meeting in a time of praise and worship.  
Psalm 100 was read

### **5. Geoff's vision for the future**

Geoff shared a powerful vision he had received of a picture of a submarine which looked in full control on the surface but under the water was vulnerable to attack. As we move forwards, we should remember:-

- that the enemy wants to discourage us.
- To be alert and to guard against attack.
- To take responsibility for building faith in our lives. What we are constructing? Will faith stand the test of time? Are we squandering our time?

A song version of Psalm 63 was played

Geoff continued that

- Churches are thirsting for so much and we should be thirsting for God himself.
- Let this year be a time to pay attention to what we long for and take care of what is below the "water line".
- We should remember Jesus says let your light shine before man and we should not be ashamed to follow Jesus.
- As we invest in growth and as God to increase the numbers at KPC numerically and with resources to share we should pray for generosity in our hearts so that God's life in Knowle can flow out to other churches in Knowle the deanery and the wider world. We should not be afraid of giving away resources because God will replenish them

Knowle has become a member of a group of churches in Balsall Common, Temple Balsall Barston, Hampton in Arden and Bickenhill. The new vicar of Balsall Common will have oversight of this groups. We will be able to share opportunities for training, leaders and preachers, evangelism and mutual prayer. We will continue to support the churches that we already have links with

### **The reordering project is an important part of the vision for the future..**

Geoff announced that after a rigorous selection process BHB architects have been chosen for the reordering project.

They are based in Lichfield. They are experienced in conservation having worked on St Barnabas Erdington, Holy Trinity Sutton Coldfield, St Marys Litchfield and St Michaels Church Weston, Bath

### **Nick Brown gave an update on the reordering project**

Over the next 6-9 months there will be a standard process with the architects to the point of feasibility. The cost of this £29,875 has already been provided by a trust. There are two tasks during this process –

- a) consultation with stakeholders to understand how the building can be used to enable KPC to be a resourcing church
- b) to assemble a team to help with a variety of tasks in the consultation process e.g. communications, accessing funding, use of the internet etc.

A letter of vision from Geoff is available on the church website.

Nick remarked in closing that a lot of people have strong views on the church building and oppose changes. It has been evolving and changing over the last 625 years and when the vision is explained much opposition dissolves. He and Ian are willing to talk to members of Knowle community about the project if required. God will lead us through

### **6. Children and Youth Department. –**

Children's Department – Report by Sarah Covington.

Children's work is divided into 2 groups – under 5s and 5-11s.

This year has been encouraging. There is growth in numbers in the under 5s and a second rainbow tots group has started. There has been a parenting for faith course for teenagers. There are 25-40 in the older groups with a consistent core. The depth of children's faith is increasing.

Knowle academy are very supportive and especially in advertising one off events which are well attended.

The children's team are excited to see what will happen next.

## **Youth Department – Report from Geoff Harley-Mason**

In addition to the published report Geoff highlighted 3 items for prayer

- a) To increase the numbers of young people we are in contact with - 9 children come to mid-week meetings, and a core of 25 on Sunday mornings, and yet there are 2,500 young people in Knowle.
- b) Young people's engagement with social media
- c) A new group for Year 6 straight after school on Wednesdays – that they would go deeper with God

### **7. Opportunity for questions**

### **8. Church warden comments**

Liz Welton commented on how much has happened during the year. She referred to the visioning process with its picture of a thick hedge around the church. Lots of things are happening to break down the hedge.

She reminded us that none of this would happen without the dedication of the clergy who work long hours, deal with complex and difficult issues. Their work can be emotionally draining, they often work on their days off and never seem to be off duty.

She expressed thanks to all three of them on behalf of the church members for their hard work, teaching and pastoral care.

## **9. Finance Report from Steve Mort**

### **1. Annual Report and Accounts for 2023**

The Treasurer, Steve Mort (SM) asked the meeting to approve the reappointment of auditors – Thomas and Young, a small local practice. Proposed by SM, seconded by Adreienne and duly appointed by the meeting.

SM explained the 3 funds, Restricted, Designated and General.

The published accounts show that regular giving has gone up by 10%, and one-off gifts by £11,000. Costs have gone up but even so an additional £35,000 has been allocated to the property fund.

2024 – He is expecting 4% increase in giving,

Grants will be reducing, higher staff costs, outside giving increasing to £40,000. He anticipates a deficit of £15,000 but this should enable the church to break even

### **10. Time in small groups to pray.**

### **11. Election of 3 PCC members.**

Hugh Rollinson, Hannah Bull and Kate Boyall (secretary) were approved as members of PCC. No election was necessary

### **12. Approval of last year's minutes and other reports**

The minutes of last year's meeting were approved with a need to check the date.

The Fabric and building report, the electoral roll report and the deanery synod report were all accepted and unanimously passed.

Special praise and thanks given to Sue Ashton for all her work in supporting the clergy

### 13. Final questions

#### Question

Pre-covid the church opened in daylight hours, but now it is closed when it is convenient e.g. 13.30 on Saturdays. Is there any thought of returning to pre-covid timings?

#### Answer

Helen would be delighted for someone to volunteer to organise a rota of people to lock the church at dusk to return to the pre-covid arrangements.

#### Question

The churchyard is neat and tidy most of the time but currently there are lots of logs and branches around – who is looking after them?

#### Answer

Fabric committee will sort this out sooner rather than later

#### Question

The provision for congregation who want to isolate because of covid or other health issues has reduced, as has live streaming. Are provisions to be reinstated?

#### Answer

Live streaming stopped because there were insufficient volunteers. A service link plan is being tested

At 9.15 service there weren't the number of people who want to self-isolate to justify the reservation of the whole of the side aisle. Suggestion that people could either sit at the front of the side-aisle or near the priests' door where there is good ventilation. Alternatively, they could attend a different service where crowding in the pews is not such an issue.

14. The meeting ended with a final prayer.