

## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Knowle Parishioners (Item 2 Only) and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Wednesday 14 May 2025**

94 people attended

Apologies received from David and Catherine Aldis, Ruth and Tony Brown and Jennie Lumb

### **1. Welcome**

Geoff Lanham welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened in prayer

### **2. Appointment of churchwardens**

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 2026

### **3. Sharing staff highlights of the year**

- Youth work was well led by Geoff Harley-Mason during Amy Dowdy's maternity leave and since the youth returned to the church from Pennys.
- The first time that Knowle Academy school choir sang in a Church service.
- Bumps and Babies continues to flourish and mums move on to Graduate Mums which meets on Saturdays approx. every 6 weeks. Church links are maintained.
- Easter under 5s was attended by 70 children and 50 adults. Toddlers and their grown-ups heard the Easter Story.
- Seeing people grow in faith
- Appointment of new organist
- The choir singing the Hallelujah chorus on Easter Day

**4 GL used a visual presentation to show many highlights**

### **5 Worship time, concluding with prayer**

### **6 Vicars annual report**

GL started by thanking everyone who contributes to the smooth running of KPC and especially the staff team for their prayerful support.

Highlights of the year include:-

- People coming to faith and especially through the Alpha Course
- The way that some people find their way into church
- The arrival and integration of the Hong Kong folk
- The work of the For Future Generations delivery group and especial thanks to Nick Brown and Ian Kay for their hard work
- The community engagement in the summer of sport
- The Christmas and Easter services with so many visitors in church and people coming to hear the Hallelujah Chorus.
- The numbers of children keen to go to Jelly Beans

He shared a vision of the tides coming in at Morecombe Bay and the extreme and surprising speed that the tide comes in. We should remember that when God chooses to move He can be very surprising.

He read from Acts 11

As in this Chapter God surprises us. Geoff is encouraged by a quiet rival in church attendance as reported by You Gov. Our core business is to help people become life long followers of Jesus and we should celebrate with the Joy of the Angels when anyone becomes a Christian. When someone becomes a Christian they walk in newness of life, they are the same person but different.

The FFG project is to allow the church to serve our community in this and future generations. It is not a vanity project but to progress the Lord's work. In the Bible a woman broke a priceless bottle over Jesus' feet. Jesus appreciated the gesture. It should be remembered that if the FFG project does not go ahead a considerable amount of money will need to be spent on maintaining the building. The regenerated building is part of the regeneration project. Change means uncertainty and people react at different paces to change. It is alright to be at different points in the For Future Generations project.

The signs for the project being successful are positive:-

- The diocese are fully engaged with the project
- There is good congregational support
- People have given generously already enabling us to pay for RIBA stages 3 & 4
- The outcome of the pledge days will be another sign

## **7 For Future operations update**

Nick Brown gave a verbal report.

He emphasized that prayer is vital for the success of this project. Peter and Wendy Thompson are leading the prayer support.

He shared the following updates:-

- Outline visuals are displayed at the back of church and may be altered as the work with the architects develops.
- There are many positive indications about the project. The DAC are now fully engaged and are asking questions.
- A woodwork specialist has confirmed that the pews have no value and are contaminated with woodworm.
- The rood screen is a fantastic piece of medieval work but it needs sorting out.
- The oak chests are 800 years old.
- Archaeology surveys will be taking place using ground penetrating radar to see what is under the floor including where there are graves.
- Heating and lighting solutions are still being researched.
- The sermon series leading up to the pledge days on 22 – 29<sup>th</sup> June are encouraging.

We should remember that God is sovereign.

## **8. Children and youth report**

**Youth report** Amy Dowdy thanked Geoff Harley-Mason for covering for her so well while she was on maternity leave, supported by Ros Hardy. Youth ministry really impacts young peoples' lives so that they can survive and thrive. It is supported by a committed group of volunteers.

Key developments include: -

- A year 6 group was started by Ros Hardy. All of this group have continued coming to the group in Year 7 and they are now bringing their friends with them.
- A year 8 craft group has been started.
- In the autumn 14 young people attended a weekend away. They studied the call of David and how it applies to them.
- There has been training for volunteers.
- Pennys café was a fantastic outreach. God has built on the work which was started there as the youth work has returned to the church.
- The Sunday morning group is going well and is attended by around 20 people. It will be moving to St. Anne's cottage and split into 2 groups. Care and attention is given to support Hong Kongers and also young people who are neuro diverse.

**Childrens report** Sarah Covington gave thanks to God for all the blessings the children's team have experienced.

Highlights include:-

- The children's team try to walk alongside people they meet.
- Tell-us-a-story curry to be organised – testimony to be shared.
- Seasonal events have been a great success both for under 5s and 5-11s. Parents and carers hear the Bible stories as well as the children.
- Stepping Stones continues to be a well-respected pre-school group. Many thanks were expressed to Sue Spencer who is retiring, for all her hard work leading Stepping Stones. Her replacement has been recruited.
- Sunday Schools are growing slowly but steadily.
- Work with Knowle Academy continues to proceed through "Jelly Beans"
- SC is chair of Governors at Knowle Academy – and as such is in a position to build relationships with staff and influence appointments. She also goes to PGL with the school which gives her further opportunities to improve her relationships with staff and students.
- Alex Dengate is now going into the school to teach songs to the children.

## 9. Opportunity for questions

### Question:-

There have been many encouraging signs this year. What are the disappointments?

### Answer:

When people make progress on their faith journey and then disappear from church. Also when tragedies happen – both on a personal and church level and the difficulty of asking why does that happen.

There are many volunteers, but sometimes still more are needed and this prevents the work going forward.

## 8 Church wardens' comments

Rod Street gave a massive thank you for the staff and all the support they give to the church wardens which makes it a blessing to serve.

He highlighted :-

The diverse clergy who work together in a supportive way and sense God's priorities and lead us appropriately.

They lead elective worship well

Their role modelling of walking with God

They pay attention to their own walk with God

He also gave thanks to the For Future Generations team for their work

### Financial Review

Steve Mort started with the statement that "God is Good."

**Appointment of Auditors** The income of KPC will exceed £1million pounds next year because of the reordering project. This will result in a full audit which is more expensive. The current auditors quoted £7200 for the full audit which is less than expected.

SM proposed that current auditors Thomas and Young be appointed for the next financial year.

This was seconded by Rod Street and carried unanimously.

SM explained the differences between the restricted, designated and general funds.

The accounts show that at the end of the year the church broke even and maintained its general reserves. At the beginning of 2025 costs increased because of NI and a full staff team. 50-60 people increased their giving and currently a deficit of £18000 is predicted for the coming year. This is an acceptable number.

We should look to God "to give us our daily bread".

**Questions:-**

Will the For Future Generations project have an impact on future giving?

**Answer**

No one knows but it is a concern, however, only the income that has already been pledged has been included in the budget.

Biblically tithing is a baseline. Generous giving is above tithing. We should ask God how generous he wants us to be. This is a spiritual work and we should lean into God.

**Question**

Will we be paying full common fund?

**Answer**

We will be paying more in 2025 than in 2024 as we are paying a curate for a full year. We are gifting less towards a member of the clergy in a less affluent area of the diocese.

**Question:-**

As the electoral roll has gone down will we pay less to the diocese?

**Answer:-**

No – the system has changed.

GL thanked Steve for all his work leading the finance team. Jennie Lumb will be taking over as treasurer while SM will continue with book keeping duties.

**12. Election of four PCC members.**

Rebecca Hailes, Leo Kwok, Warren Tan and Jennie Lumb were elected to the PCC.

The attendees were invited to take home and read the reports included in the pack and on-line.

**13** The meeting concluded with a time of prayer.