THE UNITED BENEFICE OF
HENLEY-ON-THAMES WITH REMENHAM

PARISH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, HENLEY-ON-THAMES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parishioners and of
the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
held on
Sunday 27th April 2008
at 7.00 pm
in the Chantry House

PRESENT

It was recorded that there were 34 people present.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Elspeth and Henry Villet, Jim Coffee, Michael Christmas, Cleone and Frank Augur, Liz Preston, Avril Brent, Anne Griffiths, Glen and Audrey Lambert, and Trevor and Margaret Johnson.

2 ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

Carol Brook-Partridge and Geoffrey Taylor had agreed to stand for re-election. There being no further nominations, they were duly re-elected as the Churchwardens.

This concluded the meeting of the parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting then began.

3 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last APCM were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4 ELECTIONS TO THE DEANERY SYNOD AND THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Ceridwen Cranford had agreed to continue but Andy Hurst and Alan Tang had both decided not to stand again as Deanery representatives so two more representatives needed to be elected to serve for three years. Carol Brook-Partridge agreed to stand. The PCC would consider co-opting further members in the future. For the PCC there were three vacancies (George Constantinidi and Val Barter having to stand down) and two candidates, namely Brian Brent and Mary Wood. There were no further nominations. There being three vacancies and two nominations, the above two people were duly voted on to the PCC, nem con.

The list of PCC members for 2008/2009 was therefore: Carol Brook-Partridge (Churchwarden), Andrew Butler, Ceridwen Cranford, Stuart Crippen, David Dew, Anne Forrest, Peter Hopkins, Andy Hurst, Brian Brent, Mary Wood, Stephen Nichols, Liz Preston, Alan Tang, Geoffrey Taylor (Churchwarden), and Martin Whittaker.

5 ELECTION OF SIDESMEN

Christiane Harvey and Glen Lambert were elected as new sidesmen and the existing sidesmen were re-elected. The list of Sidesmen was therefore as follows for 2009/09: Sir William Barlow, Michael Christmas, George Constantinidi, Geraldine Crippen, Richard Fletcher, Anne Forrest, Sue Hockley, Hazel Howard, Margaret and Trevor Johnson, Dorothy Marshall, Lavinia Southern, Barbara Steele, Elspeth and Henry Villet, Mary Wood, Christiane Harvey and Glen Lambert.

6 REPORT ON THE ELECTORAL ROLL

The Rector read out a report from Elspeth Villet, the Electoral Officer, on the numbers on the roll. The numbers on the roll had increased from 137 last year to 149 this year. Of the 149, 59 were men and 90 were women. The congregation's thanks were recorded to Elspeth for keeping the records accurately.

7 PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Stuart Crippen, the Treasurer, presented the Accounts for 2007. The meeting was referred to page 4 of the accounts. The accounts were now much simpler following the completion of work to the Church and Chantry House. This helped to concentrate minds on the subject of expenditure, which was starting to exceed income. 2007 was a less satisfactory year than 2006 representing a deficit of £4234 on unrestricted funds. Two years ago St Mary's had a small surplus, last year St Mary's broke even but this year there was a deficit of £4234. For 2006 and 2007 St Mary's had been bolstered by a paper gain on investments but next year unless there was to be a recovery in share prices during 2008 St Mary's would show a loss in this area as well. Regular giving (covenants and gift aid) was not keeping pace with the rise in costs. Considering unrestricted funds (the ordinary funds of the PCC) it could be seen:

Income £134,133
Costs £138,367 hence deficit of £4,234

It was this area of church finances that the Treasurer had been saying for some time was the greatest concern for the Church. The PCC had worked hard to hold down costs but sooner or later the Church could have a really bad year. St Mary's had considerable demands on its finances. By way of example: the Parish Share was increasing each year. This year the Share was just over £70,000. Utilities had risen a lot recently and the church was no exception. Insurance and accountancy costs continued to rise each year. The costs of maintaining such a large and ancient church were heavy. The cost was not yet known of the work to the floor of the Jesus Chapel and for the Quinquennial inspection the costs were not yet known.

PCC unrestricted funds would need careful monitoring throughout 2008. There was not much leeway for increased costs and any increase in income would be most welcome. Donations and legacies can often be substantial and can change the overall picture in any one-year.

Page 8 gave the breakdown of income and page 9 gave the breakdown of costs. The Accounts had been audited by Villars Hayward and found to be satisfactory.

Thanks were expressed to Richard Fletcher who continued to count and bank weekly collections as well as operating the gift aid tax reclaim. Thanks were also given to Martin Whittaker who also helped in this area.

The Treasurer commended these Financial Statements and Accounts and asked the meeting to approve them.

There was a question about the money donated to the Diocese of Lima in Peru and the Rector explained that the Bishop of Lima had unfortunately been taken seriously ill, and this coincided with the ending of contract for various staff in agencies such as CMS and USPG who had been providing reports. However it was known that Father Aurelio's house was being finished off with the money donated and the Diocese was struggling to cope with the effects of a recent earthquake. It was nevertheless agreed that St Mary's should contact the Diocese of Worcester and co-ordinate a request for more regular information on the use to which the money donated was being put.

Grateful thanks were expressed to Stuart Crippen for the huge amount of work put in by him as Treasurer and the Accounts were approved.

8 CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT AND DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Both these reports were tabled and there were no questions on them.

The Rector expressed grateful thanks to all those who had contributed their reports and for the work that they had done.

9 RECTOR'S REPORT

The Rector thanked all those involved with the ministry of the Church at St Mary's, and in particular thanked those connected with the worship, namely the Choir (who were superb and wonderful), the servers, the chalice assistants, the organist, the sacristans, and the sidesmen. He thanked the flower ladies, those who keep the Church clean, Elspeth Villet in her new role as Verger, and Julie Griffin in the Parish Office, the Chantry House Committee, the Mothers' Union, the Pastoral Group, the bell ringers (who were so faithful) the Junior Church, all the members of the PCC and especially the Churchwardens (for their care and concern for both the Church and for the Rector), the Treasurer, the Secretary, and for those (particularly Anne) who organised the parties and functions for the Church.

The Rector encouraged links between the two parishes within the Benefice, and in view of the cautionary report from the Treasurer urged the meeting to respond so that St Mary's could continue its Christian proclamation for another 1,000 years in this place (noting that although it was over 800 years since the appointment of the

first Rector of St Mary's, there had been a church on this site for a long time before that). The Rector advised that we should look for growth, not just in numbers but in spirituality, to be better disciples. The finances were linked with growth, and our "talents and time" need to be used.

A question was asked about the possibility of using more modern hymns. It was agreed that this would be looked at.

A question was asked about a speaker system for the Choir, and it was agreed that this would also be looked into.

The Rector thanked two donors who wished to remain anonymous who had provided funds for the purchase of a new altar frontal, and for a Statue of the Church's Patron Saint, St Mary the Virgin.

Carol Brook-Partridge thanked the Rector for his priestly ministry in the parish, and the generous hospitality of both him and Anne.

10 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

Villars Hayward were reappointed as independent examiners.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters of any other business.

The meeting closed at about 8.00pm.

Signed by the Chairman ……

Dated ……