

Rivington Unitarian & Free Christian Chapel
Congregational AGM
MINUTES of AGM 20.3.2016 3.27pm

1 Prayer: God please give us clarity and brevity in today's proceedings, but especially brevity.

2 Chairman's opening remarks: Vince McCully (VM) welcomed everyone to the AGM and mentioned that we would be looking into matters of the constitution among many other things.

3 Apologies: Jacqueline Dagnall, Roy Shepherd, Judith Crompton, Richard Horrocks, Peter Grimshaw, John Patefield, Olive Mayor, Chris Oldham.

4 Matters Arising: Alison Whitaker (AW) pointed out that the minutes of the last AGM should say 'Congregational AGM' not 'Committee AGM.' Also that Agenda item 10, Constitutional Matters, should be item 8, after the officers' reports. Vote to accept minutes; prop Geoff Newey (GN) 2nd Paul Fairclough (PF). Carried unanimously.

5 Chairman's Report: Given by Vince McCully (VM). We have had another eventful year and fund raising has gone really well. There was the usual and the unusual, the joyous and the tragic. On the usual side of things our Late Summer Fair in September was a great day of fellowship and industry. We raised £480, not so surprising given the effort the whole congregation put in and as we team up with the Heritage Open Day events on that day we are already booked into their list of events for 2016.

Before this, in August, Peter and Alison hosted The Choirs for a day and raised nearly £200, a great effort and I'm sure a wonderful environment for them to gather together in.

We also teamed up with the Chorley Lions for a musical extravaganza on the 4th of December and with the kind services of Craig Porch and the Bay Horse acoustic society, not to mention some excellent mulled cider, we had another success on our hands. Raising £307 we split this with the Lions 50/50.

Less usual was the Farmers Market at the Bay Horse on the 5th December, which was more of a craft fair really. Which indeed suited our efforts nicely as, again with tremendous support from our congregation we were able to cover most tastes and raised a surprising sum of £150.

All pretty joyous so far, however the prolonged, severe rains we have endured had the inevitable effect of flooding the countryside and poor old Croston copped it again. Linda and John told us about this and the collection we took on 3rd January was added to the Bay Horse craft fair money so that we could donate £270 to their fighting fund. Not bad for a little Chapel in the hills.

The Rivington Pilgrimage, scheduled for 24th September 2016 has been coming along steadily and I am happy to report that;

i/ Alison has the venue booked, Rivington Village Hall.

ii/ Karl and Fie at the Bay Horse have agreed to attend to the catering for us.

iii/ Judith has engaged the services of Dot Hewardine to propose the toast to civil and religious liberties.

iv/ I have been able to book Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon, who recently wowed us with an excellent service, to take the service on that day.

A Rites of Passage Secretary has been appointed by the committee and Mary Horrocks has assumed that role. Mary has been an asset to us and has been most helpful to all enquirers for our services.

The Congregational Committee has been able to address Chapel constitutional matters which we will be able to discuss later in this AGM.

On 15th November 2015 Rev Ann Peart took our service and afterwards, quite by chance, we discussed the remnants of our Chapel library that have been languishing, pretty much unloved, on the stage by the organ. These books she was swift to tell us would be highly prized and much welcomed (especially for their Unitarian Provenance) in the newly revamped Gaskell Library in Manchester, where they are avidly collecting pre-1865 books, the like of which would have once graced the shelves of the Reverend Gaskell. Always keen to be of service the Chapel promptly filled Rev Anne's car with the relevant volumes and she was able to drive away happily replete, if a little down on her axles.

6 Secretary's Report: Given by Vince McCully. Since our last AGM on 19th April 2015, eleven months ago, we have been unable to fill the post of secretary, so I have filled in. I have been secretary (and treasurer) previously for the 'Society of Fire Protection Engineers' and therefore have had hands on experience as it were. There was not a great deal of correspondence via mail; what there was invariably ended up on Joan Thursby's mat. We sent an Email to Essex Hall explaining our up to date situation, however this must have gone awry.

Most communications seem to come via email and all pertinent ones have been put on the notice board and/or presented at Committee meetings.

Rites of Passage enquiries that have come my way have been re-directed to Mary Horrocks our new Rites of Passage Secretary, in order to be processed in a more regular way.

I have been kept busy taking minutes at Congregational Committee meetings, then typing and distributing them. I have also been able to produce and display A3 notices of our preachers and also other events on the internal and external notice boards.

7 Treasurer's Report: Given by Frank Ascroft (FA). Collections are up with less coins and more notes. Rites of Passage are down with fewer Weddings and Christenings. Fundraising is up due to the Music Night, Craft Fair and Late Summer Fair. There was no Spring Fair as a wedding was booked on that day. Tax: Peter Bearon (PB) assisted FA to register online for claiming Gift Aid, but it was rejected as Joan Thursby was the registered responsible person. Responsible persons are now: FA, AW, VM. We expect the Tax rebate to be more because "Open Collections" can be included. FA is talking to Jayne in the Tea Rooms about the water bill; Jayne has asked to be able to pay this on a monthly basis. Electricity is £200 less by changing from Eon to British Gas. Other items: Wedding Fees; Registrar £25, Organist £60. GA (General Assembly) Capitation fee is £700 (ie 20 x £35), contribution to MDA (Manchester District Association) £100.

Income £6832.99 Outgoings £7193.93 = £360.94 deficit. Chorley Building Society interest is 1.2% and significantly higher than others such as Nationwide. FA hopes we can work hard and keep trying.

Vote of thanks to FA for assembling accounts and PB for auditing them. Prop: Dennis Crompton (DC) 2nd Mary Horrocks (MH).

8 Constitutional Matters: AW 1) References to 'Minister/Lay Leader' need amending to 'Minister/Lay Leader/Lay Person in Charge'. DC explained Lay Leader is necessarily a person on the approved roll of the GA and is usually stipendiary, but the Lay Person in Charge is not necessarily either of these.

2) Secretary to maintain a list of full members of Chapel. A Full Member is i/ 18yrs old, ii/ sympathetic to our Unitarian principles, iii/ makes a financial contribution, iv/ attends services. Also folk with strong ties to the Chapel may consider themselves a member.

AW asked what should be the next move. Linda Green (LG) said that as we have to give £35 to GA and £5 to MDA per person then a membership sum should equal at least this IE. £40.00. PB thought this was reasonable and could be discussed by the Congregational Committee.

3) Status of Lay Person in Charge (LPC) (or person holding similar role (eg. Minister, see 8.1) above) is as an honorary and non-voting member of the Congregational Committee. The post of LPC (or person holding similar role (eg. Minister, see 8.1 above) is separate from that of the Chairman.

The Committee proposed the creation of the post of vice-chairman/person who could be available if required. Carried unanimously.

4) Role of secretary. GN suggested the roles of a) Secretary, and b) Assistant Secretary – a Minutes Secretary

DC volunteered to be Minutes Secretary: Prop: PB 2nd Diane Fairclough (DF)

9 The Election of Officers: Chairman: AW Prop: LG 2nd John Green (JG). Carried unanimously. Minutes Sec DC, Prop: PB 2nd DF. Carried unanimously.

At this point AW took over chairmanship of the meeting.

AW asked FA if he was willing to continue to act as Treasurer. FA agreed. AW asked PB if he was willing to continue to act as Auditor. PB agreed. PB suggested that the Congregational Committee should decide the minutiae of the duties. VM affirmed that if DC will do the minutes, he is happy to do everything else.

10 Election of Lay Person in Charge: VM left the meeting. The motion was put that VM should remain as Lay Person in Charge. Prop: GN 2nd FA. Carried unanimously.

11 AOB: A) AW had arranged with Gerald Hefford (Church Warden) to view the facilities in the Church Hall the following day, and to visit with Karl Eccles, the caterer, later.

B) The Committee have proposed the purchase of some new portable heaters. It was agreed that this should go ahead. Proposed PB, Seconded LG, carried unanimously. (Subsequently, it was decided to postpone the purchase in light of the proposed installation of a permanent heating system.)

C) There was some discussion about how to address the Chairman. FA suggested Chairperson. GN was not in favour of this. AW said that Chairman or Chairperson would be suitable, but not “Chair” as she does not want to be sat on.

D) Mary Horrocks (MH) would like some leaflets, at least 8 of each, especially on Naming ceremonies, Weddings and Funerals, also a selection of other Unitarian literature to be available. DC will arrange this.

E) PB asked that the AGM minutes should ideally be made available within one month of the meeting and then be available to view on the Chapel website. He cited as a case in point the reference in the minutes from last year to the cheque paid to Rev Jane Barraclough, about which a decision has still to be made.

No other business

12 Date of Next AGM: Sunday 19 March 2017

The meeting closed at 16:44