

Rivington Unitarian & Free Christian Chapel
Congregational AGM 18.03.2018
Minutes

Those present: Alison Whitaker, Frank Ascroft, Dennis Crompton, Diane Fairclough, Paul Fairclough, Mary Horrocks, Peter Bearon, Judith Crompton, John Green, Linda Green, Richard Horrocks, Frank Williams, Vince McCully, Geoff Newey

1 Welcome and Prayer: Alison Whitaker welcomed everyone to the meeting and Vince McCully said a short prayer.

2 Apologies: Jacqueline Dagnall, Michael Hough, Iris Wharton

3 Minutes: The Minutes of the last AGM were circulated and accepted. Proposed: Richard Horrocks, seconded Frank Ascroft

4 Matters Arising: Rites of Passage charges were increased with effect from September 2017. The charges are: Wedding - £470; Blessing - £250; Funeral - £250; Naming Ceremony - £150.

The Chapel key previously kept in the Tea Rooms had not been replaced following its use to break into the Chapel. It was agreed that we should not provide another key.

5 Chairman's Report:

AW reported on another good year for the Chapel, during which there had been 5 weddings and 3 naming ceremonies.

The open day for the Rivington Spring Festival turned out to be a solo effort on the part of the Chapel following the cancellation of events on the village green due to problems with insurance. We still managed to raise over £240. Sums in excess of £520 and £200 were raised at the Heritage Open Day late summer fair and the Bay Horse Craft Fair respectively. In September we once again hosted the West Gallery Singing Day, and in November members of the Westhoughton Local History Group visited us and were given a comprehensive talk on the history of the Chapel by Martin Brownlow. The two visits brought in a further £200 between them.

Last April AW attended the GA Annual Meetings which she found to be a very valuable experience. This year's Meetings will run from Wed 4 to Sat 7 April, in a new venue. As AW has prior commitments that weekend, she will not be attending this time, but Vince McCully will be going.

The Ministers' board was updated in the autumn and now displays Vince's name.

The list of Chapel members has also been updated and shows a net increase in membership from 20 to 23. At a time when many chapels are losing members, this is a very encouraging sign that we must be doing something right. AW thanked Vince for the services he has led and for his organisation of the pulpit rota, resulting in varied and thought-provoking services over the year.

Work on reorganising the kitchen and improving the storage has continued. There is still more to do in the upper vestry before it can be used as a meeting area. However, the Chapel is now being used by Rivington Parish Council for their meetings.

We are continuing to feel the benefits of the new heating system. At a joint meeting of the Congregational Committee and some of the Trustees in the autumn, it was decided to monitor the temperature in Chapel in order to find out how long the storage heaters need to be on in order to maintain the temperature at the level required to protect the fabric of the building.

We were able to take advantage of a grant from Chorley Council under the Rural Community Grant Scheme to purchase some outdoor festoon lighting which will be used to illuminate the paths around the Chapel during events held in the evening. (VM reported that the lights are being stored in the upper vestry.)

Over the last few months the Committee has been putting together a Policy on the Safeguarding and Welfare of children and vulnerable adults who take part in Chapel activities. This will shortly be finalised and will be available in Chapel. Vince will be the Safeguarding Coordinator as he has attended a training course run by the MDA. We also need a Deputy Coordinator, so if there is anyone who would be willing to take on this role, please let AW know. If no one else comes forward, AW will be Deputy Coordinator.

It was very sad to hear of the death in December of Leighton Jones, a former member of the Congregational Committee. However, we have been very glad to see Muriel at a few services recently, in the company of Leighton Jnr and his wife Win.

We were also pleased to see Chris and Lynne Haighton at the service on 4 February when we were able to present them with a framed print of the Chapel by Gerry Halpin, in recognition of their many years of distributing the newsletter.

Finally, AW thanked those responsible for providing the extra step between the Chapel and the kitchen, which has made moving between the two parts of the building much easier.

AW thanked the Committee and members of the Congregation for their support over the last year.

6 Secretary's Report: VM reported that he has continued to bring correspondence to the attention of the Committee and display information relating to Unitarian activities on the notice board.

7 Treasurer's Report: Income - £9,508.07. Expenditure - £9,400.47. Excess - £107.60. Assets stand at £39,773.91. Variations in some items can be attributed to the fluctuations in attendance at services and the number of Rites of Passage bookings. Electricity costs have increased significantly, but it is hoped that the introduction of temperature monitoring will lead to levels of power consumption becoming more stable. A monthly charge is now payable on the CAF bank account, but FA feels that there would be no advantage to changing bank at this time of very low interest rates. Peter Bearon requested that FA should make sure that any agreements between him and Michael Hough regarding the repayments on the loan to the Trustees should be recorded in writing to prevent any further discrepancies between the two sets of accounts. The report was accepted – proposed: Diane Fairclough, seconded: Geoff Newey.

A presentation was made to Frank to recognise twenty years' service on the Committee.

8 Election of Officers: There was only one nomination for each of the posts of Chairman and Treasurer, so AW and FA remain in post.

Secretary: there were no nominations for secretary, so VM will remain as correspondence secretary and other secretarial duties will be carried out by members of the Committee as necessary. Dennis Crompton is standing down as minutes secretary, so the Committee needs to appoint a replacement.

9 Election of Committee: there were five nominations for the seven places on the Committee, so all those nominated were elected – Dennis Crompton, Jacqueline Dagnall, Diane Fairclough, Paul Fairclough and Mary Horrocks.

AW had been unsuccessful in her attempts to contact Martin Brownlow to find out whether he wished to remain on the Committee. After some discussion, it was proposed that MB should not be elected to the Committee at this point, but could be seconded on to it if he so wished. Proposed: Peter Bearon, seconded: Diane Fairclough.

At this point, VM was asked to leave the meeting.

10 Election of Lay Person in Charge: The motion was put that VM should remain as Lay Person in Charge. Proposed: Judith Crompton, seconded: Paul Fairclough. Carried unanimously.

11 Lay Person in Charge Role Title

Background information regarding VM's request that the Congregation should consider an alternative title to 'Lay Person in Charge' had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. AW reported that she had spoken to representatives of the Unitarian Association for Lay Ministry (of which VM is a member) about this matter. It would appear that Rivington is not alone in having to tackle this issue, but, as an independent congregation, we are able to decide what is the best solution for us, while bearing in mind that we are part of the wider Unitarian movement.

Following discussion of the pros and cons of the various options, it was proposed that we should maintain the status quo, keeping the title 'Lay Person in Charge' for all the formal aspects of VM's role, but that the term 'Minister' could be used in informal situations. Proposed: Judith Crompton, seconded: Paul Fairclough. The motion was passed 10 in favour, 1 abstention and none against.

VM returned to the meeting and was informed of the Congregation's decision. He was assured that the Congregation would fully support him in any further study and training that he wished to undertake.

12 A.O.B. PB asked for clarification of the situation regarding organists as MB is no longer available to play for services on a regular basis. Tanya will continue to play on the 3rd Sunday of each month and Hannah will play on the 1st Sunday. If possible, they will cover for each other if either of them is not available.

The Anniversary meal will be on Sunday 20 May. The Cherry Tree has been suggested as a venue. FA will contact them.

The Chapel will be open on Saturday 12 May as part of the Rivington Spring Festival. We will be running the usual stalls. VM reported that the Bennett Singers have asked if they can perform in the Chapel that day.

The Chapel will again be open for visitors before services over the summer months. A rota for volunteers will be put on the notice board. As there are 5 Sundays in July, the 2nd service will be held on Sunday 22 July rather than the 15th, which is the day of the Ironman event. The Chapel will still open for visitors on the 15th.

13 Date of Next AGM: Sunday 17 March 2019