

Rivington Unitarian & Free Christian Chapel
Congregational AGM 19.03.2023
Minutes

Those present: Alison Whitaker (chairman), Frank Ascroft (treasurer), Peter Bearon, Judith Crompton, Diane Fairclough, Paul Fairclough, John Green, Linda Green, Tim Kershaw, Geoff Newey, Vince McCully (Lay Person in Charge)

In Attendance: Richard Crompton

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

Apologies: Jacqueline Dagnall, Olive Fisher, Mary Horrocks, Richard Horrocks, Jacqui Kershaw, Iris Wharton

Minutes: The Minutes of the last AGM had been circulated by email and post after the meeting. They were accepted as a true record. Proposed: Tim Kershaw, Seconded: Peter Bearon

Matters Arising:

Defibrillator: Following JC's kind offer to make a donation to buy a defibrillator, the Committee had discussed the matter, but had decided that, on balance, there were too many potential problems. These included reliability of the electricity supply and phone signal, the responsibility and cost of maintenance, and the likely need for listed building consent. Rivington Parish Council have subsequently installed a defibrillator at Rivington Club.

Notice board: PF has been looking into whether the Perspex in the doors can be cleaned or would need to be replaced. We have a quote for re-doing the lettering from Pendle Woodcraft in Darwen, but they would need the board taking to the workshop. As this is not practical, the Committee needs to reconsider the options.

Chairman's Report: (this had been circulated by email prior to the meeting)

Over the last year, everything has felt somewhat more 'normal' as far as Chapel activities have been concerned, though we still (phone signal permitting) stream the services via Zoom for those who prefer to attend in this way.

In 2022, the Chapel was used for three naming ceremonies, two weddings, a funeral and a memorial service. This year, there has already been one naming ceremony and an enquiry for another in the summer.

The number of Chapel members is currently 21. We lost a good friend of the Chapel when Marjorie Entwistle died recently at the age of 96. Although not a member, she had made regular donations for many years.

Once all the remaining COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, we were able to resume our usual programme of events, beginning with stalls at the Rivington Spring Festival and ending with the Christmas Carol Service. There was a very enjoyable trip on the canal in September and we celebrated our Anniversary Meal at the Bay Horse.

The Triennial Rivington Pilgrimage in October was a successful event, despite some fairly last-minute changes to the catering arrangements. Everyone who came seemed to enjoy having an indoor picnic and appreciated that we had gone ahead with the day rather than cancelling.

Thanks to Chris Martin the history of the Chapel has been brought to a wider audience with his monthly talks. One of these led to a collaboration with Daniel Stenson, who runs ViewPro360, to set up a 3D Virtual Tour of the Chapel.

Over the year, the congregation has supported several good causes, either financially in the case of the British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal and the Send a Child to Hucklow Fund, or with donations of food and toiletries in the case of Coffee4Craig and Chorley Help the Homeless.

Many thanks, as ever, to the Committee and members of the Congregation for their support over the last year.

It was proposed that the Chairman's report should be accepted. Proposed: Geoff Newey, seconded Linda Green. Carried unanimously.

Correspondence: AW reported that there appears to have been a problem receiving some emails from the General Assembly offices. She had contacted the GA and added the contact@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to the details already held, and has since received some communications.

A letter about the outcome of the chalice design consultation had been circulated to members.

VM observed that there appears to be no problem receiving information that comes via the MDA.

Treasurer's Report: (The statement of accounts and Independent Examiner's notes had been circulated by email prior to the meeting)

Income - £9,727.48. Expenditure - £12,806.39. Deficit - £3,078.91. Assets stand at £42,575.52.

FA pointed out that a major portion of the deficit was made up the Congregation's contribution to the cost of the resurfacing the parking area.

There are still eighteen months remaining of the contract with British Gas for the electricity, so we have been protected from the impact of the large increases in charges.

FA said that we need to find ways to increase our income to try and prevent a repeat of the past year's large deficit. VM reported that we have two definite bookings for weddings this year and an inquiry for 2024. There has been one naming ceremony so far in 2023 plus a provisional booking for August.

It was proposed that the accounts should be accepted. Proposed: John Green, seconded: Tim Kershaw. Carried unanimously.

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

A vote of thanks to the officers was proposed. Proposed: Judith Crompton, seconded: Tim Kershaw. Carried unanimously.

Secretary: there were no nominations for secretary, so VM will continue as the main contact for correspondence with the contact@rivingtonchapel.org.uk email address as an additional contact. Other secretarial duties will be carried out by members of the Committee as necessary.

Election of Committee: Due to illness Jacqueline Dagnall has decided to step down from the Committee for the time being. Geoff Newey has agreed to re-join the Committee. As there were only two other nominations, Diane Fairclough and Paul Fairclough, the Committee was elected unopposed.

Peter Bearon was re-appointed as Independent Examiner.

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

Election of Lay Person in Charge: AW reported that VM has completed the Intermediate stage of the Worship Leader training and was now starting the Advanced stage. He has also been nominated by the MDA for the position of President of the General Assembly.

The motion was put that VM should remain as Lay Person in Charge. Proposed: Geoff Newey, seconded: Tim Kershaw. Carried unanimously.

VM returned to the meeting and was informed of the Congregation's decision. He reported that he had started the Advanced course in February and that there would be residential sessions in April and July.

VM confirmed that his nomination had been accepted and that he would be inducted as President of the GA at the Annual Meetings in April. This is because there has been no serving Vice President for 2022-23. Professor Geoff Levermore from Norcliffe Chapel will be Vice-President for 2023-24.

GA Annual Meetings: JC will be attending the meetings which take place on 4 - 6 April and has agreed to be the Chapel's delegate. She has asked that she be given some guidance on how the Congregation wish her to vote on any motions. When motions are announced, AW will circulate details to the members and there will be an opportunity to discuss them at the service on Sunday 2 April.

Social events: It was decided that we should hold our customary Anniversary meal on Sunday 21 May. The Committee will look into possible venues. VM announced that Rev Phil Waldron will be taking the service.

A.O.B. Wooden chest: PF asked if it would be all right to move the wooden chest which is currently near the organ into the upper vestry. This would provide more space when we have visiting choirs. There were no objections. AW pointed out that it had been decided at the Committee meeting in January that nothing extra should be put in the vestry until the current contents have been sorted. The Committee will arrange a day for doing the sorting as soon as possible.

16 Date of Next AGM: Sunday 17 March 2024

VM suggested that in future we should try to avoid holding the AGM on Mothering Sunday. However, it will not be necessary to change the date in 2024 or 2025 as Mothering Sunday does not fall on the 3rd Sunday.