

## CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HILTON

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING – 2 MARCH 2008

1. **Rector's Report**

The Rector, Nic Denny-Dimitriou, gave his report during the Eucharist in place of the sermon – copy included in minute book.

2. **Present and apologies:**

Attendance lists were circulated for signature and reflected 66 people present and 26 apologies.

3. **Adoption of minutes of previous Annual Vestry Meeting - 04 March 2007:**

Copies of the minutes had been published after the meeting and then ratified by Council at the next Council meeting. Graeme Mackenzie proposed the adoption of the minutes, Nan Hopkins seconded his proposal and those present agreed.

4. **Questions of clarification and discussion of Rector's report:**

Robin Seal asked for amplification on the proposed building on church property. Nic explained that he had simply made a bold statement to this effect in his report but he had not made such a proposal yet to Council or discussed it with them. He intended to make such proposal shortly to Council as he firmly believed that the position of Youth Pastor should become a permanent one (even when Andy left in a couple of years time) and accommodation for such person would be needed.

5. **Presentation and adoption of Financial Report for 2007:**

Copies of the audited accounts were circulated. Rodney Whitley the honorary treasurer presented the report in detail and thanked Sven Jager for auditing them and Jennifer Howlett and Julia Lloyd for their monthly preparation. Rodney made particular thanks to Neville Bailey who had given generously of his time to help Jennifer master the new Pastel accounting system. The following specifics were highlighted:

- ✓ The financials reflected a small final surplus of R1328, which remained after using the primary surplus of R29 992 to repay previous loan debts to other accounts.
- ✓ Expenses for the year had been kept well within budget.
- ✓ The Pastoral and Worship budget showed a large increase in budget figure for the coming year to cover expenses involved in supporting Andy Kruger the new Youth Pastor.
- ✓ Property expenses were lower than the previous year thanks to the generosity of the congregation particularly in regard to the upgrading of the electricity system at the church.
- ✓ Rodney drew attention to the fact that R74 916 was given during the year through the Diocesan Assessment to poorer parishes in the Diocese.

Nic invited questions or comments on the financial statements.

Joanne Stevens O'Connor congratulated all concerned on an excellent set of accounts and said that she would like to question why there was no budget for giving to the poor and propose that this should be included.

Rodney responded that there was an account used for this and reflected under Social Responsibility. He explained that this fund had been created as the result of a donation from Kupugani some years previously and had grown considerably over the past year. Rosemarie Bullock explained that she was embarrassed that the account had built up to such an extent and that the Social Responsibility committee were hoping to 'adopt' a crèche shortly which would mean more would be used in the coming year which would reduce the current balance as she did not wish to 'sit' on such a large pile of money.

Nic confirmed in direct answer to Joanne's question that Church of the Ascension did not budget to give to the poor in the manner she had in mind.

Merriel Neumann asked whether the Whitsun Offering could be re-introduced to enable assistance to be given to retired clergy and specifically a clergy couple currently in the congregation who after almost 50 years in the ministry deserved to be spoiled a little by the recognition of their service to others.

Nic confirmed that the modern term for Whitsun Offering was Pentecost Offering and that this was traditionally given to assistant clergy. He agreed to refer this query to the Executive, as he was not aware of any specific rules that would prevent this offering from being used for anything other than assistant clergy. He did however caution against setting a precedent in this regard. He had been assured that the quite considerable medical expenses involved in this case were being entirely paid for by medical aid and the Diocese.

The meeting agreed that this matter should be considered by the Executive.

Robin Greenwood explained that 70% of the Assessment received from Ascension went towards paying for clergy in poorer areas of the Diocese. He confirmed that the Diocese paid medical aid costs for retired clergy.

Rob Stranack proposed that the meeting accept that the correct place to propose changes to the budget was a Parish Council meeting.

Vestry approved the 2007 Financial statements; proposed by Ron Glaister and seconded by Rob Stranack.

**6. Presentation and adoption of the Budget for 2008:**

Joanne had mentioned her proposal to Nic two weeks prior to Vestry and he invited her to elaborate on it. Joanne explained that she had a deep concern that all the budget items were about 'improvement to self' in terms of Ascension and there was no provision apart from Social Responsibility to give to organizations such as those working with the elderly, the Bible Society, Mission to Seafarers etc. She asked that consideration be given to giving more broadly and more generously. She was also concerned that support for Sweetwaters had been withdrawn some years ago.

Nic explained that he had expected to address Joanne's proposal under general together with the question of Joan Hoole's proposal from the previous Vestry meeting, which Council had decided to postpone until the Church's finances were in a better position. His response was that this was now the case and he suggested that both these matters be referred to Council.

Angela Manning said that she believed that because most local domestic workers and gardeners came from Sweetwaters more should be given from the Church to that community.

Simon Weaver proposed that as the proposed budget was tight and only reflecting a break-even situation it would be wiser to postpone the suggestion to budget an amount to give to the poor, but make a concerted effort to include it in the following budget. Robin Greenwood seconded this proposal.

Nicolette Hohls supported Simon Weaver's proposal.

Gilly Saint suggested that the giving to the Diocese was generous and judged it unwise to attempt to help 'everyone'.

Ingrid Andersen suggested that money was not the only resource that could be offered to the poor. Partnership and resources were equally important.

Graham Beggs concurred with Joanne and suggested that it was important to have a heart for giving to the poor and he wasn't experiencing that – he recognized abundance at Ascension and yet didn't feel able to appeal for help for the poor whom he came across on a regular basis. He judged that we needed to repent and ask God for a heart of mercy. Graham judged that the money involved was not the most important factor as it was relational.

Julia Denny-Dimitriou requested comment from Sarah Dottridge. Sarah agreed with Ingrid that there were more ways than financially to give, and agreed with Graham in respect of needing a heart for working with the poor and acknowledged that she had received incredible blessings from her work over the years. She mentioned that she had been able to carry on her work with mostly overseas funding and had no need to approach Ascension.

Judy Pott stated that her understanding of Joanne's proposal was that she wished to encourage a culture of giving by way of including giving in the budget.

Nic mentioned that the previous year a suggestion had been made that whenever a church function was held where money was raised a percentage should be given to the poor. Suggestions of a discretionary fund that could be used for ad hoc needs had also been suggested by Gavin Bulman.

Nic closed the discussion and it was agreed that these matters should be referred to Council for decisions and that all suggestions would be given due consideration.

Rob Ender proposed the acceptance of the 2008 budget, Robin Seal seconded this and the meeting agreed.

#### **7. Election of Church Wardens**

Nic explained that Glen Crouch had served approximately 10 years on Council previously 3 of which had been as Churchwarden but had now had a 3 year break as office bearer. Glen was a person who could see the 'bigger picture' and as there were no other nominations he would accept the nomination to this office; proposed by Neil Carter and seconded by Gavin Bulman. Craig Elstob, having previously served on both Parish Council and the Property and Finance committee, had agreed to accept nomination as Alternate Churchwarden.

Both of these nominations were unanimously approved.

8. **Election of new Council Members**

Graeme Mackenzie and Jane Miller (Pastoral Care co-ordinator) had agreed to remain on Council to retain some continuity and the following nominations were accepted in their entirety:

Graeme Mackenzie	(having served a 3-year term, now to serve another)
Jane Miller	(having served a 3-year term, willing to serve one year)
Julian Dottridge	(previous councillor and treasurer, many years previously)
Jane Elsworth	
Nicolette Hohls	Sunday School representative
Andy Kruger	(already co-opted) Teenage Youth rep
Robin Seal	Thursday congregation
Callum Smythe	
Tim Wright	Environmental concerns

9. **Appointment of Treasurer:**

Rodney Whitley had agreed to serve as treasurer – proposed by Gavin Bulman seconded by Neil Carter and unanimously accepted.

Nic would contact all office bearers with regards to the first Council meeting.

10. **Appointment of Auditor:**

Rodney proposed Sven Jager to continue as auditor seconded by Gavin Bulman and unanimously accepted.

11. **Election of Representatives to Elective Assembly.**

Agreed to defer to Council.

12. **Election of Representatives to Synod:**

Agreed to defer to Council.

13. **General:**

13.1. Nic assured Joan Hoole that her proposal had not been put aside but that it together with the proposal by Joanne Stevens O'Connor would be given serious consideration by Council.

13.2. Peter Barnard requested the names of Property and Finance Committee as He judged that they deserved recognition for the wonderful service they gave to the congregation.

Nic explained the committee consisted of himself and the church wardens automatically, with a warden chairing meetings; meetings had been chaired by Neil Carter to date. As Neil would be leaving the Parish in May a new chairperson would be decided on at the first meeting after Vestry. Bronwyn Mackenzie and Mike McDonald had recently resigned from this committee but were both available for consultation should that be necessary at any time. Ron Glaister and Rodney Whitley (treasurer) also served on the committee. Jeremy Upfold had recently agreed to serve and suggestion had been made that Richard Heathcote should also do so as he had volunteered to fill the new role of Property Manager. Appreciation to them all was expressed.

13.3. Peter Barnard offered thanks for the ladies who maintained the beautiful Church gardens, namely Paula Glaister and Jenny Hoepfl primarily, with occasional assistance from others. Nic mentioned that Gavin had recently written to both of them on behalf of the Council and congregation to thank them for their service in this way.

Gavin proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of the congregation for Nic's outstanding leadership over the past year.

There being no further business to discuss Nic closed the meeting at approximately 10.15am with the dismissal and blessing.

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Resident Priest**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Church Warden**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Church Warden**