

**BRAMHALL METHODIST CHURCH**  
**Minutes of Annual General Church Meeting, Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Present:**

Rev Sarah Parkin  
Mrs Roo Lumb (Secretary)  
67 Attendees

1. **Opening Prayer** – Opening devotions were led by Rev Sarah Parkin.
2. **Apologies** were received from Edith Ashley, Sue Barlow, Patricia Cameron, Nigel & Gill Day, Ken Low, Ella Phillips, John Sandford and Alison Thornley
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**  
The minutes from 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were **approved**. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**4. Appreciations**

The names of those who have died in the last year were read out and prayers of thanksgiving were offered for their lives among us.

Irene Francis	Iris Stinton	Margaret McKeating
John Cooke	Mary Collins	Joan Wain
Erna Collier	Nancy Mitchell	Carol Barratt
Arthur Mellor	John Cunningham	Jeanne Beck
Sylvia Cowling	Janet Palk	Sybil Hall
Edna Prophet	Pam Horrobin	

**5. Appointments**

• **Church Stewards**

Carole Lomax and Gill Day had been appointed by the Church Council as Church Stewards during the year.

Sue Graham was nominated as Church Steward and was **affirmed unanimously**.

Wes McKee and Eleanor Wright have completed their term as Church Stewards. On behalf of the whole church, Angela Clowes thanked Wes for his quiet leadership and lovely prayers and Eleanor for all her practical help.

The Stewards' Team for 2023/24 of Ian Castledine, Angela Clowes, Ken Low, Chris Hall, Carole Lomax, Gill Day and Sue Graham was **affirmed unanimously**. Ken, Ian and Angela will share the Senior Stewards duties.

Sarah Parkin noted that there was still one vacancy for a church steward and the meeting **agreed** to delegate authority to Church Council for this appointment. Sarah thanked all the stewards for the hard work they undertake in the life of the church.

• **Church Council Representatives**

Philippa Fitzpatrick had been appointed by the Church Council as Congregational Representative during the year and June Nightingale retired as Pastoral Secretary and was appointed Congregational Representative by Church Council.

John Benvie, Anna Power and John Theakston have come to the end of their terms and were thanked for their service, their interest and their encouragement.

Nominations for Church Council Representatives from the congregation had been received from John Benvie, Roo Lumb and Anna Power. Their appointments were **agreed unanimously**.

There is still one place available for a Congregational Representative and the meeting **agreed** to delegate authority to Church Council for this appointment. Sarah thanked the Church Council for their important commitment in the life of the church.

• **Church Council Secretary**

Roo Lumb has come to the end of her six years as Church Council Secretary. Thanks were expressed to Roo for her service. Church Council has appointed Nigel Day to take over this role.

## 6. Consideration and approval of the Annual Report

Ian Castledine commended the Annual Report to the meeting. He highlighted the diversity of the work that goes on in the church, both regularly and one-off events such as the support for Ukrainian refugees and the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. We now have a full staff team with Lay Pastor Matt Hill and Children & Family Worker Cathy Armstrong working alongside Rev Sarah Parkin. Ian thanked all who had contributed to the report, those who lead, support and attend groups and activities and who assist in the work God is doing in this congregation. Sarah thanked Ian and the stewards' team, and the congregation for making the events possible. The meeting **endorsed** the report.

## 7. Finance Report

John Sandford, Finance Co-ordinator, had sent a report noting that the independent examination of the accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 is nearly complete and once finalised will be formally received by Church Council. They will then be sent to the Charity Commission along with the Trustees' Report. Circuit meetings have been held to discuss Circuit accounts and assessments, and the circuit will be operating with a deficit budget of around £20,000 even with BMC increasing their contribution to £10,000 in 2023/24. Discussions are being held as to how to improve the circuit financial position in the long term. John ended his report by noting that BMC is quite tight for cash at present so we need to be careful in spending. He asked everybody to prayerfully consider their giving so that we can continue to make investments into our staff and our buildings to grow the work of God in this place.

### Questions from the floor

- Geoff Barnard asked if the circuit reserves will cover the deficit budget. Sarah advised this is the case for the coming year.
- Sheila Bothamley noted that there is no mention of a collection at the weekly Sunday services; the communion collection is noted but regular giving is not acknowledged. Sarah noted that this acknowledgement is incorporated into general prayers.
- John Thornley advised that we continue to invest in our buildings. The redecoration of the back hall, renamed the Community Hub, has gone well and we have new hirers. He is grateful for the support of the many people who look after different aspects of our property.

Sarah thanked all those who serve on the Resources team and support the finance and property work.

## 8. Vision 2023

Ian Castledine made a presentation to the meeting on the work the stewards have been doing, reflecting on the nature of the church that God is prompting us to be. Our purpose is that Bramhall Methodist Church exists to serve God's mission to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ by being a church that longs to see people come to know and experience God's love throughout their lives, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ian noted that the challenge is how we live out our purpose with the resources, gifts and talents we have been given, in the community in which we live. We wish to be a growing community of believers, blessed by where our church is located in the heart of Bramhall. We need to nurture growth in faith within the Christian community and also recognise that we work out our faith in the communities where we live and work. We are part of God's worldwide community of Christians, working out how to share God's love in a needy world, locally, nationally and internationally.

As part of this outward looking, the passive statement 'Jesus at the heart of life' under our logo will now be an active statement 'Living out the love of Jesus'. This reinforces our call to action and love, reflecting the love that we find in Jesus Christ, and its relevance to today's society. This is based on four pillars:

**Faith:** We exist to help people encounter God's love, and be a church where faith is nurtured, explored and expressed in different ways.

**Mission:** We exist to make more followers of Jesus Christ, enabling God's love to be relevant and accessible to everyone.

**People:** We exist to help people grow and learn as Christians, where everyone has a part to play, and is encouraged and supported.

**Community:** We exist to show Christ-like love to our community and beyond, reach out to the marginalised, and be a voice for the voiceless.

Work is ongoing with the Leadership team but it needs the church as a whole to engage and develop it, turning it into action. On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June there will be time for conversation exploring each area, including

lunch. Everyone is invited and the wider Vision document will be circulated in advance so people can read and pray through it.

**Discussion:**

- Outreach to non-churchgoers. We are looking to break down perceived barriers between community and church through events such as the Coronation Lunch, and how we turn these to longer-lasting opportunities to share the Christian message.
- Inward and outward facing. There was a lot of discussion on balancing the need to nurture our own faith through worship, study groups and focus on God (looking inward) in order to equip us to go out and put our faith into action in practical ways (looking outward).

Sarah thanked Ian and the stewards for their work in preparing and presenting this Vision.

**9. Questions from the floor**

- Muriel Halford expressed her appreciation of all that goes on in our church and the wonderful outreach that happens through the Coffee Shop and the Thrift Shop. She appreciates the opportunities given to share our faith with the community.

**11. Closing prayer**

Sarah Parkin thanked everyone for attending, for their contributions and for all they do in the life of BMC. We all have a part to play and God equips and enables us to do it. Sarah closed the meeting with prayer and the congregation said the Grace together.