



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, BRADLEY STOKE

An Anglican/Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership, serving Bradley Stoke

Following Christ, serving his world. Everyone. Every day.

MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

Held during the 10:30am service on Sunday 18th May 2025

Chair: Reverend Rich Cresswell

SERMON/MINISTER'S REPORT

Before the meeting, as part of the service, Simon Edwards preached on Mark 9:30-50, incorporating a minister's report. This began with an invitation to the congregation to identify where they had seen God at work within Holy Trinity over the past twelve months. A wide range of positive highlights were mentioned.

Jesus taught his disciples that to be great, they needed to turn their thinking on its head. Greatness involves welcoming and caring for the least in the world. Discipleship means giving without any expectation of earthly return (there are benefits, such as experiencing more of God's grace, love, peace and joy, but these are spiritual benefits).

Simon urged us to see other churches as partners in the Gospel, not rivals. There was particular encouragement to work with Christ the King, our sister church in the benefice.

We also considered possible stumbling blocks to sharing the good news. Specific stumbling blocks for HTC at present include our finances (which are preventing projects), a lack of foundation governors (stopping us from building on our good relations with the school) and a need for more people to help with our benefice youth and children's ministry. These stumbling blocks need to be removed. Simon encouraged us all to step up into the life of the church and into a life of discipleship.

Simon reminded us of our church vision and pointed out that it reminded us how to be great: following Christ, serving his world. Everyone. Every day.

He concluded by noting that there is no greater calling than to share the Gospel, and that true greatness comes as we intentionally dedicate ourselves to God as his disciples.

ATTENDANCE

A total of 43 people signed in to the meeting.

Ruth Smale, Roger Smale, Simon Greener, Susan Greener, Ernie Trigg, Christine Rosewell, Rich Cresswell, Stephen Head, Festus Kiroro, Claire Barr, Brenda Stevens, Hayley Thomas, Rose Shaw, Keith Appleby, Sally Appleby, Chris Orman, Ann Williams, Sui Ip, William Wong, Sue Arnold, Joyce Barrow, Terry Barrow, Daphne Allan, Anne Millard, Elise Dixon, Emmanuel Amoako, Lydia Cudjoe, Njideka Nwofor, Fang Norman, Simon Edwards, Rod Vorley, Kate Vorley, Amina Ayandele, Adefemi Ayandele, Pete Moore, Christopher Maytham, Pamela Ortiz Alvarez, Collin Mabiza, Sarah Littleboy, C J Thompson, June Payne, Mark Payne, Christine Watson (online via Zoom).

1. PRAYER FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Rich opened the meeting in prayer.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Erica Geldart, Adele Moore, Susan Arnold, Jenny Cresswell, David Head, Jon Vaughan-Williams and Anne Vaughan-Williams.

3. RECEIVE AND APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL MEETING

The minutes of the 2024 annual meeting, held on Sunday 5th May 2024, were approved without corrections.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

Rich explained that the annual report and accounts had been approved by the ECC and verified by the independent examiner. They had been on display in the entrance foyer and on our website for the last 7 days. The annual report and accounts form a legal document that must be completed by all charities in a specific way.

Rich drew the attention of those present to the financial situation and invited them to read the "financial review" section of the trustees' annual report. We will need to register as a charity with the Charity Commission this year (as we have breached the £100,000 annual turnover limit for charities with excepted status). The finances look healthy at first glance, but it was noted that we have underpaid our parish share to the Diocese of Bristol for two years running and received a restricted donation in the last twelve months - effectively, we have run a deficit budget, which cannot continue.

Pete Moore asked for clarification about the need to apply for registered charity status. Rich endeavoured to explain our breach of the turnover limit. Part of the reason for this was that we had received a restricted donation of £10,000 in 2024 - we are not expecting to receive a similar sum in 2025 and, in the past, it was possible to ask for an exemption from the need to register for a one-off breach of the £100,000 limit. This option is no longer available.

5. UPDATE ON THE ELECTORAL ROLL/MEMBERSHIP LIST

There has been a full revision of the list in 2025. The new list stands at 52 members.

6. ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS/STEWARDS

There were two vacancies, each for a one-year term of office.

Emmanuel Nsiah Amoako was nominated by Susan Greener and Simon Greener. He was elected unopposed.

One vacancy for churchwarden/steward remains open.

7. ELECTION OF ECC MEMBERS

There were six vacancies, each for a one-year term. The following were elected unopposed:

David Head (*nominated by Rose Shaw and Ernie Trigg*)

Hayley Thomas (*Sam Roff and Fang Norman*)

Erica Geldart (*Brenda Stevens and Wendy Gazeley*)

Susan Arnold (*Claire Barr and Adele Moore*)

Roger Smale (*Stephen Head and Simon Greener*)

Fang Norman (*Susan Greener and Simon Greener*)

8. ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD REPS

There were two casual vacancies, each for a one-year term.

No nominations were received, therefore these vacancies remain unfilled.

9. BRIEF VICAR'S UPDATE

Rich informed the Annual Meeting that he has been told his application for Extended Ministerial Development Leave (a "sabbatical") is almost certain to be approved. This will take place for three months from January to March 2026.

Rich pointed out that his absence from church life will mean that certain activities (particularly our benefice children's work and youth work) are at risk of not happening during that period. He echoed Simon Edwards' call on the congregation to step up into the life of the church and not wait for others to get involved.

10. APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

We have used Haines Watts (now known as Gravita) to independently examine our accounts for the last few years. It was unanimously agreed that we would continue to use them at present, but that the ECC should consider the cost of their service.

11. QUESTIONS

a. Simon Greener noted that we need to register with the Charity Commission and asked if that meant we would be re-writing the church's constitution. Rich acknowledged that the current constitution is not really fit for purpose (it assumes that HTC is a multi-congregation church, which has never been the case) and this could cause us problems as we attempt to register. The constitution has been a regular point of discussion for the ECC over the years and there are challenges to changing it, but we may have no choice but to move forward with it now. Rich further explained that a number of the LEPs in the Diocese of Bristol have chosen to disband in recent years, as the issues around them have become complex. He would bring this to the ECC for consideration.

b. June Payne asked a follow up question regarding the burden of changing the constitution and registering with the Charity Commission. Rich answered that there are challenges and burdens whatever route we choose and the critical thing to do is to choose the right path, rather than the easy path. The need to register with the Charity Commission means that this issue cannot now be ignored.

c. Mark Payne asked whether we would also be required to register as a company. Rich replied that this is not the case. He further explained that the ECC are the trustees of the charity.

d. Mary Payne asked about the value of our Diocesan Parish Share and Methodist Circuit Assessment contributions. Rich replied that he didn't have the exact figures to hand, but our most recent Methodist Assessment was around £13,800 per annum and the Parish Share request had been £32,000 per annum (but that we had underpaid Parish Share by around £4,000).

c. Mark Payne asked questions about restricting giving and Gift Aid. Rich replied that giving can be restricted by writing to the ECC and that Gift Aid forms can be completed in a way that requests donations are only considered from a certain date forward.

d. Fang Norman asked about the possibility of roles being shared. Rich explained that it depended on which roles were being considered.

END OF MEETING

There being no further questions, the meeting closed and the service concluded with intercessions, sung worship and a blessing.