**Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners held in St Luke’s Church Sunday 16th May 2021 at 11.30am.**

**1. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Barry Ingram, vice chairman welcomed people in church and on Zoom. He explained that Reverend Bob would take over once he returns from St Ambrose church. Lay Reader Sue Smither said a prayer.

Notice of this meeting has been posted on the church door, in the church magazine, on the church website and on Facebook. No paper copies in church. The agenda will be on the screen.

**2. Appoint a Clerk for the meeting**

Nomination Sandra Lacey to be clerk proposed by Clare Liptrott Seconded by Colleen Harper. All agreed. Sandra Lacey will also be clerk for the next meeting.

**3. Apologies and Present**

Apologies - Dorothy Lightfoot, Rev Lyn, Rob Leech and Andrew Seadon.

Present 18 in church 9 on Zoom total 27.

**4. Minutes of meeting held Sunday October 18th, 2020 in St Luke’s Church**

No paper copies allowed in church so minutes on church website with annual report for 2020 and accounts, minutes circulated to PCC members and people on WhatsApp group for St. Luke’s and WhatsApp group for Cronton. Hard copies were printed by Yvonne when requested.

Approval proposed by Yvonne Horabin and seconded by Sue Smither. All agreed.

Barry Ingram signed the minutes as a true record.

**5. Matters arising**

None.

**6. Election of Church Wardens for May 2021 to May 2022**

There are 4 warden positions within the Parish of Farnworth. Barry thanked Barry Horabin, Pat Johnson, Rob Leech and Colleen Harper for serving as wardens from October 2020 to now. To stand as church wardens for the forthcoming year (2021-2022) nominations were received for

Barry Horabin (2016) Proposer Margaret Campbell Seconder Sandra Lacey

Pat Johnson (2018) Proposer Margaret Campbell Seconder Sandra Lacey

Rob Leech (2020) Proposer Margaret Campbell Seconder Sandra Lacey

Colleen Harper (2020) Proposer Lesley Runcorn Seconder Alma Marshall

The church wardens are ex-officio members. All are not disqualified from standing and agreed to stand. No further nominations. Nominations accepted all agreed. Barry thanked the wardens for their dedication and for continuing in their roles.

Wardens serve for 6 years then must take a 2-year break before being eligible to take on a Bishop’s warden role again.

**7. Election of Deputy Church Wardens for October 2020 to May 2021**

Nomination received for Barry Ingram Proposer Margaret Campbell Seconder Sandra Lacey. No further nominations. Nomination accepted. All agreed.

Colleen Harper thanked Barry for his dedication and for serving as Deputy Warden from October 2020 until now and for continuing in this role. On a personal note, Colleen thanked Barry for his help to her as a new warden, we could not manage without him. Barry thanked us for the confidence with have in him.

Deputy Wardens can be appointed throughout the year at a PCC meeting.

**8. Closing prayer**

Barry closed the meeting with a prayer.

Attendance In church 18 Barry Ingram, Sue Smither, Colleen Harper, Barry & Yvonne Horabin, Debbie Doyle, Derek & Gail Beswick, Paul Delaney, Jeff Evans, Malcolm & Linda French, Lesley Howell, Alma Marshall, Lesley Runcorn, Pat Johnson, Alison Pearson and Beryl Cain.

9 on Zoom Clare Liptrott, Sandra Lacey, Margaret Campbell, Doreen Hough, Sandra Vanezis, Lynn Keeling, Lesley Firth, Jade Maloney and Stephanie Couzens.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in St Luke’s Church on Sunday 16th May 2021 at 11.40am**

**1. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Reverend Bob thanked Barry for chairing the Annual meeting of Parishioners and added his thanks to the wardens and deputy warden for continuing in their roles.

Reverend Bob said a prayer. Notice of this meeting has been posted on the church door, in the church magazine, on the church website and on Facebook. No paper copies in church. The agenda will be on the screen.

**2. Apologies and Present**

Apologies - Dorothy Lightfoot, Rev Lyn, Rob Leech and Andrew Seadon.

Present 20 in church 9 on Zoom. Total 29.

**3. Minutes of meeting held October 18th 2020 in St Luke’s Church**

3 Amendments –

Section 9 Election of Deanery Synod reps Rev Bob not Rev Ian

Section 24 Closing remarks Mothers’ Union added

Vote of thanks added ‘On behalf of the PCC and the people at the meeting I would like to thank Bob for his closing remarks. As he said please talk to him and tell him what you think so he can help. We thank him for continuing to provide worship during these unprecedented times’. Sandra Lacey

Approval with 3 amendments proposed by Sue Smither and seconded by Alison Pearson All agreed. Rev Bob signed the minutes as a true record.

**4. Matters arising (not on the agenda)**

None.

**5. Report on the Electoral Roll as of 1st May 2021 Sandra Lacey, Electoral Roll Officer,**

There were 157 on the roll in October 2020, 6 were added so now 163. Additions can be made to the Roll at any time following this meeting. The 2021 Electoral Roll is displayed in church. Names are listed in accordance with privacy rules.

The PCC allocation is based on the Electoral Roll number. As less than 200 members on the Electoral Roll the number of members allowed on P.C.C. is 12 elected members plus 2 co-opted for 2021. Reverend Bob thanked Sandra.

**6. Election of Parochial Church Councillors for May 2021 to May 2022**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Proposer | Seconder | For | Until |
| Clare Liptrott | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 3yrs | 2024 |
| Gail Beswick | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 3yrs | 2024 |
| Dorothy Lightfoot | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 3yrs | 2024 |
| Stephanie Couzens | Debbie Doyle | Sandra Lacey | 3yrs | 2024 |
| Lynn Keeling | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 2yrs | 2023 |
| Sue Smither | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 2yrs | 2023 |
| Barry Ingram | Margaret Campbell | Sandra Lacey | 2yrs | 2023 |
| Deborah Doyle | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 2yrs | 2023 |
| Sandra Vanezis | Pat Johnson | Sandra Lacey | 1yr | 2022 |
| Alma Marshall | Margaret Campbell | Sandra Lacey | 1yr | 2022 |
| Margaret Campbell | Sandra Lacey | Yvonne Horabin | 1yr | 2022 |
| Jeff Evans | Sandra Lacey | Margaret Campbell | 1yr | 2022 |
| Co-options |  |  |  |  |
| Sandra Lacey | Yvonne Horabin | Margaret Campbell | 1yr | 2022 |
| Andrew Seadon | Pat Johnson | Colleen Harper | 1yr | 2022 |

All nominations accepted. Reverend Bob thanked PCC members who served in 2020/21 and those willing to continue. Lesley Firth does not wish to continue. Reverend Bob thanked Lesley for her time on PCC and welcomed Sandra Vanezis, Andrew Seadon and Stephanie Couzens.

**7.Cronton Mission May 2021 to May 2022**

Treasurer Denis Bray, Service Co-ordinator & Safeguarding Officer Debbie Doyle. Lesley Firth’s term office as a Local Missional Leader for Cronton has finished and Lesley will now be a Team Lay Reader.

**8.Election of Deanery Synod representatives May 2021 to May 2022**

**Nominations**

Lesley Runcorn Proposed by Colleen Harper Seconder Sandra Lacey

Barry Horabin Proposer Sandra Lacey Seconder Margaret Campbell

Pat Johnson Proposer Sandra Lacey Seconder Margaret Campbell

Yvonne Horabin Proposer Sandra Lacey Seconder Margaret Campbell

Nominations accepted. All agreed. Deanery Synod representatives are ex-officio.

Reverend Bob pointed out that he is a member of Deanery Synod and thanked Lesley, Barry, Pat and Yvonne for serving October 2020 to May 2021 and for continuing in their roles.

**9.Election of Deanery Mission and Pastoral committee representative May 2021 to May 2022** Nomination Rev Bob Proposer Sue Smither Seconder Sandra Lacey. Nomination accepted.

All agreed.

**10.Appointment of Independent Examiner for the financial affairs of the PCC 2021**

Nadia Hague FCA Vanguard Accountancy Ltd, Liverpool Proposed by Yvonne Horabin and seconded by Sandra Lacey. Nomination accepted. All agreed.

**11.Parochial Church Council proceedings – Sandra Lacey PCC Secretary**

In February there was a PCC meeting in church but come March all PCC meetings were held on Zoom. There were 7 meetings, more than usual because of the ever-changing situation. The PCC meetings covered topics ranging from producing and constantly reviewing a Risk Assessment for opening church buildings to the public to how will we pay the parish share as our income each month was falling.

Times had changed – church closed, Cronton Mission closed, schools closed, Sunday Club closed but Lynn kept in contact with the children, Clare held an online activity for the May session of Toddler Church and produced a video for Messy Church. Children and their parents who usually attended Cronton Mission joined us on Zoom. Everyone had to adapt and get up to speed with technology. People joined Zoom by phone to listen to the service. As someone said at that time - Zoom used to be a type of ice lolly not a way of communicating!

Services in church resumed on Sunday August 30th with Holy Communion. People who attended church felt safe as everyone abided by the rules in place. Services were zoomed as well so people could join the worship from home if they were self-isolating.

In September Heritage Day went ahead, despite the restrictions thanks to Baz and his team. Lynn held a Teddy Bear’s picnic in her garden for Sunday Club as a meeting in the Bridewell was not allowed.

In December Christingle was zoomed from church thanks to Clare, Sue, Reverend Bob and Reverend Lyn. We all made Christingles together and listened to the Christmas story. Not quite the same as a packed church for 2 services with singing, but enjoyable and reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas.

At the end of 2019, for the first time PCC had produced a calendar of events such as Afternoon tea in church as we had opened the back of church but 2020 was not as planned, was it?

But everyone adapted to the unprecedented times and worked together. We were overwhelmed by the response to our Toy Appeal for the Trinity Kings Cross Project. We got to know people better and made new friends in the breakout rooms on Zoom. People were delighted to return to church and take Holy Communion. We got used to jazz hands to share the peace well perhaps not everyone Bob.

So, on behalf of the PCC, I would like to thank you all for both your resilience and adaptation, embracing new ways of doing things and of being church.

Reverend Bob thanked Sandra for her report and for all she does.

**12.Safeguarding, Child Protection and Protection of Vulnerable Adults – Margaret Campbell Safeguarding officer**

My name is Margaret Campbell and I am the Safeguarding Coordinator and Lead Recruiter for St Luke’s Church and Cronton Mission. This year, I have been joined by Debbie Doyle who has kindly agreed to represent Cronton Mission for all safeguarding issues.

Within this difficult year of the Covid-19 pandemic, we continue to be committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. We continue to utilise the Liverpool Diocese Safer recruitment for all applicants applying for volunteer roles within the Church. This ensures protection for the individual who is volunteering as well as the congregation.

Safeguarding is of vital importance. St Luke’s Church, is a welcoming place, but it also needs to be a safe place. The Minister and PCC are responsible for ensuring that they are promoting the best possible safeguarding culture. We do not want to prevent the culture of volunteering that is the life blood of the church.

We cannot rely solely on DBS Criminal Record Checks, we also need a strong procedure that ensures safeguarding recruitment is closely followed, utilising The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for volunteers working with Children and Vulnerable Adults. However, the PCC has overall responsibility to ensure that all activities involving, Church activities, children, young people and vulnerable adults are well managed and supervised by the appropriate personnel.

At the back of the Church there is a printed copy of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook and Policies and procedures for a Safer Church, I would encourage the church congregation to read them. Also, there is a list of contact numbers of people to be informed if anyone has concerns, with regards to a safeguarding issue.

We continue to work closely with Pauline Ruth and the Halton Safeguarding Children and Adults Board. At this moment in time, there are no safeguarding issues to report. The objective for 2021 is to encourage volunteers who work with Children, young people and vulnerable adults to attend the Liverpool Diocesan training sessions.

General Data Protection Regulations. (GPDR)

We continue to store the congregation’s information in a safe place and respect the individual’s privacy, and do not share their personal information with other organisations.

Are there any questions? There were no questions. Reverend Bob thanked Margaret for her report and stated that she is champion of safeguarding and he personally could not do it as well as her.

**13.Fabric, goods and ornaments of the parish and Health and Safety – Barry Horabin**

**Fabric, goods and ornaments**

With regards to work on church fabric we are still in the grip of the problems the pandemic has made which has brought all work to a standstill. Hopefully when things improve, we will be able to launch the next Restoration Appeal and move things forward. We still have the Faculty and now need to drive on and gain the funding to complete the project to install toilets to the rear of the church. This will enable us to open the church for more community activities and attract more of the community in Farnworth to appreciate the beauty of this building and hopefully give them a feeling of ownership.

The churchyard is starting to bloom with daffodils and bluebells everywhere, which is wonderful to see, but it does inhibit work in cutting grass and brambles. Although the working party has shrunk somewhat due to the fact that most, if not all, come under the vulnerable category of people therefore work has been restricted. Having said that one of the group Barry Hughes has worked daily on his own, clearing piles of cut brambles to the extent we can now see the bottom wall of the churchyard. Also thanks to Arthur Turner and Geoff Poole for their work in the churchyard.

My own thanks and I am sure of all of you will go to Barry who has only been with us for a few months and has worked tirelessly with the team to achieve this result in all weathers. Work on cutting back the brambles etc. will now have to wait until the flowers have died back so that work can again commence.

We are in great need of more volunteers for this work although, strenuous at times, gives you a feeling of wellbeing especially when the sun shines and we can appreciate the peace, quiet and the wonders of nature that it offers. If anyone feels they can offer some help, please contact me or come to the church at 9-30 am every Monday you will be made very welcome.

**Health and Safety**

As with all work in church or the churchyard Health and Safety is the first concern. All machinery used in the churchyard is constantly maintained on a regular basis for safety reasons. Spraying of herbicides and weedkillers are used under the safety guidelines of the product and administered by a qualified person.

The use of ladders in the church are only used by qualified persons and the rules are strictly applied. All major works require a completed risk assessment which is agreed before work can begin. Every three years all volunteers must undergo a training course and update for all eventualities. This is run in church by Graham Mc Gregor who is a H&S Consultant.

First aid and Fire drills are part of this course and certificates of achievement are awarded to all who attend.

Finally, I cannot stress too much the need for more volunteers to undertake this work. All churches are run by volunteers and they are the backbone of every successful church, if you have any or no skills at all come and join us you will be made very welcome. Imagine yourself as someone who is doing an important job by keeping this iconic building a place for all in years to come, I am certain you would wish to be a part of that ideal.

Reverend Bob thanked Barry for his commitment to these roles to preserve the building.

**14.Financial affairs of the parish – Yvonne Horabin Treasurer**

Endowments held on behalf of PCC @ 31/12/2020 and Restricted and Designated Funds are per page 7 of accounts. The General Fund is for the general day to day expenditure of the church.

Due to the Pandemic and Government restrictions the church was closed from 21st March 2020 until Sunday 19/07/2020, but just for 10.30 am services only until beginning of November when it was closed again for a month. Due to restrictions, we were unable to hold the Christmas services for the Schools, Christingle and Fund-raising evenings such as Brass band and choir concerts, which resulted in a substantial loss of income for church, schools and other charities funds. A total of £26,173 was transferred from Endowment and Restricted funds to cover some of the church fund shortfall.

Incoming resources this year were £86,237 compared to £101,148 in the previous year, a decrease of £14,911. All types of income sources are down compared to the previous year apart from income from the Parish Giving Scheme. Income has increased from £757.97 per month in January 2020 to £1560.81 per month in Dec 2020, with tax rebates of £186.25 in January to £370.21 in December. Some of this is due to people who previously donated via envelopes or standing orders changing to the Parish Giving Scheme. Thank you all who did make this change. If you still donate via envelopes or standing order and you are a UK taxpayer that gift aids your donation, would you please consider changing to the Parish Giving Scheme? This way of giving helps the church funds enormously, as we know on a monthly basis what is coming into the account PLUS the tax rebates. It also saves church treasurers a lot of their valuable time too.

Resources expended have increased from £127,255 to £114,132 this year, a decrease of £13,123. We have tried to keep costs down as much as possible in this year and managed to pay the Parish share up to October 2020, with November and December fees of £13,913.70 outstanding at the year end. However, earlier this year 2021, we were fortunate to hear that we have been awarded credits from the church commissioners towards parish share arrears of £23,213, which covers the outstanding amount at December 2020 of £13,913.70 leaving £9299.30 towards the 2021 Parish share.

Each member of the PCC has a duty to look after the day to day running of the church, and to collectively work at finding new ways of increasing the income on a regular basis. Promoting the use of the Parish giving scheme instead of envelopes or loose plate. Exploring the use of a contactless card machine in church now that we have got the broadband working in the main part of the church. Thank you to the younger PCC members who understand and can embrace this new technology, for the benefit of all, especially regarding the zoom services on a Sunday and Wednesday, unfortunately this way of worship does not bring in much needed funds for the church, so please see our website for ways to donate.

Like all businesses and charities, the regulations covering all aspects of the day-to-day work are changing all of the time, and the standing committee group within the PCC must keep abreast of all of the changes.

We must think of ideas to reach out to everyone to keep this fellowship strong. Everyone needs to play their part in this, not just expect the Clergy, Readers and Wardens to do it. Let them know your ideas or if you can help in any way, please get in touch.

Reverend Bob recognised the amount of time and effort put in by Yvonne to look after our finances and thanked her for the fantastic job she does.

**15.Cronton Mission and School – Debbie Doyle**

**Cronton Mission**

The year began with a regular Sunday attendance at the mission of 25 (children and adults). Unfortunately, with the COVID Pandemic, services were unable to be held from 22nd March onwards, though the committee and congregation met informally with Reverend Bob on zoom for support and decision making as the guidelines changed throughout the year. It was agreed, in support of the pupils, staff and families at school that the mission would not resume in 2020. We have greatly missed the fellowship of Cronton Mission.

LML Lesley Firth took a sabbatical during this time due to work commitment and personal wellbeing. There has been ongoing concern for the pastoral and spiritual welfare of our congregation during this frightening, isolating and uncertain period of our lives. Communication was maintained on social media and a Cronton Mission Whatsapp group was established.

Reverend Bob led the first Morning Prayer on zoom initially from home, then in St Luke’s church, A growing number of new Cronton families (Up to 14) have joined the services on zoom since this time and it is essential that we support these families to continue their worship as the situation changes to ensure growth of the Mission going forward. We are looking forward to getting to know them.

Services were held at St Luke’s church with a congregation when Covid restrictions allowed in line with a robust risk assessment. I represented Cronton at St Luke’s PCC and agreed to assist with safeguarding when required. The fabric of the mission remained unused and unchanged throughout 2020 and was stored safely in line with school Covid risk assessment guidelines.

We thank God for the ongoing support from Reverend Bob and St Luke’s PCC and look forward to resuming the delivery of mission at Cronton. Due to the pandemic restrictions the objectives for the previous year were not met and some are now not appropriate, but the following will go forward - To facilitate the community to be self-supporting in taking over the drop-in sessions.

To further develop links with Cronton CE Primary School through provision of weekly collective worship in school and joint services, the work of foundation governors in strategic school decisions to ensure continued outstanding education provision, Christian distinctiveness, and work with school staff in preparation for SIAMS inspection. To take part in Giving in Grace Stewardship Appeal. To continue to incorporate “The Rule of Life and Bigger Church, bigger difference” into Café Church.

**Cronton CE school**

The school has been striving on throughout the Covid pandemic in 2020, firstly providing “childcare” to key worker children and opening the whole school when possible, adhering to strict risk assessments to safeguard pupils and staff. Staff members have worked tirelessly to keep children safe and provide high quality education in unprecedented ways, including delivering a stimulating curriculum both face to face and remotely.

Many staff members have been ill, have coped with family illness and bereavement, or have had to isolate due to closure of their class bubble – a stressful and challenging time for all. We thank God for the school leaders. teachers, all support staff and our wonderful children at Cronton, and all our schools.

Reverend Bob has continued to provide weekly collective worship through Zoom, and a new PPC foundation governor, who is a youth leader at Grace church, provides support with the curriculum and ethos group. Sylvia Thomson, Headteacher and the Governing body have acknowledged the significant impact the pandemic has had on the joint working between school and church. Pupils have been unable to visit St Luke’s church or hold joint services in the Mission. Mrs Thomson is looking forward to rebuilding the close relationship with church as restriction ease and to look at ways of increasing church attendance of school families.

Reverend Bob thanked Debbie for her report and for the work she does for Cronton Mission church and for Cronton School.

**16.Deanery Synod – Pat Johnson**

Deanery Synod in Widnes is an active group, with representatives from all churches in the Deanery. Meetings are held regularly with many thought provoking items on agendas not least over the past couple of years the change within the churches of St John and St Paul. I am very aware that TRANSFORM North West particularly here in Widnes appears to have consumed the thoughts of lots of Christians and non-Christians, and their success is due to the hard work being put in by the Ministry within St Paul’s church and St John’s church and to local people who are attending and becoming involved. From time-to-time changes make you re-evaluate your life and look at certain things from a different perspective. Depending on what the change is, it may also reinforce your life values. We must embrace this new addition to worshipping in Widnes.

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Reverend Bob thanked Pat for her report.

**17.Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee – Sue Smither**

Like all Committees in 2020, the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee met less frequently once the restrictions came into place in March, those meetings that did take place were conducted over Zoom. Fortunately, the plannedDeanery Day at Halton Stadium was able to go ahead in February and was well attended. The full report and implications of this has yet to be published.

The focus of the Committee is to have an overview of all parishes in the Deanery, particularly in the area of growth, but as Finance has become such a difficult and important focus for all churches, it was decided at the beginning of 2020, to form a separate Finance Group who would ultimately report to DMPC and Synod. The Finance Group would have the remit of specifically looking at the Parish Share allocated to each Parish and how best to manage this within the Deanery as a whole. Representation from each church was sought.

Such was the negative impact on the Parish Share to most churches that approval was sought and given by the Diocese to use a portion of DMPC funds to supplement each Parish with their Parish Share and Roland Harvey also gave some of his Area Dean allowance to this which was a generous gesture.

Notice was issued by the Diocese that all clergy appointments were to be frozen for three years. Widnes currently has 6 stipends which is achievable.

Discussion took place several times over the issue of allocation of DMP funds to support Widnes Transform and we were informed that the Consultation period for the joining of St John’s and St Pauls to became Transform Widnes was extended into 2021 due to the Pandemic.

Sue Smither stepped down from DMPC in October 2020 and Reverend Bob took her place.

Reverend Bob thanked Sue for her report and hoped he could ‘fill her shoes’ but she will be a hard act to follow.

**18.Dates** Commissioning of volunteers Sunday in September date tbc

Archdeacon’s Visitation Service online only wardens to attend

PCC meeting Monday 24th May 2021 7pm to appoint officers and sides people

**19.Date & time of 2021 APM & ACPM Sunday May 15th, 2022 11.45am in St Luke’s church**

**20.Date and time of 2021 Cronton Mission AGM 11.45am in Cronton Mission tbc NO AGM**

Reverend Bob met with Cronton members on Zoom, and it was decided that there will not be a committee going forward but the congregation will be asked to take on operational roles as necessary and be side persons when they are back in church. In future Cronton business will just be included in the annual meeting, there will not be an AGM. Debbie Doyle and Stephanie Couzens will represent views of Cronton members on the PCC.

**21.AOB** none

**22.Closing Remarks by Reverend Bob Pearson**

In my closing remarks in last year’s report, I explained that although we were already into October because of the Covid-19 lockdown, the report was meant to comment on the year which had ended 10 months earlier (2019); and I said I would try to be disciplined and leave the information about the new ways of being church and the new skills that were being developed for next year’s report. Well, the time has come.

Sometimes, it is only when we look back that we can trace God’s hand putting in place the pieces of the jigsaw to enable his plan for us to develop.

I have often thanked God for the prophetic person he placed here before me who thought it would be a good idea to have wi-fi installed in church! What a huge blessing that has been to enable us to worship in the restricted circumstances of 2020 and beyond. It was pointed out to Reverend Bob that Clare Liptrott was the instigator of installing wi-fi in church.

Also, he blessed us with two great IT wizards in Rob and Clare (and Clare’s hubby Steve) who enabled others, including Sandra and Colleen, to learn the skills to make good use of the miracle of technology. I am sure you join me in saying a sincere thank you to them all.

In these anxious times for many we should not forget the positives that have come from the unprecedented crisis that has gripped our nation and the whole world.

Those who cannot attend church because of frailty or because of the risks of mixing with others now have a way in which they can join in with worship ‘live’ with those who can be physically present in church. It has been a great joy to me personally to see the many young families and others joining us each week. We plan to continue to offer this resource in the future even after the restrictions have ended.

Technology has also enabled us to communicate and to meet safely to continue planning the church’s mission work and new phrases have become a part of our vocabulary – such as “Zoom”, “login details”, “WhatsApp” and “You need to unmute yourself!”

If I might repeat what I said last year, which sadly is still true, personally, one deep regret I have is that because of Covid-19, although I may have been your minister for 2 years in June 2021, we are still in the process of getting to know one another properly.

Let me repeat again that even in more ‘normal’ times trust and affection takes time to develop, but I still hope that you are at least convinced by now that I have the very best interests of God’s church in East Widnes always uppermost in my mind. It is very important to me that you can come to eventually regard me as your friend as well as your church leader.

There will inevitably be some difficult decisions made in the coming years and I hope that those who might hold different views about the way forward from mine will always find me approachable and willing to listen – please talk to me.

After all, we all want the same things – for God’s kingdom to increase and for all the people of East Widnes to come to know and love the Lord Jesus.

I now turn to the most important part of what I want to say and that is a huge thank you on behalf of all of us to everyone who has contributed to the mission and ministry of EWT in 2020.

I cannot tell you what a joy it is to have colleagues like Sue and Clare, Lesley and Rev Lyn – all very gifted in ministry in different ways and very generous with their time. The pastoral instinct is strong in them all and I know that we are all deeply appreciative of their important work amongst us both in preaching and teaching, in children’s and school’s work, in their prayerful and gentle pastoral work, ministry with the bereaved and in a hundred other ways – they are a crucial part of St Luke’s with Cronton Mission.

ChurchWardens/deputy – The phrase ‘Gang of 4’ is sometimes used in a negative way but I have to say that our ‘gang of 4’ – actually 5 is a great positive for us. My grateful thanks go to Pat, Colleen, Rob and Baz for all their work in 2020 and not forgetting the huge blessing of having Barry continue as a deputy.

Church Treasurer, Yvonne – She continues to do a fantastic job involving many hours of often complicated work in the background and we thank her for the immaculate way she has managed our parish finances throughout the year. She has also regularly drawn our attention to our depleted financial state. Due to church attendance not being allowed for quite a lot of 2020 we are now in dire need of funds to enable God’s work here to continue. Please may I draw your attention to the Parish Giving Scheme? It is by far the best and most convenient way of giving. With many of our PCC and others, Alison and I joined it ourselves and I wholeheartedly recommend it to all of you. There is a link on our website – just click on ‘giving’ and follow the simple instructions.

Honourable Secretary, Sandra – for the conscientious way she continues to manage our PCC business and a dozen of other things – including me! I thank her personally for her timely reminders and suggestions – always given out of a desire to make the best of any missional opportunities that arise.

Team Administrator, Lesley – although furloughed for much of the year we look forward to her returning to do the vital work of administration for our Team. Lesley will oversee bookings for Baptisms and Weddings, and I will organise funerals.

I look forward to having another Commissioning Service for all our volunteers when the restrictions are finally eased - and it is a very long list! Some have been unable to carry on their ministries during the restrictions, but we look forward to their resumption when it is permitted.

Let me remind you that we all have a debt of gratitude to those who give their love, time and expertise to us by working in various roles: as a PCC member,Deanery Synod reps, church cleaners, administering the chalice, Margaret our safe guarding and GDPR officer, Baz leading our project managing, sidespersons, choir and Paul our Director of Music, welcomers, Lesley and her flower arrangers who I am sure will be delighted to be working in church again, Lynn and her helpers at Sunday Club, Tea ladies, Clare and her helpers at Toddler church and Messy church, Gardening working party, Open Door helpers, Parish Review editors and contributors, Children's Society Rep, Bible readers, intercessors, Christian Aid Rep, Bell ringers, Creche helpers, Bridewell activities, collection counters, Baptism Verger/helpers, Wedding Verger/helpers, Funeral Verger/helpers, School Governors, Friends of Farnworth (Fairs), Rob managing our church website, Child Friendly Church, Foodbank, Home Communion providers, Refreshment servers, Heritage Day organisers and helpers, Scouts & Guides, First Aiders, open/close gates, Open the Book – and, this year, not forgetting our wonderful Mothers’ Union (my deep apologies for last year’s report!)

I apologise if I have missed anyone out this year but let me end with a huge thank you to you all! My annual reminder is that whatever you do which is given out of a desire to build God’s kingdom that is your ministry and however humble you may see it as - it is all VITAL to God’s work in this place.

**25.Vote of thanks Barry Horabin**

On behalf of the people here in church and on Zoom, I would like to thank Reverend Bob for coming to Widnes from Widnes, despite the rivalry between the two towns, may be friendly rivalry. We welcomed Bob and his family who have become the heart of the church, not sure if he had a choice but God guided him here. We had been many years without our own Vicar, so I thank Bob and his family from the bottom of my heart for being here now and hopefully for many years to come.

**26.Closing prayer to say together**

God our Heavenly Father, please make the doors of Cronton Mission, St Ambrose and St Luke wide enough to receive all who need human love and a Father’s care and narrow enough to shut out all envy and lack of love. Here may the tempted find help, the sorrowing find comfort, the careless be awakened to repentance and the penitent assured of your mercy; may all your children renew their strength and go on their way in hope and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The meeting closed at 1pm.

Attendance In church 20 Reverend Bob, Linda Brown, Barry Ingram, Sue Smither, Colleen Harper, Barry & Yvonne Horabin, Debbie Doyle, Derek & Gail Beswick, Paul Delaney, Jeff Evans, Malcolm & Linda French, Lesley Howell, Alma Marshall, Lesley Runcorn, Pat Johnson, Alison Pearson and Beryl Cain.

9 on Zoom Clare Liptrott, Sandra Lacey, Margaret Campbell, Doreen Hough, Sandra Vanezis, Lynn Keeling, Lesley Firth, Jade Maloney and Stephanie Couzens.