

# THE ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST. ANNE, NORTHAMPTON, ANNUAL PARISH GENERAL MEETING 2019

14th July 2019 at the end of Divine Liturgy

## Minutes

1. **Prayers:** The meeting opened with prayers
2. **Attendees and Apologies:** No apologies were given, Attendees; Priest Timothy, Priest James, Rdr Peter, Cuthbert Hayes (Warden) Seraphim Honeywell Alton (Trustee), Ioannis Patsavellas, Elena Symeou, Joseph and Sarah Westwood, Branka Radicic, Elizabeth Nash, Benjamin Amoah, Ragener Artemiou, Anna Holden (Welfare Officer), Marina Coleman, Marius Liebus
3. **Minutes of previous meeting;** the minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as an accurate record
4. **Report from the Priest in Charge:** Fr Timothy read the Rector's report. It was decided that the trustees will be asked to sign a lease for five years, rather than ten, given the current situation. The Trustees will ask again for up to ten guarantors. It was agreed that the hardship fund would be extended to the asylum seeker until the next court hearings of the family court (Sept/Oct) and Home Office hearing (Nov) at which he will either get indefinite leave to remain, or have his permit removed. It was agreed that the parish will ask for assistance from the Deanery Exec development fund, as well as doing a second fundraiser.
5. **Report from the Secretary/Treasurer:** Peter Cousins presented the financial report on behalf of the Trustees. It was noted that without the unforeseen costs of the hardship fund, the parish would have been £4,647 in surplus, but only £130 in surplus with the hardship fund costs. It was discussed that the direct debit income has reduced over the last few months, so effort will be made to bring that up to cover the Rent, utilities and insurances costs. It was agreed to purchase a 'tap-and-go' device to allow parishioners to make donations via card, as fewer people carry cash on them. The costs of the travel to Paris several times this year were noted, and it was agreed that the Trustees will request a bursary from the Deanery to help with this. Fr Timothy has not claimed his trip to Paris, so this would have been a further £400+, with yet another EGA due in September.
6. **Report from the Warden:** James Hayes presented the Warden's report. It was agreed that as soon as the lease is signed, to remove the chapel carpet and paint the concrete floor, and experiment whether it works as it is, or invest in new flooring
7. **Proposal of new Property Trustees to St Ragener's Trust:** Fr James and Seraphim Honeywell Alton have both indicated their wish to retire Trustees. The Parish Advisory Council discussed possible new Trustees, and Cuthbert Hayes proposed Anna Holden, Anna Broad and Dan Broad. These were voted by majority with two abstentions.
8. **Safeguarding arrangements & welfare:** Anna Holden reported that one or two welfare and safeguarding issues had arisen in the parish, although majority of Fr Timothy and Anna Holden's time has been taken up with safeguarding issues within the Deanery. It was proposed, and agreed, however, that a small team will be identified and trained to chaperone anyone visiting the building, particularly after the divine liturgy when people not known to the parish often attend.
9. **Youth representation/Parish School:** there was a discussion about a new group of parents being invited to run youth activities leading up to the Feast of St Nicholas, with last years leaders unable to continue this year
10. **Parish activities discussion & plans for 2019/20-** St Anne's support group continues once a month, the iconography group meets once a month, a childrens' group up to Christmas ins planned, Ragener has volunteered to lead organising of vespers for St Ragener at St Peter's church
11. **Meeting of St Ragener's Trustees (Fr J, Seraphim & Fr T),** The existing trustees, Fr Timothy, Fr James and Seraphim noted and approved the proposal by the Parish Advisory Council for

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Anna Holden, Anna Broad and Dan Broad to be trustees. As soon as the new trustees have been registered with the Charity Commission, Fr James and Seraphim will retire. It was suggested that it will be worth paying for an accountant to ensure that Gift Aid has been claimed and that the Charity Commission annual report requirements have been met. The Trustees noted the proposal of the Parish Advisory Council to sign the lease for 5 years, with a 2.5 year break point. The remainder of the Parish Property Trust agenda was deferred to a meeting before Christmas.

## **14<sup>th</sup> July 2018 Proposed Agenda**

- 1. Prayers**
- 2. The meeting opened with prayers**
- 3. Attendees and Apologies**
- 4. Minutes of previous meeting**
- 5. Report from the Priest in Charge: Fr Timothy, St Anne's and Archdiocesan developments**
- 6. Report from the Secretary/Treasurer: Peter Cousins**
- 7. Report from the Warden: James Hayes**
- 8. Proposal of new Property Trustees to St Ragener's Trust**
- 9. Safeguarding arrangements & welfare: Anna Holden**
- 10. Youth representation/Parish School**
- 11. Parish activities discussion & plans for 2019/20**
- 12. Meeting of St Ragener's Trustees (Fr J, Seraphim & Fr T), reception of new trustees, preparation of accounts and annual report, tax relief and auditing of accounts**
- 13. AOB- have a second parish meeting GM in Oct/Nov**

## **Rectors' Annual Report**

The parish as a whole continues to thrive, with a new cohort of dedicated new members in 2018/9, although some of the longer-term parishioners are less connected. I would like to thank Fr James and Reader Peter again for their unfailing support of the ministry of St Anne's. Also, it is a joy to note that the choir is wonderful! It has not, however, been possible for myself and Mat. Elizabeth to take a weekend rest at any point this year.

The issues in Ukraine and the suspension of communion between the Ecumenical Patriarchate (EP) and the Moscow Patriarchate (EP) has meant that about 40% of our parish are currently not coming, despite careful explanation of the situation. The schedule of services has remained the same, although weekday services still have low attendance. Pascha was very successful this year, but we have not organised any special events.

I have still struggled to support weekday activities as work commitments have doubled in the last year, and I am still taking migraine medication, not always successfully. I propose to keep the schedule of services the same for the next year. We will return to doing annual vespers at St Peter's church this year, with the help of Arte Artemiou.

## **Archdiocesan challenges**

In November, the EP suddenly, and without warning, removed the Exarchate status of our Archdiocese within the EP, inviting all parishes to report to their local/national Greek Archdiocese, in our case Thyateira. Our Archbishop John was shocked by this decision, so called an EGA in Paris to get guidance on the way forward. That EGA voted 93% to remain as an Archdiocese that covers all of western Europe. The challenge for the Archdiocese now is how to implement that decision. There will be another EGA in September to hopefully resolve the problem. I and Fr James have travelled to London several times and to Paris once each to contribute again to the ongoing discussions.

This situation has created a high level of doubt and anxiety. To this end, I have not progressed renewing the lease of the building until such times as we could see a way forward. I have hence delayed and delayed the new lease, sometimes to the irritation of the council, hoping that a clear decision will have been made in Paris. This is so far still not forthcoming.

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We need to decide whether to a) sign for the next 10 years, regardless of our destination, or b) ask for a further 5 years or c) delay again until after the September EGA. The St Ragener Trust is the holder of the lease, so it is a Trust decision, but it is advisable that we have ten (10) guarantors of the lease, to continue sharing the cost of the lease if our income should collapse.

## Registration as a place of worship

In May 2019, the business rates team at the Council wrote to me saying that they had determined that we are a place of worship, but not registered as such. This meant that they decided that we are not eligible for the 80% charity rates relief, and also not exempt from rates as a place of worship, and started charging us full business rate at about £7k pa. I have immediately, and successfully, applied to the UK Registrar to register St Anne's as a place of worship, which means that the building going forward will be exempt from business rates. The council would still like us to pay £300+ for the month that it took for the place of worship registration to process. I am contesting this.

## Finance and asylum seeker support

Rdr Peter will confirm this, but for the last year St Anne's has been supporting the accommodation, living costs and legal fees of our asylum seeker. He came to us through the government funded work of one of our parishioners. When he reached 18 the government stopped supporting him, so the parishioner (whose business is accommodating refugees for the government) continued to support him- he is not allowed to work or volunteer until the case is decided. The sponsoring parishioner has withdrawn from St Anne's and now no longer supports the asylum seeker at all. We have sponsors for the accommodation and food, but the costs of fighting his legal case has been significant. I raised over £5000 for these fees, but we still have £2k outstanding, with no clear conclusion. He has won a temporary right of residence, but has to demonstrate a connection with his daughter (being contested in court by the mother) to build the case for a right to remain. Even if he wins all the cases, he isn't really yet capable of independent life. We need to agree the next steps.

## Church building

The removal of the carpet and return to the parquet floor in the narthex seems to have been successful. It still needs some more sanding back and restoration. The carpet in the main chapel is in a dire state. I propose that as soon as the lease is signed, we remove the carpet and return to the concrete floor, painting it as has been done with the concrete in the narthex. When this is done, the iconostasis needs to be removed and remounted with a more permanent timber frame. I would also like to fund the replacement of the lighting to facilitate the fitting of the remaining Reitlinger fresco panels.

## Financial Report

St. Anne's Orthodox Parish			
Receipts and Payments Account			
For the year ended 30th June 2019			
Receipts		Payments	
<i>Balance b/d.</i>		<i>Rent, utilities &amp; insurance</i>	
* Remainder of Legal appeal	£2,687.00	Rent	£5,799.96
Effective Bank bal.	£6,795.90	Water	£201.00
Cash	£285.42	Electricity	£380.68
	£9,768.32	Gas	£383.56
<i>Donations</i>		Alarms	£584.34
Regular donors	£5,638.00	Insurance	£718.47
Sunday collections	£7,627.91		£8,068.01
Christmas collection	£143.40	<i>Supplies</i>	
Pentecost collection	£104.05	Altar	£30.96
African box	£89.70	Candles	£250.00
Baptisms, etc.	£377.00	Kitchen, cleaning, etc.	£79.98
	£13,980.06	Bulbs, etc.	£19.20
<i>Hardship fund</i>			£380.14
Regular donors	£2,054.00	<i>Hardship fund</i>	
* Legal appeal	£0.00	Personal	£2,350.00
	£2,054.00	Rent	£1,050.00
<i>Sale</i>		Legal fees	£5,858.00
Candles	£1,351.99		£9,258.00
Icons, cards, books, etc.	£171.50	<i>Travel &amp; accommodation</i>	
	£1,523.49	Rail fares	£404.80
		Hotel	£304.92
			£709.72
		<i>Payment of special collections</i>	
		Quête	£1,361.90
		Christmas	£143.40
			£1,505.30
* <i>Legal appeal from previous year</i>		<i>Funds to be paid over</i>	
Donations Feb-Apr18	£4,637.00	St. Procopius fund	£89.70
less Legal fees paid Feb-Jun18	-£1,950.00	Pentecost chq. not yet sent	£104.05
	£2,687.00		£193.75
		<i>Balance c/d.</i>	
		Bank bal.	£7,164.50
		Cash	£46.45
			£7,210.95
	<b>£27,325.87</b>		<b>£27,325.87</b>

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## **Churchwarden report**

### Maintenance

Though a number of issues are still ongoing, including for instance loose tiles, progress has been made with respect to flooring. Originally, quotes were sought for work to be done on the flooring in both the narthex and the chapel. The following local companies were contacted: Crown Flooring, Northants Flooring Ltd and Stephenson Flooring. Taking into account the feasible budget for such a job, as well as with the discovery of the condition of some of the parquet flooring, it was decided by St Anne's Parish to carry out the work ourselves.

As we speak, the carpet has been removed from the narthex, the parquet flooring cleaned and treated, and the cement areas painted in white. It is hoped that the carpet in the chapel can be removed, the cement surface painted white and decorated using stencils. Overall, the parish hopes that the flooring in the more frequented parts of the church will become more manageable and easier to clean.

### Health and Safety

Fire safety still requires attention and the churchwarden ought to make sure that there are fire-safety-aware people at St Anne's. Though people from the congregation continue to tend to the candle stands intuitively, there ought to be individuals who will be able to respond quickly to any fire situation. Part of fire awareness involves familiarity with the use of firefighting equipment.

### Hospitality

With regards to hospitality, the Churchwarden only wishes to note that it is encouraging to see members of the parish contributing towards hospitality and cleaning, especially on an informal basis. There have been numerous occasions when people have lent a hand to the person or persons who are on duty for a particular event.

### Free-parking

Thanks to Gregory, St Anne's Parish have managed to obtain free parking at Gemco Equipment Ltd, which is located just next to the Japanese restaurant. Earlier this year, Gregory managed to negotiate with Gemco to allow for parking on certain days for a certain number of hours. This includes Sundays as well as Monday-Friday, but these details will have to be confirmed with Gregory. This will hopefully be a boon for St Anne's. If anybody wishes to register for parking spaces at Gemco, please feel free to speak to the Churchwarden after the meeting.

### Monastery trips

This year the Churchwarden has taken on responsibility for organising trips to the Essex monastery. It is excellent to see a number of people in the congregation take an interest in such a trip, particularly among those recently received into the Church. However, as a number of people in the parish are not able to drive, this makes transportation to the monastery a challenge. Though this involves a number of issues, the Churchwarden suggests that perhaps, for next year, the hiring of a bus or mini-van might be a viable solution to the transportation situation. The Churchwarden has already sent off for a request for a quotation to Rentautobus.com and hopefully hear back from them next week. The particular issues that stem from organising such transportation will have to be discussed by the Parish as well as by those interested in joining the trip.

Cuthbert Hayes, Churchwarden, 14th July 2019

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## MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

ANNUAL PARISH GENERAL MEETING 22nd July 2018 at the end of Divine Liturgy

## AGENDA

1. Prayers
2. Attendees and Apologies
3. Minutes of previous meeting
4. Report from the Priest in Charge: Fr Timothy
5. Report from the Secretary/Treasurer: Sarah Faulkner
6. Report from the Warden: James Hayes
7. Safeguarding arrangements & welfare: Ann Holden
8. Health & Safety review 2018: James Hayes (to be discussed in point 6)
9. Youth representation
10. Parish activities discussion & plans
11. Meeting of St Ragener's Trustees (Fr J, Seraphim & Fr T)+ Lease
12. AOB

## MINUTES

1. The Annual General Meeting opened in prayer.
2. **Attendees:** Fr Timothy, Fr James, Rdr Peter, Elizabeth Curtis, Elena Symeou, Elizabeth Palmer, Cuthbert Hayes (Warden), Chris Baker, Elizabeth Nash, Zolina Whiting, Phil Hadland. **Apologies:** Anna Holden, Seraphim Alton Honeywell
3. **See previous minutes.**
4. Rectors report (below) was presented by Fr Timothy. Cuthbert to obtain quotes for wiring and flooring in the narthex. Plan to have a rota for choir directors in the autumn.
5. Secretary/Treasurer not present. We do need a secretary for the parish. Phil proposed his wife, Irina. Phil to check. Treasurer actually works for the Property Trust. Peter is happy to take over the work from Sarah, but would like someone to 'job-share' and shadow the work, with a view to taking over. Now that the trust is a registered charity, this is a more involved task. No accounts information was available, but Fr T reported that as at March 2018, there was £5.5k in the bank and that is stays at that level of reserves. One donor has had to reduce a £400 per month donation to £100 per month, so we need to be clear with parishioners in the autumn to ensure good subscription rates. The loan to Oxford parish has been fully paid off. Fr T proposed to delay the finances until an autumn PAC meeting, which was accepted.
6. The Warden presented a written report (below). Buildings: It was agreed to proceed with costing flooring for the narthex, and contact the council when the lease has been signed about better accessibility through the front door. The boiler will need replacing, but costs are too low to warrant immediate action. **Health and Safety** during Pascha was markedly improved. It was suggested that the wardens be given a rota, so that they can enjoy some of the service. Training of volunteers was discussed; and agreed that the parish fund first aid, food hygiene and fire safety training. The warden welcomed the move of **hospitality** away from just the Curtis family. There was some discussion about improving arrangements. Parking was discussed, reiterating that Avis' carpark is no longer available but low cost alternatives are available nearby.
7. Anna was not available to provide a report, but Fr T confirmed that Anna had been dealing with one safeguarding situation this year. The issue of children using the Study unsupervised by adults was brought up. Fr T was clear that we are not able to provide a creche, and parents must remain responsible for their children at all times because the building is open to the public. The Study is a

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quiet space for meetings and reading, not primarily a playroom, although it is a handy location to 'contain' children after the liturgy.

8. Discussed in Warden's report.
9. Elena volunteered to co-ordinate pre-Nativity and Lenten youth activities with parents. Chris offered to look at providing Orthodox Scouting opportunities, which was welcomed. To be developed.
10. The meeting discussed, and accepted, the following proposals: calendared visits to the monastery, and Walsingham. Elena reported on the Support Group which has grown from 3 to 10 people, with Irina taking more responsibility for the meetings. The start of the Reitlinger Iconography group was noted and the toilet/store room was offered as a secure storage place for materials. Elizabeth Nash noted the Welcome Directory for people leaving prison. Cuthbert will investigate further.
11. **Property Trust AGM:** There were insufficient Trustees available, so the AGM was postponed.
12. **AOB:** Fr J requested that panikhida requests are communicated to the priests before the liturgy, not during. Fr T read out some draft Deanery guidance on what a PAC is and how it works, which was noted.

**Date of next meeting to be arranged for mid-Sept**

### **Priest-in-Charge Report 2018**

It has been another busy year, and I would like to thank Fr James and Rdr Peter, Jamie as warden and Elisabeth Nash particularly for organising around me this year. It has been a testing time where I have been working two jobs at University and helping a friend start a business, as well as dealing with some very difficult situations at a Deanery level. This has resulted in me being permanently on medication, and having to reduce my workload. Weekdays services have been difficult to attend, but they still occur with Fr James and Rdr Peter, but attendance is minimal. I invite discussion on the sustainability of this current pattern of services. Fr James has been taking much more of the liturgies and doing more of the pastoral work, which I am encouraging. Jamie and Elisabeth have been working to coordinate the other pastoral ministries. In a way, this is all very healthy behaviour. St Anne's is not a Curtis production, and it is vital that a new parish, in its sixth year, begins to operate autonomously from its founding priest and choir director. This process of me and Matushka stepping backwards a little to allow all the pastoral and ministerial skills and talents to flourish will continue.

The highlight of the year was the visit of Archbishop John to the parish, it was a huge success, and he was delighted with our building, the warmth of our welcome, how good the choir was and the general ethos at St Anne's. You are all to be congratulated and thanked. I saw him in Exeter last Sunday, and he excitedly asked how you all were. The Reitlinger Fresco workshop on the same weekend was also very successful, as was the VIP evening. St Anne's continues to have a high profile in the town.

We continue to have well attended liturgies, every Sunday, even though the wider population of the parish has steadily changed over the last two years. We have welcomed new members, visitors and even returning friends. Over the last year, I have been negotiating the renewal of the lease. It sounds complex, but it is not, it's just slow. We had an end of lease inspection and we are only required to do something about the wiring- which the Warden will cover. I would like us to renew, now that we are finalising a 10 year lease, the flooring in the narthex as a priority, and reorder the front door area. For the visit of Archbishop John, I commissioned some conceptual drawings which outline a potential extension of St Anne's into a first floor. This would be an expensive, as yet uncosted, expansion but with a 10 year lease ahead of us, I would like to think that we have a few years to raise the money. I propose that a building sub-committee is established and look for sponsors.

We had another successful Vespers at St Peter's Church, and were invited to sing at the Guildhall. I will again thank Matushka for her hard work directing the choir every week, and she also intends to make sure we have a couple of alternate directors so that a rota may be formed. We haven't had much in the way of organised youth ministry this year, so I would encourage the parents and helpers to organise something. We have a

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building standing empty throughout the week. Any ministry associated and run by a St Anne's member will be encouraged.

I would lastly like to thank Oksana for her generosity again this year. I hope you all appreciated the blue vestments and cover for the holy table that she has purchased for the parish. Blue is the colour of feasts of the Mother of God, including St Anne, so it is very good that St Anne's now owns a blue set of vestments. I would also like to thank Elena for her continued ministry of iconography.

Fr Timothy Curtis

Rector, July 2018

### **Churchwarden's Annual Parochial Report 2018**

St Anne's Orthodox parish Northampton

Sunday 22nd July 2018

#### **Maintenance**

The current state of repairs and other issues relating to the fabric of St Anne's are summarised as follows:

- The parquet flooring in the narthex requires attention. This falls under the responsibility of the parish. Quotes for parquet flooring will be sought.
- During the year the boiler (which is 20 or more years old) broke down and needs replacing. This again falls under the responsibility of the parish. This is very important, not only for the needs of parishioners during cold weather but also for the Reitlinger frescoes, which may become damaged in frosty conditions. There are two possible options: either the boiler can be replaced with a new one (a quote for which ought to be sought) or remove the boiler, decommission the boiler room and replace it instead with a central heating system.
- Neighbours have reported loose roof tiles on St Anne's and thus require attention. However, this is the local council's responsibility and will resolve the matter once the parish have signed the lease.
- Electrical wiring, especially of lights, requires reviewing and approval from a certified electrician.
- Toilet next to the chapel requires regular flushing, as there is a risk of Legionnaire's Disease if left un-disturbed.

#### **Health and Safety**

From the churchwarden's impression of those who attended this year's Paschal Liturgy, the crowd control was a significant improvement from Pascha last year. It certainly made a difference in having a volunteer team of attendants who were able to watch over the chapel, the narthex and the porch outside. This will be a good model for future events and services at St Anne's. One flaw in this system, though, is that it does not allow the volunteers to participate fully in the liturgy. To remedy this situation, loudspeakers can be installed for the

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benefit of those standing both in the narthex and outside, as well as a rotation system among the volunteers, allowing each volunteer the chance to participate in the liturgy when possible.

Fire safety requires more attention and the churchwarden ought to make sure that there are fire-safety-aware people at St Anne's. Though people from the congregation continue to tend to the candle stands intuitively, there ought to be individuals who will be able to respond quickly to any fire situation. Part of fire awareness involves familiarity with the use of firefighting equipment.

## **Hospitality**

As the churchwarden is working in co-operation with Elizabeth Nash on the St Elizabeth's Hospitality Group, a number of brief notes will be made regarding hospitality at St Anne's:

- Firstly, it is welcoming to see that the responsibility for hospitality has moved away from the Curtis family, who will now, the parish hopes, have at least one less thing to worry about, particularly on Sundays.
- Secondly, it is encouraging to see members of the parish contributing towards hospitality and cleaning, especially on an informal basis. There have been numerous occasions when people have lent a hand to the person or persons who are on duty for a particular event.
- Thirdly, certain questions have arisen out of stock maintenance for hospitality. For instance, who will maintain stock? Who will make sure it is checked and restocked? When will it be done? How will it be paid for? Ideally, an informal hospitality committee could meet on a regular basis to resolve issues such as these. The PAC suggests that individuals who are on the hospitality rota should bring, at least, two packs of biscuits and a bottle of milk with them before they come to St Anne's. All other items, namely the kitchen/toilet utensils, come under the responsibility of the churchwarden. It is important that all receipts should be kept, so that those involved can have their expenses reimbursed.
- Fourthly, there is unfortunately now no longer free parking near to St Anne's, meaning that people will become more restricted in what they can do after liturgy. There is nothing that can be done to resolve the parking situation as such; however, it may be possible to encourage pro-active responsibility for hospitality as mentioned above. Another issue regarding the parking situation is the availability of a disabled parking space next to St Anne's; the council will be contacted on the subject of this concern.

## **Suggestions**

The churchwarden received one suggestion from a parishioner who was not able to attend today's meeting. The parishioner suggested having a series of talks or discussions about what makes for a good Christian husband (though there is no reason why the topic cannot be expanded to include other issues or relationships).

One could also suggest, before the start of a new year, designating a period on the parish calendar of when prospective trips to the monastery will be made. By giving parishioners a year's notice, this may encourage others to come along.

Cuthbert Hayes, Churchwarden, 20th July 2018