



## Christchurch Huntingdon Annual Church Meeting Minutes

23rd March 2025, 11.45am-1pm, Stukeley Meadows Primary School

1. Charlie Newcombe **welcomed everyone and opened in prayer.**

2. **Apologies** (6 or 8) & **attendance** ( 68 / 65)– see appendix 1

3. **Minutes from 2024 meeting** were accepted.

Proposed Jon Gilbert Seconded – Charlie Newcombe

4. **Financial Update**

a. Alistair Fraser provided a report on 2024 financial year (report online). Key points -

- 2024 costs £160,000 was a little less than anticipated. This was despite having some one off legal costs and the full costs of employing Charlie now CCH has left the CoE.

- Main costs include staffing, contribution to CoE/ AMiE / Ministry costs (venue hire etc)

- 15% of the income is spent on Mission Giving (William Wyers chairs Mission Committee).

- delighted that income was £162,000 so we did not have to use reserves. This was partly due to around £18,000 one off external donations.

- current reserves of £140,000 which the Council are looking at initiatives that this might be used for (it includes a startup grant from StAG)

- Expenditure and Income for 2025 looks as if it might be a break even (based on predicted giving)

b. Giving at CCH – regular giving assists with budgeting and planning (Information is available). Gift aid enables us to reclaim tax (forms available).

c. Appointment of independent examiner – Accounting firm Chater Allen.

Proposed – Alastair Seconded – Nicola Harrison Agreed - unanimous

formal accounts are presented to them.

d. Questions – it is not clear what the inflation rate is for the church. Council will be looking at staff salary increases. Other increases may be for venue hire.

- Gift aid – there is concern that the Gov't may change this.

- Staffing costs – there has been some slippage on admin (Ops Manager post was vacant) but we now have some admin covered. The budget allows for more than is currently being used although the Admin hours have increased.

- Giving units – 80% of the income comes from the regular givers, some regular givers also give additional one-off gifts from time to time. We do promote giving as part of the membership commitment,

Thanks were given to Alastair for his commitment and time.

5. **Safeguarding Update**

5.1 Susan Brown (Safeguarding Officer) provided a brief report. Key points:

- Explanation of her role as lead. The importance of reporting issues to her even if they are thought to be minor issues. Details on website.
- Jo Watson (admin) and Beth have been appointed as assistants.
- An example was provided as to how to react if there was a safeguarding concern – Listen / clarify (don't ask leading questions) report to Susan (or Beth / Jo / Charlie) write down conversation asap.
- Susan thanked for her time and expertise.

## 6. **Health & Safety Update**

Charis Murton (Admin) – set out some key issues being dealt with:

- Will start looking at a H + Safety issues. Team leaders will be contacted for information.
- Fire Evacuation procedures provided.
- Rota due out soon (noted the number of people volunteering) – noted people don't need to do every week.

## 7. **Appointment of Officers**

7.1 Jon Gilbert provided an explanation of the different kinds of leaders on the church council.

It was noted that elders are not chosen by election but by the trustees (council) according to the qualities of character, conviction and competence found in the pastoral epistles (see 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus). No objections or concerns had been raised prior to the meeting regarding the reappointment of Johnny and Simon as elders. This will be Johnny's 3rd term and Simon's 2nd term. Confirmation of Johnny Pawlett & Simon Sykes to serve for a subsequent term as elder. Will be done by Council at the next meeting

Council make up as follows:

4 elected members Jean / Jo / Sarah / Sho

Elders – Charlie, Jon, Johnny and Simon

Appointed Alastair (Treasurer) / Susan (Safeguarding) / Nicola

7.2 AMiE Synod AMiE Canons & Constitution allow a church with over 75 on the electoral roll a 2nd lay candidate. It was not necessary to elect a 2nd rep as CCH membership does not yet exceed 75. Charlie, Jon attend and now Alastair attends as AMiE treasurer.

Charlie thanked Elders and Council Members for their commitment and time.

## 8. **Pastor's Report- see appendix 2.**

8.1 Charlie Newcombe provided his report starting with the verse Col 2 6+ 7. Key points:

- overflowing in thankfulness: gospel shared / growth in numbers / cupboard.
- Reminder of our vision: Loving Jesus, Loving one another, Loving Huntingdon
  - Around 70 currently signed up to membership. Growing numbers attending weekly.
  - 65 services, around 60 prayer meetings, around 200 people, young and old, who regularly or from time to time come to our church
  - Carpenters arms services
  - Pastoral support – informal visiting and support.
  - House move a great blessing.
- Priorities for the next year (new prayer diary distributed)
  - Overflowing thankfulness
  - Complementary male & female ministry- (teaching in the Autumn)
  - Space for growth- new chairs due, location and timings of our Sunday meetings.

- Outreach- delegation of duties to free up time
- Pastoral care- please pray that we can continue to care for one another well through speaking the truth in love

## 8.2 New opportunities – prayerful consideration

- Staffing. Could we recruit another member of staff who could help multiply the ministry here in Huntingdon. Or perhaps part time staff?
- Church plant, 1<sup>st</sup> May, a zoom prayer meeting praying for church planting in Peterborough . 15<sup>th</sup> November, the second in person “church planting collective” in Cambridge to nearby Peterborough in partnership with other churches
- Mission for Life – in 2026, a nationwide **mission** initiative across churches called “[A Passion for Life](#)”. Could we use this banner to share the good news in Huntingdon, perhaps culminating in an event in June 2026?

## 9. Questions

Questions and issues from the floor noted:

- AMiE – Fridays praise service focussed on God’s power emphasising its Gods role in evangelism.
- Growth anticipate – opportunities for a discipleship course / material.
- Peterborough – might present a different type of ministry.
- Council – noted that people could stay for 16 years. It was noted that this is a long time and its important that new blood can serve too.
- Changing things – need to review what we do in order to introduce new things.
- Pastoral support – Life Group leaders are available to provide support (question re support for women).
- Church growth – possible opportunities to increase church leadership as the church grows. However, it was noted that we can have only 12 Trustees (currently council members).

The meeting ended at 12.50 this was followed be a Quiz, a song and a prayer.

**APPENDIX 1 REDACTED for internet use- a list of names of those present is available from Jean.**

## **Appendix 2 Pastors ACM ANNUAL REPORT 23 MAR 25**

I’d like to start with this verse... ***So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col 2:6,7***

Did you see those last 3 words? “*overflowing with thankfulness*”. Isn’t that a lovely picture? Imagine a glass of thankfulness: not *half-empty*, not even a glass *fully full*, but instead overflowing with thankfulness. Wouldn’t that be a lovely thing to pray for our church? Wouldn’t that be a healthy church?

We have so much to thank God for over the last year,

- new people joining us,
- the gospel shared,
- specific answers to prayer from this time last year (which I’ll come onto),

- a new cupboard that has given our wonderful tech team a lie in and saved their backs lugging tech in and out of cars!

But actually our circumstances or our activities aren't the key to thankfulness. The key is found in the first part of the verse: "just as you received **Christ as Lord**, continue to live your lives in him". Paul wants the Colossians (and us) to stay close to Jesus. And that's going to be the key to a healthy church and a happy church overflowing with thankfulness.

After all, isn't Jesus amazing? He is the Lord of the universe. He's the Lord of the church. He's the one for whom all things were made. He loves his church, his bride, and he has laid down his life for us. He's with us day by day through all the ups and downs of life, and he's promised to build his church. Praise God for Jesus- stay close to him and we'll always be overflowing with thankfulness, even when personal and church circumstances are difficult. Put your cup under the tap of success, numbers, clever projects, the latest spiritual techniques or any other worldly joy and we'll soon run dry.

So with that important foundation in place, let's look at these 3 things on the agenda: a reminder of our church vision, a quick recap of the last year, and what we are praying about for the next year.

Loving Jesus, Loving one another, loving Huntingdon is the *shorthand*. I wonder if you know our **church vision statement?** (*turn to neighbour, fill in the gaps!*)

*Our vision is to see... the wonderful \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_, which transforms, \_\_\_\_\_ and equips a \_\_\_\_\_ prayerfully shared with all in the \_\_\_\_\_.*

### **How have we been seeking to put that into practice over the last year?**

Well you can read all about it in the 1 page annual report. Around 65 services, around 60 prayer meetings, around 200 people, young and old, who regularly or from time to time come to our church. And what have been particular things of note over the last year?

Well at the ACM last year, I gave you 6 priorities to pray about, and I'd like to pick up on them. You may remember the pictures...

What were they and how have things gone?

1. **Membership roll...** Thank you to everyone who has engaged with the new membership process, and committed to loving Jesus, loving one another, loving Huntingdon together. This is another area to give thanks for. To date there are \_\_\_ people who have committed to membership. Do continue to ask questions if you have any, it's yielded some great conversations.
2. **Women's Ministry... (better Complementary ministry)** The elders and staff team over the last year have been doing some thinking, praying and reading about how we understand the Bible's teaching on male and female roles in ministry. We've had some really good meetings and we hope to share where we are up to with some teaching in the Autumn.
3. **Space for Growth.** We were 143 people last Sunday (which is pretty much every seat in the building taken). That's a wonderful problem to have, and we have a short term solution which is to buy more chairs for the school (hopefully by Easter). We still need to be praying about longer term plans.
4. **Outreach.** It has been great to have lots of things tried this year in evangelism, including slightly different events at Christmas, some creative door to door ventures around Valentines day and pancake day, some encouragements at the Carpenters Arms, and an

evangelism group led by Alice and Becca supplying us with ideas. The Warren Furman Gladiator event was a particular highlight (I enjoyed being dressed up in Roman armour), but the key to evangelism is not leaving it to others, but each of us doing what we can to prayerfully share the good news with our neighbours and colleagues. This is hard. More on that in a moment.

5. **Pastoral Care.** This is the day to day work of meeting up with people to care for them to lovingly speak God's word into their situations. It happens weekly in all sorts of ways by many people, formally and informally meeting up to encourage and pray for one another. Last year, I shared that ideally I'd like to visit each individual or household systematically (perhaps with a team), though it just hasn't been possible diary wise to do that, partly this year due to staffing changes and due to the house move. I would love to delegate more admin & non-pastoral work to make this vital work happen.
6. **Staff Housing...** Praise the Lord. A year ago the Newcombe family didn't know where we were going to be living, and wonderfully the Lord has provided. It's always a bit of an upheaval moving house, but praise God we are happily settled. We are gradually inviting the church over, starting with the homegroups over on a Sunday afternoon, so it will be great for you to visit at some point. So there's another thing to be thankful about. Beth has also moved house in the last year, and we were praying for Dan & Laura's move too.

So looking back, there's an update on those areas on the front of the prayer diary last year. And a shout out to Jon Gibbon who I know has used this prayer diary very regularly- thank you!

### What about looking forwards?

Well again like last year there are 6 things to pray for, and they are in this similar but different prayer diary for the next year which I'll pass round in a moment. Two are different and four are the same.

1. So I've already mentioned the first new one of these which is to be overflowing with thankfulness in the light of our relationship with Christ. That's the first main focus for this year. **Thankfulness.** Please pray that as we find our joy in the Lord Jesus, and as we meditate on him and his work (especially in John's gospel over Easter), we will be "overflowing with thankfulness")

What next? Well the two that we can take off the list and put in the thanksgiving category are the housing and membership points. Those areas of work (and additional ones related to our move from the CofE to AMiE such as a new Safeguarding policy and work on our charitable constitution) are now complete – so we can put those in the thanksgiving category. A big thank you to everyone who has helped in these areas particularly our church council, especially Simon, Nicola and Alistair (and Susan for the safeguarding policy).

Four of them are ongoing prayer points...

1. **Complementary male & female ministry-** we'll bring you more on this as the year goes on, including some teaching in the Autumn, though always feel free to ask questions if you have questions about this before then.
2. **Space for growth-** depending on the rate at which God grows us, the new chairs should buy us some capacity for the short to medium term, but longer term we are going to continue to need to think about the location and timings of our Sunday meetings.
3. **Outreach-** many of us were quite struck in the talk from John 17 in the church series about the way in which the unity and love demonstrated between Christians can be a positive force for witness to our unbelieving friends and family. So under this heading I would encourage

each of us to answer this very simple question... How can I bring believers and unbelievers together? (ask friends to church, homegroups, intro Xn friends to non-Xn at Park run, BBQ). We'll keep talking about this as the year goes on, and we'll share stories of where this is happening, starting with a discussion at the church weekend away in May (+ CPM), but please pray about it. The whole reason Jesus hasn't returned yet is so that more people can be saved, but in order for that to happen, we are going to need to be brave in sharing the good news in Huntingdon. How can you work as a team to share the good news? Out of the overflow of thankfulness.

4. **Pastoral care**- please pray that we can continue to care for one another well through speaking the truth in love (mentioned in last Sunday's sermon)- continuing that through homegroups and other interactions. But pray that I'd be able to free some time to meet more systematically with members of the church.

The final focus for the year... is a **question mark**, because it's an unanswered question at this stage. Where else is the Lord leading us? As a council we are aware that the Lord has blessed us with resources- both financial and people. How can we move forward into the next chapter of the mission that the Lord is calling us to in Huntingdon with the opportunities he has put before us. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Huntingdon is a massive town and the gospel needs are so great, how can we reach out effectively with the good news. Where is the Lord leading us?

Here are three areas to be praying about under this question mark...

- a) **Staffing**. Could we recruit another member of staff who could help multiply the ministry here in Huntingdon. Or perhaps part time staff? You?!
- b) Could a new staff member at some point in the future in turn lead a **church plant**, for example to nearby Peterborough in partnership with other churches? It's something to pray about. Do put two dates in your diary:
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> May, a zoom prayer meeting praying for church planting in Peterborough
  - b. 15<sup>th</sup> November, the second in person "church planting collective" in Cambridge, to bring like-minded churches together on this.
- c) As we look to 2026, there is a nationwide **mission** initiative across churches called "[A Passion for Life](#)". Could we use this banner to share the good news in Huntingdon, perhaps culminating in an event in June 2026?

All of this is on the prayer diary which is coming around now, it has one thing to pray for for each day of the week on the front, and then different things to pray for each day of the month. Please use it if you can.